



# 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 worshippers.

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.  
Divine Liturgies are held every Sunday at 10 am.  
Great Vespers are held every Saturday evening at 5 pm.

## Next Services

Saturday, March 9th

Great Vespers  
5:00 pm

Fr. Peter is available to hear  
confessions before Vespers by  
appointment.

Sunday, March 10th

Matins  
8:30 am

Divine Liturgy  
10:00 am

Fellowship to follow  
at

St. Olympia Chapel  
123 Main Street  
Potsdam, NY, 13676

Also:

Daily Vespers at 5 pm  
St. Olympia Hermitage  
Edwards, NY

Visitors are welcome to attend.  
E-mail:  
mothersophronia@gmail.com  
to confirm and for directions.

Fr. Peter will serve there on  
Wednesday evenings and a light  
Lenten meal will follow.

Lenten Retreat with Fr. John Behr:  
"John the Theologian and his Paschal Gospel"

Saturday, March 16, 2019

Annunciation Orthodox Cathedral  
15 Lebreton Ave. Ottawa ON

Cost: \$20.00 - includes a Lenten lunch and coffee.

Register now through Eventbrite or buy tickets during  
coffee hour this Sunday. Please share widely!

## Exploring Christian Faith

St. Olympia Orthodox Church is hosting a series of events on selected Saturdays following Vespers. Join us for pizza and a movie!

### Yerei-san: Confessions of a Samurai Saturday, March 23rd, 6:00 pm

Fr. Nikolay is a priest of the Japanese Orthodox Church. Earlier in his life he was a professional karate fighter. His brother is the boss of the powerful Yakuza clan, a violent Japanese gang. One day, he couldn't ignore the cruelty of the members of a rival gang and fights to protect a young girl. Gang war becomes inevitable and Fr. Nikolay is forced to leave Japan in order to save his life. He finds refuge in a remote Russian village but his new home is torn by both internal and external conflict. Father Nikolay's new fight is one for the villagers' souls while he works and prays to restore the remnants of the village church. *This Russian film is not rated and contains violence.*

## ANNUAL LENTEN TEEN RETREAT MARCH 22-24, 2019

Sponsored by the OCA Diocese of New York & New Jersey

OPEN TO: Teens in Grades 7-12

FIRM REGISTRATION DEADLINE: March 8th

ACTIVITIES INCLUDE: Rock climbing wall, zip-line, challenge course, basketball court, game room, and hiking!

CONTACT INFORMATION:  
Danielle Geeza - Chair, Department of Youth Ministry  
(914) 222-1317 - nynjocayouth@gmail.com

Register today at <http://nynjoca.wixsite.com/nynjocayouth/upcoming-events>



SPEAKER: Steven Christoforou  
Director, Department of Youth and Young Adult Ministries of the  
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America  
Host, "Be the Bee" and "Pop Culture Coffee Hour"



### 8 days and counting...

Until the registration deadline for the Annual Lenten Teen Retreat!

Do not delay registering! If your registration is not completed online by **next Friday, March 8th**, we cannot guarantee your participation. A headcount needs to be given to our venue by this date.

We are excited that this year's retreat will be held at [Camp Shiloh](#) from **Friday, March 22 - Sunday, March 24th**. Our guest speaker is **Steven Christoforou**.

## 1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Note: the following article was written by Fr. Philip Speranza, a.k.a. Fr. Guido, in 2017

It is included here by permission.

In case you hadn't noticed, we live in a society deeply concerned with rights. Our constitution affirms our right to certain fundamental freedoms and legal rights, like the right to practice any religion we choose without governmental interference, and the right to speak freely against government policies. The courts have determined that we have additional rights, such as the right to privacy and the right of criminal defendants to a speedy trial. And let's understand clearly that those rights are important and need to be defended, especially against governments who always end up confusing God and Caesar. In Acts 25:10-11, in order to escape a rigged trial, St. Paul appealed to his right as a Roman citizen to have his case heard by the emperor personally: "I stand at Caesar's judgment seat, where I ought to be judged...I appeal to Caesar." We have human rights, patients' rights, women's rights, children's rights, animals' rights. And we should and do value our rights---except, of course, when someone else's exercise of those rights becomes inconvenient to us. That's why the most basic right, the right to life, is being denied to the weakest members of our society; the unborn children being aborted; and will sooner rather than later also be denied to the old and infirm.

But as Christians we believe that ultimately our rights come, not from government, but from God, because we have been created by God, in the image of God, and are intended and called to live according to the likeness of God. As Christians we insist that humans are not just another animal on this planet; that human life has special dignity precisely because we have been made in God's image; and that because you have been created in God's image, then no matter how different you and I may be, I owe you a certain amount of respect, including respect for your conscience and convictions.

