



# ST OLYMPIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

POTSDAM, NEW YORK 13676



ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA  
DIOCESE OF NY AND NJ

*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,  
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Our priest is Fr. Peter Irfan, Acting Rector.  
You may reach him at 716-342-8520 (cell) or at fatherpeter777@yahoo.com.*

*Please join us for prayer and fellowship.*

**Upcoming Services:**  
**Saturday, March 7**  
Great Vespers: 5pm

**Sunday, March 8**  
Matins: 8:45 am  
Divine Liturgy: 10am

Lunch and fellowship  
will follow the service

*The above services are  
at St. Olympia Chapel  
123 Main Street  
Potsdam, NY, 13676*

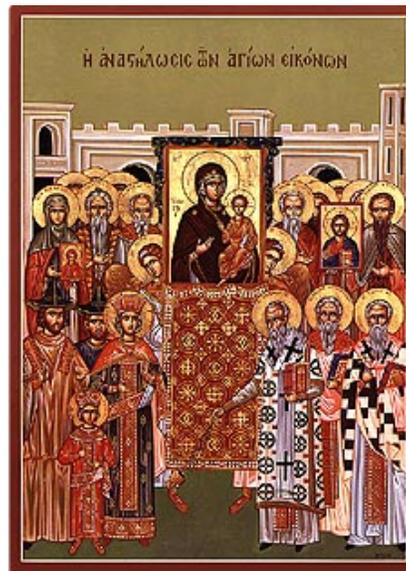
*Daily Vespers at the  
Hermitage of Saint  
Olympia*  
<[saintolympiahermitage.org](http://saintolympiahermitage.org)>

*5 PM - Monday  
through Saturday*

**Upcoming Liturgies of the Presanctified Gifts!**  
**Fridays, March 13, 20, 27 at 10 AM**  
**Hermitage of Saint Olympia**  
(no evening Vespers on those days)

**Wednesday, April 1 6:30PM**  
**Archbishop Michael visiting!**  
**St. Olympia Chapel**

**First Sunday of Great Lent: The Triumph of Orthodoxy**



*No one could describe the  
Word of the Father; but  
when He took flesh from  
you, O Theotokos, He  
accepted to be described,  
and restored the fallen  
image to its former  
beauty. We confess and  
proclaim our salvation in  
word and images.*

*Kontakion of the Sunday  
of Orthodoxy*

**The Sunday of Orthodoxy is the first Sunday of Great Lent.** The dominant theme of this Sunday since 843 has been that of the victory of the icons. In that year the iconoclastic controversy, which had raged on and off since 726, was finally laid to rest, and icons and their veneration were restored on the first Sunday in Lent. Ever since, this Sunday has been commemorated as the "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

The decree of the [Seventh Ecumenical] Council for restoring icons to churches added an important clause which still stands at the foundation of the rationale for using and venerating icons in the Orthodox Church to this very day:

*We define that the holy icons, whether in colour, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, that of our Lady the Theotokos, those of the venerable angels and those of all saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honour (timitiki proskynisis), but not of real worship (latreia), which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. The veneration accorded to an icon is in effect transmitted to the prototype; he who venerates the icon, venerated in it the reality for which it stands.*

Orthodox teaching about icons, as defined at the Seventh Ecumenical Council of 787, is embodied in the texts sung on this Sunday.

*We have moved forward from unbelief to true faith, and have been enlightened by the light of knowledge. Let us then clap our hands like the psalmist, and offer praise and thanksgiving to God. And let us honor and venerate the holy icons of Christ, of his most pure Mother, and of all the saints, depicted on walls, panels and sacred vessels, setting aside the unbelievers' ungodly teaching. For the veneration given to the icon passes over, as Basil says, to its prototype. At the intercession of your spotless Mother, O Christ, and of all the saints, we pray you to grant us your great mercy. We venerate your icon, good Lord, asking forgiveness of our sins, O Christ our God. For you freely willed in the flesh to ascend the cross, to rescue from slavery to the enemy those whom you had formed. So we cry to you with thanksgiving: You have filled all things with joy, our Savior, by coming to save the world.*

The name of this Sunday reflects the great significance which icons possess for the Orthodox Church. They are not optional devotional extras, but an integral part of Orthodox faith and devotion. They are held to be a necessary consequence of Christian faith in the incarnation of the Word of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, in Jesus Christ. They have a sacramental character, making present to the believer the person or event depicted on them. So the interior of Orthodox churches is often covered with icons painted on walls and domed roofs, and there is always an icon screen, or iconostasis, separating the sanctuary from the nave, often with several rows of icons. No Orthodox home is complete without an icon corner (iconostasion), where the family prays.

Icons are venerated by burning lamps and candles in front of them, by the use of incense and by kissing. But there is a clear doctrinal distinction between the veneration paid to icons and the worship due to God. The former is not only relative, it is in fact paid to the person represented by the icon. This distinction safeguards the veneration of icons from any charge of idolatry.

The theme of the victory of the icons, by its emphasis on the incarnation, points us to the basic Christian truth that the one whose death and resurrection we celebrate at Easter was none other than the Word of God who became human in Jesus Christ.

Excerpted from "Sunday of Orthodoxy" on the GOA website  
<https://www.goarch.org/sunday-of-orthodoxy>