

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
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OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Reader Hours: Kaitlyn Dymtrow

Sunday, January 14, 2024
Choir Director: Wash King
Reader Epistle: Edward Pierson

32nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Tone 7. Leavetaking of the Theophany.

St. Savva I, first Archbishop of Serbia. The Holy Fathers slain at Sinai and Raithu: Isaiah, Savva, Moses and his disciple Moses, Jeremiah, Paul, Adam, Sergius, Domnus, Proclus, Hypatius, Isaac, Macarius, Mark, Benjamin, Eusebius, Elias, and others. St. Nina (Nino), Equal-to-the-Apostles, Enlightener of the Georgians. St. Joseph Analytinus of Raithu. Ven. Theodulus, son of Ven. Nilus of Sinai. Ven. Stephen, Abbot of Khenolakkos Monastery near Chalcedon. Saint Meletios, Bishop of Ryazan. Hieromartyr Platon, the first Bishop of Estonia, and all the New Martyrs of Estonia.

We welcome all our visitors today! We want to let you know that we are so glad you came to pray with us. Please come again; join us after the Divine Liturgy in the parish hall for fellowship. If you do not have a home church, we invite you to become a part of our parish family. Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.

SERVICES:

Sunday, Jan. 14	8:00 AM – Matins
Sunday, Jan. 14	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour
Saturday, Jan. 20	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Jan. 21	8:00 AM – Matins
Sunday, Jan. 21	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Archbishop MARK celebrating, we will have a greet and meet time with our Archbishop at the Fellowship Meal
Saturday, Jan. 27	4:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions
Sunday, Jan. 28	8:00 AM – Matins
Sunday, Jan. 28	9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Fellowship Hour

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772. Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory. Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency.

Prayer List*:

Fr. Michael Evans, Fr. James Weremedic, Sbdn. James Weremedic

Jeanie Cannon, Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins, Nancy King, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mantey, Dorothy & Joseph Macenka, Anna Pierson, Melissa Schmitt, Helen Sheers, Olga Sidoriak, Martha Stafiniak, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Marie Yurchak

* Names will cycle off approximately every 30 days. You may request to have your name or the name of a loved one placed back on the list at any time by contacting Fr. James directly.

Candles (January 14)

7-day Vigils-Altar... In memory of **Michael & Helen Bogosh** offered by Terri & David Bogosh

Altar Candles... In memory of **Mary & Andrew Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Kay & Paul Maliniak** offered by William Yelsh

7-day Vigils-Tetrapod... In memory of **Helen Butts** offered by Raymond & MaryJo Danchak

Decorated Candles... In health of **Millie O'Shura** offered by Gloria Bench

Vigil Crosses... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel** offered by family members

January Birthdays: 2- Tommy Shanosky, 7-Jhanyiah Bracero, 13- Dr. Ronald Berezniak,
21- Helen Sheers, 28- Edward Pierson, 31- Michael Birocik

January Anniversaries: 1- Edward & Anna Pierson, 9- Wash & Helen King, 23- Russell & Geri King

Financials 1/7/2024: Operating Acct: Envelopes \$175, Donations \$480, Holy Day \$335, Altar Candles \$30, Candles \$46

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

January 14 Helen King **January 21** Greet & Meet with Archbishop MARK Meal (Everyone Welcome)

January 28 Michael Tatusko

February 4 Valentine's Day Turkey Dinner

We are hosting a Valentine's Day dinner on February 4th. The dinner will include an open face turkey sandwich, stuffing, vegetable and dessert.

Donation of \$12 per person. ADVANCE TICKETS ONLY.

See Mat. Lisa or Claire Remington for tickets.

If you have any Redner receipts, please call or get them to Helen King.

Please use your Boyer's card when shopping at Boyers; if you need one call Helen King.



Home Blessing: Please use the 2024 Home Blessing Sign-up Sheet in the vestibule for those who want their homes blessed. Fr. James will call to set a day and time.

**January 14, 2024 32nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST Tone 7. Leavetaking of the Theophany.
Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)**

By Your Cross You destroyed death. To the thief You opened Paradise. For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy. And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that You are risen, // granting the world great mercy.

Tone 1 Troparion (Feast)

When You, O Lord, were baptized in the Jordan, the worship of the Trinity was made manifest. For the voice of the Father bore witness to You, and called You His beloved Son; and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truthfulness of His word. O Christ our God, You have revealed Yourself // and have enlightened the world, glory to You.

Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive, for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers. Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry: "The Savior has come to those in faith; // enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!"

Tone 4 Kontakion (Feast)

Today You have shone forth to the world, O Lord, and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us. Knowing You, we sing Your praises: "You have come and revealed Yourself, // O unapproachable Light."

John 21:1-14 (10th Matins Gospel)

After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself: Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing. But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No." And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea. But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.

Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught." Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken. Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?" – knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish. This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Ephesians 6:10-17 (Epistle)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;

Silent Prayer before the Gospel:

Illumine our hearts, O Master Who lovest mankind, with the pure light of Thy divine knowledge. Open the eyes of our mind to the understanding of Thy gospel teachings. Implant also in us the fear of Thy blessed commandments, that trampling down all carnal desires, we may enter upon a spiritual manner of living, both thinking and doing such things as are well-pleasing unto Thee. For Thou art the illumination of our souls and bodies, O Christ our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Luke 18:35-43 (Gospel)

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

Ministry of Laity in Daily Life, By Jean M. Haldane (1989)

Parish Ministry Resources- Ministry of Laity in Daily Life- Orthodox Church in America (oca.org)

The hidden ministry of the people needs to be brought into the light.

