



Crossroads

The Monthly Newsletter of the Orthodox Church of the Holy Cross

11 Wilkins Station Road - Box 805 - Medford, NJ 08055

Rectory Phone: 856-665-2491 - Fr. John's Cell Phone: 609-315-2894 - Email: frjs@aol.com
www.holycrossmedford.org

September, 2007

Redeeming the Time: What to do on Saturdays and Sundays

by Fr. John

With the recent college graduation of my oldest child, John, I've been driven to think about the fleeting nature of time. While our children were young, especially through elementary school, each day's responsibilities and chores seemed endless (we probably spent 10 years with at least one child in diapers!) It often was a matter of just trying to get through each day, only to start up again in the morning.

Yet, as I look through our family pictures and find various school projects and other mementos, I am reminded of the many things I have forgotten and how quickly they have grown. They do eventually get through elementary school, and with that exit the time through middle, high school, and college only seems to go by faster and faster. I always caution newborn parents about the need to cherish the sounds and feelings as they listen and hold their young children, because when you're in the midst of being worn-out and overwhelmed you think it will never end, and yet someday it will – and does end, or at least it changes.

The sensations I am trying to express are in a way just the reality of growing up. Some of it, especially the busyness and the being worn-out parts, come as the realization of just the way things were or had to be. Many of us, particularly the men as significant providers, no doubt found that there was much we had to do and a great deal we might have missed because we needed to work or to travel. But other times there was a busyness we allowed to enter into our lives because we wanted to provide our children with what we hoped would be the best – the best of experiences whether in sports, the arts, entertainment, or in intellectual stimulation. Maybe we look back and think – it was all worth it and we'd do it again. But perhaps we can also think of the lessons we have taught our children about what is really important, and what they, as a result, will end up teaching their own children perhaps someday as well.

What I'm suggesting is that there is a lot we find ourselves doing as families and individuals, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, that might not be bad in any real sort of way, yet does not prepare us for the experience of coming to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He has sent (John 17). In the Gospel for most of the feasts of the Virgin Mary (we read it for the feast of Mary's Nativity on September 8 and did this year again on Sunday September 9) we hear the story of Martha and Mary. We are reminded that Christ says to Martha that she was "worried and troubled about many things," but "one thing is needed" and her sister Mary had chosen that good part, "which will not be taken away" (Luke 10:41-42). Are we teaching our children and ourselves about that which "is needed"? We find some of our high school and many of our college children losing interest in Church and in God. Sometimes this

challenge to the question of faith might be perceived to be what they need to do in order to move from the faith of their parents to “their own” faith. But I wonder if it also is an indictment of their experience growing up in our church and in our families; that they never truly had an experience of coming to know God themselves, or of seeing others who knew Him either. We, as parents, cannot will or demand them to care or to want what we might want for them, but I think we can model the example of those who are at least trying to find that thing which is needed and true.

I asked in our last *Crossroads* that we re-examine some areas of our behavior in church, and I called it “common sense” because these things relate to the basic response we should have in coming to understand that - **The Church is a Special Place and our worship is time that we spend before God.** Besides certain practical changes I asked that we all take seriously the idea that each of us should prepare before coming to church and particularly to the reception of Holy Communion. Orthodoxy seems difficult to many people because it is often “counter-cultural” to what society considers normal. This especially becomes obvious when we are asked to look more seriously at what we do on Saturdays and Sundays. Is Saturday night, in particular, the busiest evening of the week in that we stay out or up late, making it difficult for us to get to church on time, if at all? Do we ever think that as looked at within the Bible and the Orthodox Church (in Judaism as well, for that matter) the day begins with the evening before? I mentioned in the discussion of preparation that fasting is a normal requirement and that for those who are physically able it should be from at least midnight through the divine liturgy. I noted as well that married couples should abstain from sexual activity on the eve of the Sunday liturgy (or before any other liturgy – unmarried couples, of course, should be abstaining from sexual activity before marriage anyway – another “counter-cultural” expectation of Orthodoxy!) This was mentioned not to put sexual restrictions on couples but in order to allow them to re-claim their sexual lives after, in the words of St. Paul, “they give themselves to fasting and prayer” (1 Cor. 7:5). This verse has been the basis for several Orthodox canons and additional reflection on this subject. So does Saturday evening ease down in a peaceful way that prepares us for the experience of the Sunday liturgy and communion with Jesus Christ or is it the day of the week that ends with more of a collapse?

