



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

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THE LITURGY: IT'S ALL ABOUT GOD AND US

by Fr. John

During the sermons in September I've talked about some conclusions we reached at a recent Parish Council Retreat. Primarily, we discussed how nearly all aspects of life within our community – both strengths and weaknesses - can find their foundation and ways for resolution within the language and meaning of the Divine Liturgy. So, we are determined and committed as a Council over this next year to the study, the exploration, and presentation of what the Liturgy can mean not just to us as individuals, but as a community.

In trying to identify some basic themes I've preached on images that emphasize how the liturgy is a common effort, realizing that literally it means, "common work." The quote of Sandra Day O'Connor was offered: "We don't accomplish anything in this world alone... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something." The liturgy and community are like the stone walls found throughout New England and New York, structures that are built from many elements and built upon to last. Within the children's sermon it was emphasized that the word bless, as is used to start the divine liturgy, means "to say a good word about" and so we say good words about and praise God's Kingdom, affirming that's where the liturgy is taking us. The response is, "Amen" – Yes, so be it – indicating that's where we, in fact, want to go. It was pointed out that the Kingdom, using images from the Scriptures, is like the pearl of great price that a man spent all that he had to purchase. It's also like yeast and a seed – items that work within flour and the earth – eventually producing results. So, Jesus said that the "Kingdom of God is within you" (Lk 17:21).

We're going to move through the Great Litany over the next few weeks towards the Antiphons, emphasizing how important it is that these groups of psalms be sung together, by the community – congregationally. I look forward to explaining why and how we would like to pray these hymns together.

But before that I want to share the following article from a recent issue of the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. It can help us think more about the Kingdom as a seed and the spiritual significance of a garden (as any of our gardeners already know). It can also help us to anticipate the Gospel of the Sower and the Seeds which will be read on Sunday October 18 (and the annual planting sermon that will be delivered that day).

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What we can learn about life in a garden

Nine lessons of patience and trust, growth and letting go.

by Laura Casey

Craig Chalquist of John F. Kennedy University's School of Holistic Studies in the San Francisco Bay Area says research shows gardening can lift depression, release stress and anxiety, and strengthen the immune system, among its many surprising benefits.

Here are "nine lessons from the garden" that he has learned through years of working outdoors:

(1) Abandon perfectionism.

"When you go out in the garden, the one thing you won't find is perfection," Chalquist says. Pests and weeds will invade even the most cared-for garden. It cannot be controlled, and a gardener must live with that.

"It's an opportunity to look at one's own imperfections."

(2) Things take time to grow.

Chalquist says gardening requires patience and trust in the powers of growth to keep their own schedule. There are no deadlines, and there is no rushing nature.

"This can be a good lesson to learn," he says. "You can take the time and ask yourself, 'What is it that's growing in my life?'"

(3) Detach from outcomes.

"When you plant seeds, you never know what's going to happen," he says. Your efforts sink into the ground, sometimes reappearing as new growth and sometimes just vanishing. Put effort into your life, he says, but realize that the outcome may not be what you expect or hope.

(4) Everything contributes.

Chalquist says the plant you think of as a weed is actually a pioneer - a hardy, fast grower designed to break new ground for ecosystems to come.

"Even when it needs to be managed, everything contributes. And we know if you repress part of a system, you often strengthen it." Every living thing has a purpose, and nothing in the natural world is wasted.

(5) Everything self-organizes.

"The ground you walk on hosts fungi that stretch over wide expanses to manage which nutrients go to which plants and trees: Earth's quiet, weblike nervous system," Chalquist says. "The wisdom hiding in the ground resembles the wisdom within instinct, intuition, the gut: capable of meaningful arrangements if we allow ourselves to trust and get comfortable with it."

(6) Things decay and die.

Chalquist says the garden teaches that some things need to go away; some old structures should decline. Many can become compost for new forms of growth.

"It is a time where you can ask yourself, 'What is dying in my life? What needs to go away?'"

(7) Trust the senses.

When you taste something that grows in the garden and it's bitter, you spit it out.

"The garden teaches me that there are things my body doesn't find nutritious and that I should not let it into my system," Chalquist says.

