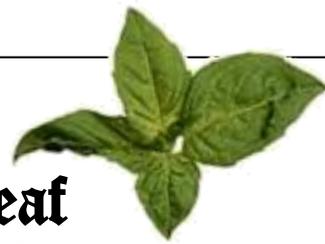


The Basil Leaf

May 2017 Volume: 6 Issue: 5



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Return Service Request

DATES TO REMEMBER 2017

GREAT VESPERS, SATURDAYS 6:30 PM. MATINS, SUNDAYS, 9:25 AM.
DIVINE LITURGY, SUNDAYS, 10:30 AM.
SUNDAY SCHOOL & ADULT ED, SUNDAYS FOLLOWING LITURGY.

<u>MAY</u>	31	BECOMING TRULY HUMAN, 7PM
<u>JUNE</u>	1-4	GREEK FESTIVAL, STS. CONSTANTINE & HELEN, NEWPORT NEWS
	4	PENTECOST
	12	APOSTLES FAST BEGINS (ENDS ON THE 29 TH)
	28	PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE BEINGS (FR. JAMES ATTENDING)
	29	FEATS OF STS. PETER & PAUL
<u>JULY</u>	2	PARISH LIFE CONFERENCE CONCLUDES
	23-30	ARCHDIOCESAN CONVENTION (FR. JAMES ATTENDING). FR. JOSEPH BIRTHESAL TO SUBSTITUTE.
<u>AUG.</u>	6	FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
	14	LITURGY FOR THE FEAST OF DORMITION, 6:30PM

✠ Notes from the Parish ✠

Pascha was definitely the major highlight of the past month or so. The Holy Week and Paschal services were as beautiful as they always are. The choir and chanters worked very hard, as did the women who decorated the bier, made eggs, provided food and so forth. We are also thankful for our altar servers and their help rounding out the liturgies. Lastly, we are thankful for the push made by **Chuck Simerick** and crew in getting so much done on the building before Pascha. Major construction is now done.

Ascension was the other Feast that we celebrated. We were joined by **Fr. Noah Buschelli** and his family for the liturgy. Fr. Noah is the priest at St. Philip's in Souderton, PA. St. Philip's has been particularly helpful throughout the years in providing us with finances, liturgical books, and icons. It was so nice to have him with us.

Sunday school and adult education have come for the school year. In the words of our Sunday School Director, **Anna Mary Vogt**, "We sincerely thank our wonderful and dedicated **Sunday School teachers** for giving so generously of their time and talents this past school year. Our children have benefited greatly! We look forward to beginning classes again this fall. Registration for the 2017-2018 Sunday School year will begin in August!" We also thank **Chris Mertens** for his hard work in presenting thoughtful and engaging Adult Classes. We should also mention that Chris will also be finishing the St. Stephen's course this fall!

The **Antiochian Women** will be working alongside the **Stewardship Team** this summer to put together a fundraiser for September. This will be a Saturday brunch and auction held at Warwick Forrest retirement community. Stay tuned for details!

The **Stewardship Team** has also been working with Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Church, who has been kind enough to let us work their Greek Festival this June. St. Basil will be financially compensated for the hours we put in. We hope you can support this.

James Crawford and the **Missions-Evangelism Team** have ran their first Becoming Truly Human program for the public. If you, or those interested, missed it, Missions-Evangelism will be running it again in the fall.

Mark Nixon is putting together a youth group to start in the fall for 5th-8th graders. The tentative plan is to meet one Saturday a month. The kids would have an "Ask Father" session, do social events together, and perhaps Bible trivia. Mark is asking for volunteers to help, so don't be shy in approaching him.

Keep your eyes posted on the parish website. **Jon Vogt** is in the process of updating something pages and giving it a bit of a facelift.

Lastly, the summer months are always a challenging time for our bottom line. We are asking that you please remember to stay up-to-date on your tithes. Have a blessed summer.

Building Construction Update

On To Finish Work.

Prior to Pascha we made a significant effort to finish major construction. Here is what we've completed...

- ❖ The new parking lot has been graveled.
- ❖ Carpet has gone down in the Sunday School wing and cabinets have been going up in the classrooms.
- ❖ Sheetrock has gone up and is receiving tap and mud.
- ❖ Prosthesis tables and cabinets have taken shape in the altar, and the vestries have been painted.
- ❖ Our new front doors have been installed
- ❖ The fellowship floor has been laid.
- ❖ And much more!