And as a society, we're losing sight of that mutual respect. The whole "political correctness" thing is nothing other and nothing less than an attempt to coerce the conscience to accept and approve of whatever happens to be politically correct, regardless of whether or not it's moral. One political party in this country requires each and every one of its candidates to be "pro-choice," meaning pro-abortion, if they want to stand for election for that party. The professional associations for both physicians and nurses in Ontario are currently attempting to force doctors and nurses to participate in physician-assisted suicide, regardless of the practitioner's conscience and convictions. The erosion of respect for conscience and convictions is the erosion of our fundamental freedom.

And what's any of that got to do with 1 Corinthians 9:2-12? Well, in it St. Paul deals with part of the respect we owe to one another as he deals with the right to be paid for one's labor. Indeed, in verse 14, he says bluntly that "the Lord has commanded that those who preach the Gospel should live [receive their living] from the Gospel." And understand: Paul's dealing with the issue as a matter of principle: not because he's actually getting paid by the Corinthian parish, but because somebody in that parish at challenged his right to be financially supported in his ministry.

Paul begins with an appeal to human authority and natural law: "Who ever goes to war [serves as a soldier] at his own expense?" Our military, all volunteers, put their lives on the line to protect our freedoms from tyrants who would have no qualms about violating our rights or stripping us of our rights altogether. So at the very least it's our duty to pay them, care for them when they're wounded in body or mind, and to pension them decently. It's called gratitude.

Similarly, says Paul, "Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit?" Farmers plant their crops expecting a harvest and with the right to partake of that harvest. Sometimes the crop fails because of too much rain, too little rain, hail, insects, whatever. But who would plant, knowing there'd be no harvest? And this is not just about farming; it's also about government greed. Governments think they have a "right" to raise taxes as much as they please; but they have no such moral right. We rightly growl when property taxes go up and when new fees are introduced. As the Soviet system learned the hard way, what's the point of working hard and contributing to a vigorous economy if the government's just gonna take it all anyway?

Paul also asks, "Who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock?" In Luke 10:7 Our Lord, insists that "the laborer is worthy of his hire." And, says James 5:1-6, short-changing workers leads to eternal disaster for the cheater: "Come now, you rich, weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you...Behold, the wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, are crying out against you, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts. You have lived on the earth in luxury and in self-indulgence. You have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. You have condemned; you have murdered the righteous person. He does not resist you." Let's be clear: unbridled, unrestrained greed-driven capitalism which rakes in billions in profits and pays workers a pittance is just as wicked as Communism in the disrespect with which it treats people.

Further still, Paul notes, God's law in Deuteronomy 25:4 says, "'You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain.'" And this is not about animal rights, although mistreating an animal is a grave sin. The point is that if God is concerned with the treatment of oxen, how much more is He concerned with the treatment of human beings, just as the Lord Jesus already said in Matthew 6:26, "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?" No, says verse 10; God lays down this law "altogether for our sakes...that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope." Then in verse 11 he asks if it's too much to apply these principles spiritually. "If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing [such a big deal] if we reap your material things?" If someone has benefited us spiritually, is it too much to ask that they be supported in material ways? And just in case somebody thinks the answer to that question is "Yes," Paul now appeals to precedence. "If others share this rightful claim on you, do not we even more?" To deny that Paul, in particular, or anyone in general, has no right to be blessed materially for the efforts he has made to bless others spiritually is to deny what they've already accepted as common practice. Paul's rights are clear and undoubted.

But (and here's the kicker) this whole thing is not really about anybody's rights; it's a lead-up to our need to be willing to sacrifice even our rights for something greater. In verse 12 Paul says, "Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the Gospel of Christ." Why did Paul give up his right to be paid by the Corinthians? So that nobody could say "You're paid to say all that good stuff." Paul wanted his reward for preaching the Gospel to be that he did so free of charge. Sometimes he worked as a tent-maker; at other times he received support from other congregations. But he never took a dime from Corinth. His credibility in preaching the Gospel was too important to be compromised even by somebody's evil imagination.

And that's where our challenge lies: to set aside our right for the sake of Christ and His Gospel. The holy martyrs set aside their right to life in order to be faithful to Jesus. Is it so much for us, then, to set aside our legal right to take a fellow Christian to court; to set aside the right to divorce an unfaithful spouse; to set aside the right to an apology when we've been wronged, in order to help someone find and live in Christ? For every right given to us by God there's at least one circumstance when godly love calls us not to insist on our rights, but to cling to God's protection, mercy and grace. After all, even God sets aside His rights sometimes. When we sin, God has every right to condemn us to hell for all eternity; but instead He offers grace and forgiveness. God had every right to leave our sin unforgiven and unatoned for; yet He came to this earth, and endured the shame and torture of the cross to give us eternal life: not just a meager existence, but His own abundant life. For us and for our salvation God set aside His own rights. How will you and I respond? Will we insist on our rights at the expense of a soul that could be saved? Or will we, like the Apostle Paul, become all things to all people, so that by all means we might win some? It's your choice...and mine too.