You may have people in your life who are like a sour fruit or a bitter herb. If they are tearing you down psychologically, remove them from your life, he says.

(8) Nature has multiple ways of doing things.

With pollination, if there are not enough bees, then wasps, moths, and other creatures pick up the slack.

"In any given ecosystem, there are multiple ways of getting things done," Chalquist says. "If we want a community or nation to really work, these one-size-fits-all solutions aren't going to be the right ones."

(9) Nature bats first and last.

Chalquist says the living world will have the last say after you are done with it. Despite all of our anxiety and doubt, loneliness and uncertainty, the forces of life and the cycles of seasons always have us firmly in hand.

[from the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, October 2, 2009]

UPCOMING MEETINGS & EVENTS

- **ST. HELENA'S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, following the Liturgy**
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING – SUNDAY OCTOBER 4, after the Liturgy**
- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON – SATURDAY OCTOBER 10 - 9AM**
- **CHURCH SCHOOL BARBEQUE HAYRIDE AT SPRINGDALE FARM – SUNDAY OCTOBER 18 – MUST REGISTER IN ADVANCE WITH MARGARET LITTLE**
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – Date will be rescheduled**

NEW BISHOP FOR OUR DIOCESE: On September 22, the Holy Synod of Bishops confirmed the choice of Archbishop Michael Dahulich as our new hierarch. The consecration service will take place early next year. Donald D'Ercole attended the special Diocesan Assembly which selected Fr. Michael as the favored candidate. Here are some comments from Don:

My impression of the Diocesan Assembly and the selection of our new bishop was a positive experience. I found Metropolitan Jonah to be focused, fair, and a very "take charge" person. The Episcopal Selection Committee was a diligent group, working through the summer, considering 40 candidates for the position. The delegates, both clergy and laity, men and women, were of diverse backgrounds, optimistic, engaging and humorous. I found the whole process very democratic, with candidates for bishop presented by the Committee and opportunity for nominations to be offered from the floor. Turmoil, negativity and doubt should remain in our past; positive actions, strong leadership, and transparency must carry us into the future. And the beat goes on.

MEMORY ETERNAL to **Frances Delia**, grandmother of **Edward Sicienski**, who fell asleep in the Lord on October 1. She was 97 and had lived, up until the last month, a long and healthy life. She was ready, and the prayers of others definitely supported her during the last few weeks of this final illness. Her funeral will be on Monday October 5 and she will be buried alongside her husband of 63 years, Frank.

CAREGIVERS' FALL GATHERING will be held on **Monday October 26** at the home of Dan & Susan Dowiak at 6:30. Please call Susan (856-234-6318) if you'll be coming and about the menu.

ST. HELENA'S GUILD: Looking ahead, the **Guild Holiday Bazaar** will take place **Saturday, November 14th**. A pierogie session is scheduled for **October 23rd and 24th**. Hopefully by then we'll all have recuperated from the fall festival!!! A tentative **stuffed cabbage session is scheduled for November 6th & 7th**.

A REMINDER FOR EVERYONE (not just guild members) YOUR DONATION TO THE SUNDAY MORNING COFFEE HOUR 'JAR' HELPS OFFSET THE COST OF CUPS, SPOONS, KNIVES, FORKS, NAPKINS, COFFEE ETC. PLEASE DON'T JUST WALK BY FOR YOUR SNACK WITHOUT A DONATION.

If you are not currently hosting a coffee hour, please make a commitment to do just one coffee hour a year. Call Diane Vozdovic (609-288-6833) or Carol Ann Curry (856-985-4649) to add your name to the list. Also please consider joining St. Helena's Guild. Your help and input will undoubtedly be appreciated!

SUNDAY MORNING ADULT EDUCATION CLASS

Beginning Sunday October 11 at 9:15.

As Christians we are always examining the question of who we are, who we are called to be, what it is that drives us to gather as a community rather than roll over and go back to sleep on a Sunday morning. And when we gather as a community, who are we, exactly, and what are we doing as a community. What is our calling? As the old and still powerful Irish familial question has it, "Who do you think you are?"