I realize that due to our inability to serve more than one Sunday divine liturgy (in theory if we had an additional priest and a second altar, or an extension to our present altar we could serve a second liturgy) it is sometimes difficult to fit in some activities that get planned on Sunday morning. But if we allow our children to miss the liturgy continuously because of these activities what kind of priorities are we teaching them? What should we assume that they will later teach their children about the “needful thing”? How do we expect them to develop the experience of God if we rush them through the church “part” in order to get to what we might consider as the more important parts of the day? Moreover, how does the experience of coming to church and of receiving the Eucharist effect our lives? How do we speak to and about our families and other community members after the liturgy? How do we act? Does it make any difference in our behavior at all?

We can spend a lifetime being amazed at how quickly time has passed in our own lives and in that of our children. We can remain perpetually being worried and troubled about many things to the end, without changing anything substantial along the way.

But in we were really interested, how would we go about redeeming the time? How could we change our priorities? Let’s start by looking at how we spend our Saturdays and Sundays.

UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **ST. HELENA'S GUILD MEETING – SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 9 at 8:30.**
- **COMMUNITY LUNCHEON - SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 15 at 9AM (Hot dog and bean casserole)**
- **INREACH/OUTREACH MEETING – SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 16, after the liturgy.**
- **PARISH COUNCIL MEETING – SEPTEMBER 19, 7 PM**
- **CAREGIVERS' MEETING – to be announced**

TIME OF THE SUNDAY LITURGY: We will keep the time of the Divine Liturgy at 9 AM until the Fall Festival (September 30). The Liturgy will begin at 10:00 AM. The church school program will begin on **SUNDAY OCTOBER 7** and the adult education class will begin on **SUNDAY OCTOBER 14**.

ONE BOOK – ONE HOLY CROSS PARISH: This year the adult education class and a variety of sermons and other events will be based on the book, *Sweeter than Honey: Orthodox Thinking on Dogma and Truth* by Peter Bouteneff, assistant professor of dogmatic theology at St. Vladimir's Seminary. Copies of the book are available from Fr. John for \$12.00 a piece.

THIS WEEK A SPRINKLER SYSTEM HAS BEEN INSTALLED THROUGHOUT OUR GROUNDS. We are very grateful for this donation made by Dorothy Phillips, in memory of her husband, John.

FROM MARK & GENIE SKUBY TO THE PARISH OF THE HOLY CROSS:

Genie and I would like to thank you, our parish family, for your thoughts and prayers during my dad's illness and falling asleep. It helped so much to know that we could both count on you no matter what our needs were at such a stressful time. You were and continue to be a great comfort to us and our family.

CLEAN-UP DAY: SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 8: During this day significant efforts were made in weeding and mulching the church grounds, and we've begun painting the concrete parking markers – about 1/3 of the markers were cleaned and painted, another 30 or so remain. A wire brush, paint and a clean paint brush are located in the shed. Please let Gene know if you are able to help finish the painting. It's one of those areas that few will note when they are all painted, but are an obvious eyesore when they remain as they are. Everyone's help in whatever area (weeding is a continuous chore) is appreciated.

GOLF OUTING: Our 3rd annual golf outing is planned for **Saturday September 15th** at the **Indian Spring Country Club, Marlton**. See Mark Skuby if you'd like to participate.

THE BIBLICAL GARDEN, IN MEMORY OF JOHN PHILLIPS will be blessed on **SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 9**. We'll process outside after Holy Communion and end the liturgy at the garden. Thanks to Gene Dubiago and Diana Pasca for their efforts in designing the garden

and to Greg Sapnar for constructing the raised and covered icon of the Theotokos and Jesus. We'd like to add a stone trim around the front of the garden and would appreciate donations towards the purchase of the stones. Initially, we'll be placing around the base of the icon the stones which were used at the time of our church consecration to pound the wooden dowels into our altar table.