Where do we go from here? We are moving on to the finish work. This will include decorative trim, painting, carpet and tile work, bathroom work, and so on. Of course this also means work on the icons, which Jeff Edens has begun.

Work days need to resume in full! It's time to get back into the swing of things and set aside days we can help. Mon., Tue., Thur. 6pm-9pm, and Saturdays 9am-2pm.

Pastor's Note

Terrorism, it seems, is now a common occurrence. I am writing this on the heels of the attack in Manchester, England. As horrific as it is, it also seems common place. Attacks in France, England, Turkey- the list goes on. Even here at home we seem to increasingly be suffering from this plague. Inevitability, as though it were part of some liturgical act, comes the criticism for moderate Muslims to stand up, be outraged just as much as we are, and to do something to stop such things. Surely, you've heard it. Heck, maybe you've thought it, or said it yourself. Regardless, the criticism has become as commonplace as the terrorist attack itself.

Now, whether or not this criticism is justified is a worthy discussion for some other time. What we need to equally consider, and what is almost always forgotten, is the hypocrisy of the criticism. If we pay just a little bit more attention we'll find that both cultural and practicing Christians behave in the most egregious ways. Too often our response is silence. When will "moderate" Christians stand up, be outraged, and do something? In other words, we ask others to do what we are unwilling to do ourselves.

Granted, there isn't much terrorism going on in the name of Jesus these days. Yet, terrorism didn't start with the bomb. It began with hate. Hate that was tolerated, then hate that was preached, and that was followed by hate finding receptive ears. There are, however, plenty of examples of poor Christian witness that we remain too comfortable with. We tolerate it. The next step is for it to be preached and accepted.

That is not to say that Christians will soon be carrying out acts of terror, but that soon, if not already, Christians will become comfortable with ideas that are opposed to the Gospel. Our fight, in the end, is not against flesh and blood. It is "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness..." (Eph. 6:12) who are behind the thoughts and ideas that breed hate and run counter to the love and manifestation of God in Jesus Christ.

Brothers and sisters, we are the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Let us be faithful, especially in the small things, do not let hate make even the slightest inroads into our hearts. Drive it away with the prayer of Jesus and the sign of the cross, so that our light may shine before men, so that they may give glory to our Father who is in heaven. I pray you have a blessed summer.

Your unworthy Priest,

Fr. James

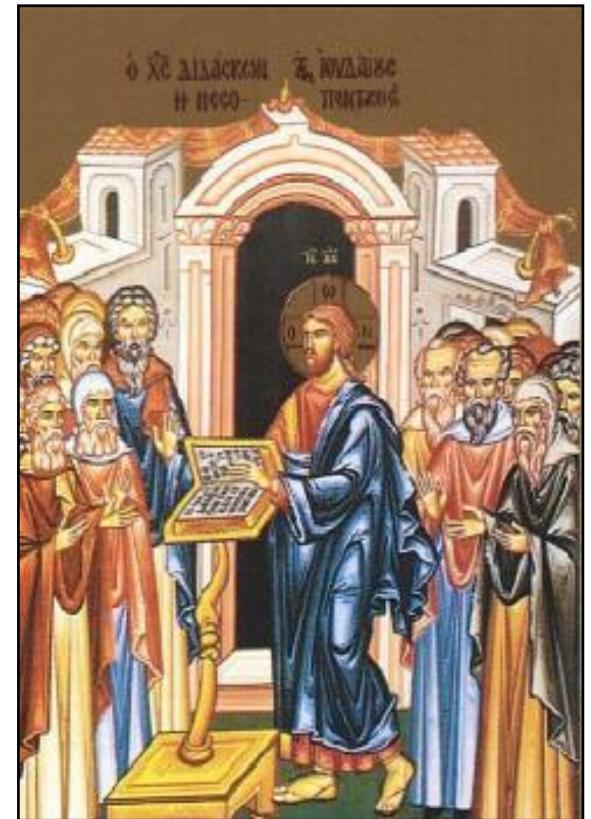
Mid Pentecost

May 8th, 2017

In the midst of this Feast, O Savior, give Thou my thirsty soul to drink of the waters of true worship; for Thou didst call out to all, saying: Whosoever is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink. Wherefore, O Christ our God, Fountain of life, glory to Thee. (Apolytikion of the Feast, Tone 8)

On the Wednesday of the Paralytic, we celebrate the Feast of Mid-Pentecost. Standing in the midst of the teachers, Christ the Messiah teacheth at Mid-Feast.