One of the most powerful answers to those questions is given in the second chapter of the first letter of St Peter:

Come to him, to that living stone, rejected by men but in God's sight chosen and precious; and like living stones be yourselves built into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For it stands in scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and he who believes in him will not be put to shame."

To you therefore who believe, he is precious, but for those who do not believe, "The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner," and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall"; for they stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do.

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy but now you have received mercy.

1Peter 2: 4-10

The first weeks of our adult education program this fall will examine this answer, the call to the height, depth and breadth of what it means to be a Christian, a Christian in community in 21st century Medford, New Jersey. We'll begin by looking at the reality of "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's own people" as seen in the Hebrew Scriptures as the foundation for what we find in the Christian Scriptures. That will be followed by an examination of what those terms might mean for us as believers at Holy Cross.

A second theme in this section of Peter's letter has to do with Christ as the cornerstone. We will take a serious look at what that means, and how its meaning is made manifest at Holy Cross.

Adult education begins at 9:15 on Sunday mornings in the church and ends at 9:50. Our first class will meet October 11th and meet Sundays thereafter except for the first Sunday of each month.

WEEKDAY BIBLE STUDY: A Scripture study will be held at the home of Kim and Tim Rommen in Barrington **beginning on October 12th and continuing on Monday evenings until November 16th.** This six week program, led by **David Brook**, will focus on the *Letter to the Ephesians* (conveniently having six chapters). Those interested will gather at **7 PM**. Each session will end at 8:30, followed by Compline and a brief period of fellowship. This would be a wonderful way to tune one's heart and mind in advance of the Christmas Fast and the rush of the preparations for the holidays.

SUMMARY OF THE 09-29-09 PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

The monthly financial report was presented by our treasurer Caroline Graham. Weekly contributions continue to be low, resulting in shortfalls for general collections and the OCA assessment. We are short on funds to cover the mortgage, payroll, OCA assessment and other bills. The OCA assessment has not been paid for August and September as a result.

Gary Mosser announced that the recent fall festival was more successful than in previous years. A net profit of \$7,774.00 has been counted so far. Gary thanked Val Olesnovich and Elizabeth Gibbons for their hard work in organizing this important church event. Gary Mosser suggested the idea of having a spring festival in lieu of a fall festival, or a combination of a spring and fall festival. A discussion regarding Gary's suggestion ensued, and will be discussed further in the future.

Donations for six new pine trees on our property have been confirmed and will be planted next to the property line abutting the new shopping plaza. The trees will be planted by a landscaper and guaranteed for one year. Some ideas for encouraging congregational singing were discussed. It is hoped that the whole congregation will become more involved by singing the responses and hymns in the Divine Liturgy that are simple and familiar.

OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS: We know that our college students face educational, emotional, and spiritual challenges in their studies and times at school. It's important that they know we are praying for them, especially in their efforts to make the faith we have tried to share and implant within them – their own. Please let Fr. John know if any names are missing:

Alexander (Abdallah),/ **Anastasia** (Shimchick), **Andrew** (Abdallah), **Antonio** (Chong), **Bryan** (Thompson), **Christine** (Lane), **Christopher** (Abdallah), **Christopher** (Shimchick), **Danielle** (Giovanni), **Matthew** (Brook), **Ethan** (Detwiler), **Gianluca** (Keeler), **Jacquelyn** (Chong), **John** (Pierman), **Joshua** (Dowiak), **Julia** (Skuby), **Katherine** (Lane), **Kristin** (Little), **Martha** (Skuby), **Michael** (Shimchick), **Nikolas** (Tranchik), **Peter** (Abdallah), **Rachel** (Tranchik), **Stefan** (Keeler)

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS: Funds (\$300.00) raised from the hoagie sales from this summer will be utilized in purchasing clothes that will be sent to Christina Semon's mission in Romania. This effort is being coordinated by Rebecca and Faye Nugent.

The church school will be having a Barbeque Hayride on Sunday October 18. It is important that everyone intending to go (especially if you bringing a friend from outside of our parish) must register in advance with Margaret Little (856-772-4937) – so that enough supplies can be epared.