FALL FESTIVAL: Our Annual Fall Festival will be held this year **on Saturday Sept 29 from 11:00 -7:00 and Sunday Sept 30 12:00 -3:00.** Preparations have been going on, especially for the kitchen. We need workers in all areas so we are asking that you use the sign up sheets on the bulletin board. We still have booths that need someone to run them. There will be no White Elephant Booth this year .Continue to bring in soda and water. We need cash donations/ gift cards or new items that can be used for the Basket Raffle. Sign up to pre-order your babkas and nut rolls.Sign up to bake a dessert. If everyone chips in and does their part it will make the weekend enjoyable for all of us. If you have any questions or concerns see ***Val Olesnovich or Bonnie Flanigan.***

.. Sign up sheets will be on the back bulletin board in the social hall. Below are the booths we will be having and specific needs for that weekend. If you have any questions, please see Bonnie or Val.

- Russian Tea Room- Margaret Little
Need baked goods for this booth
- Ellie's Boutique- Ellie Kuzma
- Baked Goods/Nut Rolls & Babkas - Kathy Pierman
Pre-orders will be taken for nut rolls/babkas. Sign up sheet on board
Need cookies,cakes,brownies ,sugar free treats. Please use the sign up sheet so we know what is coming in for both days so we have a nice variety
- Kitchen- Need 725 cans of soda, name brands please- Coke, Diet Coke,Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, Ginger Ale. Need 750 bottles of water. Need workers for both days. Sign up sheets on bulletin board. Would like to do it in shift to make it easier on everyone.
- Basket Raffle- Diana Pasca/ Barbara Shimchick.
Need donations from businesses, donated gift cards, large baskets to make up various baskets., new items that can be included in baskets. We would like all items to be at church 2 weeks before so we can begin to put them together. Last year we had around 25 items(gift certificates/baskets)
- Barrel of Fun-Ann Moroz
. New small inexpensive items for children of all ages and adults. We need around 200 items for this booth. .

LIFT INSTALLATION PROGRESS: The lift has received its final approval and is fully operational! Thanks to Gary Mosser for coordinating the project and to all those who donated.

ST. HELENA'S GUILD:

FALL FESTIVAL PREPARATION- Mark your calendars –Borshct/Halushki Session **week of Sept. 24.** Please sign up if you can help. Come and enjoy the fellowship along with helping

make the Fall Festival 2007 a success. Pirogie Session in August was a success. 159 dozen were made for the festival. Many thanks for those who helped. Please sign up for working the festival on the various sign up sheets on the back bulletin board. The more the merrier. Please order your babkas and nut/poppy rolls ahead of time-sheets on bulletin board as well.

- **EYE GLASSES COLLECTION with SUNDAY SCHOOL** –We are still collecting unwanted eye glasses for helping people gain the gift of sight. Thank you for supporting our children’s efforts in their community service work/ fundraising activities.
- **COFFEE HOUR DONATIONS** – Your generous donations are greatly appreciated as they help defer the cost of all the supplies for coffee hour. Please contact **Donna Woodhull (609-654-7093)**- if you cannot find a replacement for your coffee hour. There are a few openings during the year. If you would like to host one of those weeks contact Donna Woodhull. Please remember to keep it simple when you are hosting. ****Special note:** we have a few parishioners that are highly allergic to peanuts, please label items if possible or keep all ingredient labels if purchased. Please don’t be offended if we ask you to remove certain items from the table.**
- **ACME GROCERY RECEIPTS** – Remember to save your grocery receipts from **ACME only**. Place them in the little bag on the bulletin board. We do all the leg work and get “cash” back from participating ACME stores.
- **NEXT MONTHS GUILD MEETING** – **October 7, at 9:15 am.** Please mark your calendars and plan to attend – no cost – just your warm friendly spirit.