Mid-Pentecost is the midpoint of the fifty days between the Feasts of Pascha and Pentecost. In the Divine Liturgy Gospel passage, we read that "in the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the Temple, and taught" (John 7:14). The feast in question is the Jewish Feast of Tabernacles which commemorates the Israelites wandering in the desert for forty years, when they lived under tents and tabernacles. "Tabernacles" served as the middle link between the Jewish Passover, which recalls God's deliverance of His people from the Egyptian pharaoh, and the Jewish Pentecost, which remembers Old Israel's entry into the "promised land" of Mount Sinai. The risen Christ is the link for New Israel as it celebrates the New Passover (Pascha, the Resurrection) and the New Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the disciples and apostles. When Jesus had preached in the temple, he had just healed the Paralytic Man—which the Orthodox Church recalled on the previous Sunday—and was about to give sight to the Blind Man—



which the Orthodox Church will recall in ten days. The apolytikion of Mid-Pentecost announces the "waters of true worship", which Christ will give us to drink, just as He gave the Samaritan Woman to drink; we commemorate that event on the coming Sunday. Thus,

Mid-Pentecost reveals to the world that Christ will heal all of its infirmities, both physical and spiritual. By Thy boundless mercy, O Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

O Sovereign Master and Creator of all things, O Christ our God, Thou didst cry unto those present at the Judaic Mid-feast and address forth immortality's water. Wherefore, we fall down before Thee and faithfully cry out: Grant Thy compassions unto us, O Lord, for Thou art truly the Well-spring of life for all.

With the streams of Thy Blood do Thou water my soul, which is grown dry and barren because of mine iniquities and offences, and show it forth to be fruitful in virtues. For Thou didst tell all to draw nigh Thee, O all-holy Word of God, and to draw forth the water of incorruption, which is living and which washeth away the sins of them that praise Thy glorious and divine arising. Unto them that know Thee as God, O good One, grant from on high the strength of the Spirit, which verily was borne by Thy disciples, for Thou art truly the Well-spring of life for all.

--Kontakion and Oikos of the Feast

Feast of the Ascension

May 25th, 2017

The Ascension: An Excerpt from The Year of the Grace of the Lord
By A Monk of the Eastern Church
Published by SVS Press

The Wednesday which follows the fifth Sunday after Easter is the day when, in liturgical terminology, we 'take leave' of the Easter feast. We commemorate the last day of the physical presence of the risen Christ amongst his disciples; and to honour this presence, to honour the Resurrection once more, the church on this Wednesday repeats the service for Easter Sunday in its entirety. And now we have come to the fortieth day after Easter, the Thursday on which the Church celebrates the feast of the Ascension.

Three lessons from the Old Testament are read at vespers for the Ascension, on the Wednesday evening. The first lesson (Isa. 2:2-3) speaks of a mountain: 'It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains...and all nations shall flow until it.... Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord'. This alludes to the Mount of Olives, from which Jesus ascended to his Father. The second lesson (Isa. 62:10-63; 3, 7-9) was chosen because of the following words: 'Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people.... In his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them, and carried them...'. Jesus, ascending to heaven, opens

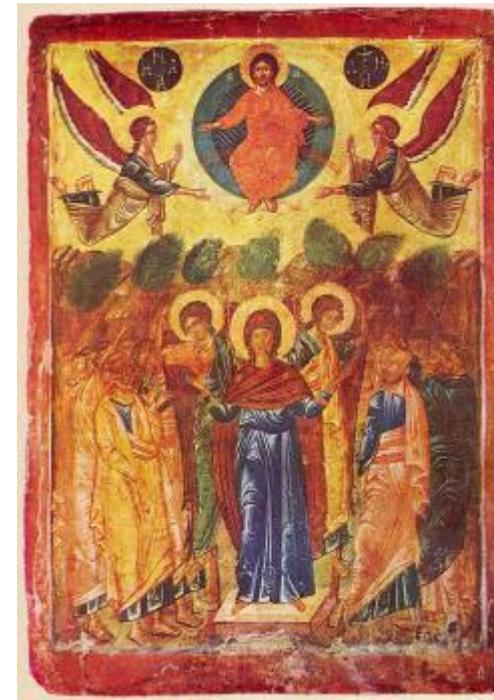
the gates to his people, he prepares a way for them, he carries them and raises them up with him. The third lesson (Zech. 14:1, 4, 8-11) also speaks of the mountain which was the scene of Jesus's final triumph: 'Behold the day of the Lord cometh.... And his feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east.... And it shall be in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem.'