Fr. John will preach a Youth Sermon every month – usually on the last Sunday, at which time the children’s choir will also sing. However, in **October the yearly “Planting Sermon” will be delivered on Sunday October 18** (when that Gospel is assigned to be read).

TEENS

The Teens met in a “First Friday” session of October 2 with Tim Rommen and Fr. John, discussing plans for the Fall. It is hoped that the group will work closely with the *Samaritan Hospice*, where they spent a day during their summer program. *Samaritan* is calling its efforts to organize teen volunteers – *Samariteens*. One of their representatives was present at a table during the Sunday session of our Fall Festival. The teens will be visiting nursing homes during the Fall.

The Teens would also like to offer their energy and enthusiasm in helping our seniors clean up this fall. They would be available for raking leaves and other efforts during weekends in November. Please talk to *Tim Rommen* (856-617-0293) if you’d like them to come by.

CHURCH SCHOOL CALENDAR:

- **Soup Sundays (October 25)**
- **Barbeque Hayride (Sunday October 18- MUST SIGN UP IN ADVANCE!)**
- **Advent Retreat – Saturday November 21**
- **Christmas Pageant – Sunday December 20**

WE NEED SOME HELP! Recently one of the toilets in the basement men’s room was clogged with paper cups. Please inform your children that nothing but toilet paper should be put into the toilets.

Also, it’s important that the last people to leave the church close the doors that lead in and out of the stairways and the church. These are considered “fire doors” and would hopefully be important in containing – at least for a while – a fire.

Finally, a request from Fr. John – while we believe it’s important to bring our young children to church and the divine liturgy, there are times that we need some quiet and cooperation in relaying information and news. So, please, if your children are acting up during the sermon or the announcements please take them out.

Flower Donations will normally be acknowledged on page two of Crossroads. This month only October 4 has been reserved. We would appreciate if anyone takes home the flowers on days when no one has reserved them or taken them that they would help us cover the cost of \$10.00.

RESPONSIBILITIES for October, 2009

COFFEE HOUR:

October 4: Marianne Petaccio
11: Marie Clifton
18: Lee Ann Detwiler
25: Marianne Sobotka
November 1: Caroline Graham

READERS

October 4: Don Dercole
11: Diana Pasca
18: Greg Sapnar
25: Leslie Lane
November 1: Genadi Dubiago

ALTAR SERVERS

October 4: David Hamaty & Brendan Detwiler
11: Anatoly Lane & Eli Nugent
18: Andrew Abdallah & Paul Clifton
25: Paul Abdallah & Paul Giovanni
November 1: Stephen Shimchick & Leo Weismantel

COMMUNION USHERS

October 4: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta
11: Kristina Zanghi & Faye Nugent
18: Natalia Rommen & Elisabeth Graham
25: Sierra & Miranda McCleery
November 1: Alexandra & Magdalena Plachuta

Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross – October, 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
4 <i>St. Helena's Guild Meeting</i> Divine Liturgy – 10:00 Inreach Meeting	5	6 Choir Rearsal – 7:30pm	7	8	9 Fr. John will be away from 10/9 – 10/10	10: <i>Community Lunch 9:00</i> NO Great Vespers
11 <i>Church School & Adult Ed 9:15</i> Divine Liturgy 10:00	12 <i>Ephesians Bible Study</i> at the Rommens 7 PM	13 Choir Rearsal – 7:30pm	14 <i>Burlington Nursing Home 1:30</i>	15	16	17 <i>Parastas for Walter & Eleanor Skuby 4:30</i> <i>Great Vespers:5</i>
18 <i>Church School & Adult Ed 9:15</i> Divine Liturgy 10:00 Hay Ride	19 <i>Ephesians Bible Study</i> at the Rommens 7 PM	20 Choir Rearsal – 7:30pm	21	22	23 <i>Pirohi Session 9:00 -</i>	24 <i>Pirohi Session</i> <i>Great Vespers: 5</i>
25 <i>Church School & Adult Ed 9:15</i> Divine Liturgy 10:00	26 <i>Caregivers' Fall Gathering</i> at the Dowiak's 6:30	27 Choir Rearsal – 7:30pm	28	29	30	31 <i>Great Vesper: 5</i>