

ST. NICHOLAS BULLETIN

Sunday, August 2nd 2020

8th Sunday after Pentecost/Tone 7

Translation of the Relics of the Protomartyr, Stephen

Blessed Basil of Moscow, Fool-for-Christ (1552)

Epistle: 1Cor. 1:10-18 | Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

We are now in the midst of the **Dormition Fast**. Let us increase our prayer and fasting for the world in this difficult time! As always, confession is encouraged especially during the 4 major fasting seasons. If you're communing regularly, it's good to aim to build a habit of monthly confession (that's not an encouragement to commune infrequently!) Fr. John is always available by appointment or any time after vespers, and available by phone as well for those unable to come in person.

Thank you to everyone who came and helped with the piroghi making this weekend! It was a blessed time and went smoothly. May God grant us all good health and wellness.

Our bible Study group on the Epistles of St. Paul will begin soon, likely this coming week via Zoom; Fr. John will email updates about that.

SERVICES AND EVENTS THIS WEEK

Wed. Aug. 5th 6:00pm—Great Vespers for the **Feast of the Transfiguration**

Thurs. Aug 6th –TBD???

Fri. Aug 7th 6:00 PM Akathist to the Mother of God

Saturday, Aug. 8th

10:00 AM—Panikhida Prayers for the departed

6:00pm—Great Vespers

Sunday, Aug. 9th 9:30 A.M.; Divine Liturgy, hours @ 9:10

Prayer List July 26th

Mary Behanna—in memory of parents Andy & Petrina Gernat

Sandra Klizas—in memory of Stephen & Helen Drake / in memory of Frank and June Drake / birthday remembrance of Ron Onufer / special intentions

Dimitri & Pauline Petro—God's blessings upon Jim and vera Hays on their anniversary / for birthday of Olga Bogan / for health of Philip Soroka / for health of Fr. Igor / for health Mat. Nadia / for health of Kyra, Luke, and Noah / for health of Christine, Alexandra, and Nicholas / for health of cousin Barbara

Michael Horan—memory eternal to my beloved wife, Rebecca / special intentions

Vlad Kash—memory of newly departed Cathern Jean Pomponia

Nick & Christine Milchovich—for health of Fr. Igor / for health of daughter, Alexandra / for health of Mat. Nadia

The Role of the Body in Prayer

When we pray, we must pray with our whole person. Human beings are "composite"; we are corporeal, like the animals, because we have a

physical body and physical senses. Yet we are also incorporeal, like the angelic powers, since we have a spirit made in the image of God, a "living soul." For prayer to be truly effective, we need to struggle to bring our whole person – mind, body, and spirit – into prayer.

This is why we keep fasts; fasting is a physical way to match our spiritual struggle for holiness, abstinence from evil, and closeness to God. Fasting according to the rule of the Church is the simplest way to say "Not my own will, but Thine, Lord," and can help heal the sins of gluttony and drunkenness, idleness and listlessness, and even anger. By voluntarily "weakening" our flesh through a little fasting, we strengthen our spirit. Fasting from food is the body's participation in our spiritual fasting from sin, idleness, etc.

We also involve the body in prayer in corporate worship. In Church, we stand, vigilantly. This is why the evening prayer service prior to liturgy is called "Vigil" (though we usually do the shorter vespers service); we stand, vigilantly, awaiting the coming of the day of Resurrection. Though long services tire us physically, they strengthen our spirit, preparing us to receive more a more of the Life of God. Thus Services like Vespers are good to attend (and actually used to be required for anyone who wished to commune at the following Liturgy), as a way to teach vigilance in prayer and receive greater grace from the divine Services. St. Sophrony of Essex tells us that there is great spiritual benefit when we tire our body through standing in prolonged prayer.

Historically, Churches did not have pews (and many today still practice this). And traditionally, we stand for the entire service, except during the sermon (Kneeling and prostrations are normal for a weekday liturgy, but strictly speaking, we really shouldn't kneel or bow on Sundays since it is the day of Resurrection. Exceptions include the Sunday of the Cross and Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost). And so we see that prayer is not meant to be physically passive, but the body is to be engaged in prayer. In the same way we pay attention and patiently focus our mind and our heart onto the words of prayer and our love for

God, so we also stand attentively, ready to receive the word of God, to receive the instruction of the scriptures, and to receive the very body and blood of our Lord. Every time we hear the deacon or priest say "Let us attend!" or "Stand aright!" Or "Let us stand aright, let us stand with fear, let us attend", it is a reminder to us to attend (literally "wait on") the word of the Lord- with focused thoughts, a peaceful heart, and a still body.

Finally, it's also important to involve the body in prayer at home. We should to our best to do a prayer rule standing in prayer rather than praying while sitting or lying down or driving, if possible (not that you can't pray during those times in addition). As our age and health allows, making the sign of the cross followed by prostrations or bows is a good habit to make in prayer; as we are lowering and humbling our hearts, we also literally lower our hearts by bowing. If health restricts you, then do your best to stand or sit in stillness, reverently aware of being in the presence of the God of all, who loves you more than you love yourself, and to whom you will give an account of your life.

Forced prayer is higher than prayer that is easy...

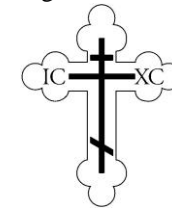
"If you do not feel like praying, you have to force yourself. The Holy Fathers say that prayer with force is higher than prayer unforced. You do not want to, but force yourself. The kingdom of heaven is taken by force (cf. Matt. 11:12)" St. Ambrose of Optina



***"The fruits of the earth are not brought to perfection immediately, but by time, rain, and care. In a similar manner, the fruits of the Christian life ripen through practice, time, perseverance, self-control and patience."
(St. Anthony the Great)***

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