The chants at matins for the Ascension are already filled with allusions to the Spirit, the Comforter, whom Jesus will send. Ascension is the prelude to Pentecost. At the liturgy, the beginning of the Book of the Acts (1:1-12) is read. Jesus, after a last meeting with His apostles, is taken up, and disappears in a cloud. The gospel for the liturgy (Luke 24:36-53) takes up the account of events from the first appearance of the risen Jesus to the assembled disciples and continues with it right up to the Ascension itself.

It is rare, if one has lived through the joy of Easter time sincerely, that one does not experience a certain constriction of the heart when the day of the Ascension comes. We know perfectly well that it is one of the very great Christian feasts, and yet, despite ourselves, it seems like a parting, a separation, and that after it, our Lord is not with us in quite the same way any longer. The disciples did not react like this. They could have been overwhelmed with grief, but, on the contrary, they 'returned to Jerusalem with great joy'. We, too, can try and enter into this joy of the Ascension. Why does the Ascension bring joy to Christians? First of all, the glory of our Lord must be very precious to us, and the Ascension is the crown of his earthly mission. He has accomplished on earth the whole mission which he had received from the Father. It is to the Father that his whole being reaches out. Now he will receive from the Father the welcome that his victory over sin and death—a victory gained so grievously—has merited for him. Now he will be glorified in heaven. The glory and

the desire of our Lord are surely more important to us than the sort of 'perceptible consolations' that we might receive from his presence. Let us know how to love our Lord enough to rejoice in his own joy.

Then the Ascension marks God's acceptance of the Son's whole work of reparation. The Resurrection was the first dazzling sign of this acceptance, and Pentecost will be the last sign. The cloud which today envelopes Jesus and ascends with him to heaven represents the smoke of the sacrifice rising from the altar to God. The sacrifice is accepted, and the victim



is admitted to God's presence where it will continue to be offered in an eternal and heavenly manner. The work of our salvation has been accomplished and is blessed.

Jesus does not return to his Father in isolation. It was the incorporeal Logos which came down among men. But today it is the Word made flesh, both true God and true man, who enters the kingdom of heaven. Jesus brings into it the human nature which he had assumed. He opens the door of the kingdom to humanity. As if by proxy, we take possession of the benefits which are offered and made possible to us. '[God] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus'. There are places destined for us in the kingdom, if we are faithful. Our presence is desired and awaited.

The Ascension makes thoughts of heaven more immediate, more actual to us. Do we think of our permanent home often enough? For most Christians, life in heaven is no more than a supplement—of which they have but a very hazy notion—to life on earth. Life in heaven is seen somewhat as a postscript, an appendix, to a book whose text is formed by earthly life. But it is the opposite which is true. Our earthly life is but the preface to the book. Life in heaven will be its main text, and this text is endless. To make use of another image, our earthly life is but a tunnel, narrow, dark—and very short—which opens onto a magnificent, sunlit landscape. We think too much of what our life now is. We do not think enough of what it will be. 'Men have not heard, nor perceived by the ear, neither hath the eye seen, O God... what he hath prepared for him that waiteth for him.' At matins for this feast, we sing: 'We who live in this world, let us feast like the angels...'. That is to say: let us open our minds more to the angels, and try to enter into their feelings, experiencing something of what they experience when the Son returns to the Father; let us go ahead in spirit and be near the Blessed Virgin Mary and the glorified saints, who will be our true co-citizens: 'For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ'. Our lives would be transformed if, from now on, we threw our hearts over the barrier, beyond this world, into the kingdom where is found not only our own true good but also the good of those whom we love.

When the disciples had been separated from Jesus, they remained full of hope, for they knew that they were to receive the Spirit. '[He] commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father'. The cloud surrounds Jesus, but this cloud is coloured already by the fire of Pentecost. Jesus, in going away from us, leaves in us an attitude which is one not of regret, but rather of joyous and trustful awaiting. Jesus's departure has been both an act of benediction and an act of adoration, the one corresponding to the other: 'And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy'. This is what the feast of the Ascension should be to us. If Jesus withdraws with an act of blessing, and if we adore Jesus as he withdraws (we speak figuratively), we will get up filled with new power—which comes from this adoration, this blessing—and we, like the apostles, will return 'with great joy'.



The Ascension of Christ



Ascension shows us that The Father has accepted the work of His Son Jesus.
It also affirms that God accepts us human beings.