In practice, the church rewards institutional activities and gives little attention to men's and women's daily ministry in their workplaces, in their homes and during times of recreation. Church-related ministries are known, recognized, supported, encouraged. Yet there are many works of ministry in the world that, if known, would spark many more. Already the laity serve in a world of power, but if what they are doing is unknown or assumed or not given attention, how can laity be aware that the church values the servanthood?

Many laity have a deep sense of service, of being servant. One good reason stems from their devotional lives centered in the corporate worship of the church. That ritual of giving and receiving is at the heart of the Eucharist. A second good reason has to do with people's perception about the life of Jesus. Many understand Jesus as servant. And they have appropriated this image for their own lives. When laity are asked to describe experiences of giving service, they can do so, usually with humility and modesty. But their sense of "real" ministry continues to be *for in and for the church*.

Yet laity have great opportunity to carry out their Christian commitment "in the world"—for that is where they spend most of their time. Monday to Friday, weekends, too, for many, men and women are working in the fields of industry, agriculture, education, politics, retailing, "helping" professions, etc. at all levels of responsibility. These men and women are also maintaining relationships, responsibility to spouses, parents, children, friends, and many groups in the community and society as a whole. They are members of numerous organizations, social service groups, environmental groups, political associations, peace efforts, associations and task forces of all kinds, as well as sports and health clubs Are they ministering "in the world?"

Sadly, the greater scope and appreciation of laity's in-church ministries (pastoral, Eucharistic and others), has not furthered greater recognition and support of laity's ministry beyond the walls of the church. Laity themselves seem blind to their daily ministries.

Nevertheless, my research reveals that privately and quietly, generally unknown to the church, laity in their daily lives demonstrate servant ministry as followers of Christ. This is distinct from what they do in church and outreach activities.

RECOGNIZING MINISTRIES

If Christ's ministry of compassion and healing in the world is to be lived out more consistently and effectively, laity need more education to help them perceive, accept and act upon the ministries for which they have been gifted. And both clergy and laity need to find ways to recognize, support and encourage the worldly ministry of laity.

I have many times facilitated this ministry awareness exercise: I ask laity to share two personal experiences when "you feel you were ministered to," and "when you feel you ministered to someone else." As they talk it becomes obvious that each has understanding of and experience with "ministry." When asked what they were doing as they ministered they said things like "I cared," "I listened," "I was there," "I showed some alternatives." When I asked, "Where did these ministries take place?" the answers revealed they happened with friends, family and strangers, in supermarkets and hospitals, at work and the tennis club, and, of course, at church.

As people share they begin to see themselves and others differently. And they see that ministry *happens in all of life*.

A layman in San Francisco, a bus driver, calls out clearly the names of the stops, "so people don't get lost." Is he ministering? He now believes so. But are these experiences seen as ministry by the church? We may say, "Yes, of course," but are their ministries commended as *outreach* along with the Hunger Program? Probably not, for we do not see the laity acting in society; their experience is not part of the input that the church shares. We do not act as though they are our greatest outreach on a daily basis.

Who authenticates a woman's ministry of caring for an invalid mother over twenty years if she is unaware that such caring is ministry and feels the time given prevents her from doing "real ministry" through the altar society and outreach work? What support can the church give to the executive who is silent about saving 250 jobs for people who otherwise would be unemployed? Is his job-saving action seen as ministry? He has begun to think so. What is it in church norms that prevents the "whistleblower" from talking about risking his job in order to stop the shipment of faulty materials that could cause lives to be lost? Is this not ministry?

In conference settings, when laity are led to share these experiences, they suddenly see one another living their lives by faith, ministering in the community, addressing issues of justice and human need. Then they speak of "renewed hope," being "encouraged for my work," discovering "a vision of our ministry." Why is this not already plain to people in the church? Because this ministry is carried out where other church people do not see it. It is the hidden ministry of the church. There is no planned way for laity to talk to each other about their service in the world. The hidden ministry of the church would be brought out into the light. What stands in the way of this being a central activity? *Significant* ministry is seen by the church as solely taking place within and under the auspices of the church community.

RIDICULOUS?

A woman spoke to me quietly after the Eucharist. "I have spent years work in the church in all kinds of areas. Right now I am sensing different spiritual needs, wondering what's next in ministry for me. But as soon as you drop out of working full-time for the church, you are ignored. It's lonely." The only way, it seems, for laity to relate to each other is through working together in the church. They are still seen more as helping hands for the church, rather than those to be nurtured and strengthened as the church in the world. In some of the most caring congregations, the normative way of belonging is to be involved, support the church, volunteer for more and more. Burnout is not just the clergy's problem. When laity drop back a little, their names no longer appear in the church bulletin. They feel discarded. Many endure, some leave. (And when I interview people who've left, this seemed the pattern: burn-out, dropping out and no one seemed to notice.) If ministry is interpreted as more and more work *in* the church, *for* the church, we shall not sustain the true servant ministry in the world.

Clearly there is need for a different approach to "adult education" and "training" for ministry and mission. On almost no church agenda is there a place for reports from the field! Because of this the laity count as trivial their efforts to carry out their Christian commitment in daily life, and the church as a whole misses its opportunity to shape church programs for empowerment of the people.

THERE IS A DAILINESS TO MINISTRY

There is a necessary, dynamic tension between the church's risky sense of mission and its conserving sense of tradition. For the laity, the tension could be described this way: "How do I belong to a caring faith community and at the same time respond to my calling to minister to the world?" In this highly individualistic society people yearn for community, so it's tempting for lay people to stay in the faith community, especially when the church norm strongly affirms in-church acts of service and leadership. Most laity have "merged" tradition and mission under one roof, the institutional church; relatively few live creatively with the tension.

Clergy exacerbate this problematic norm by *leading* laity into mission instead of sending them. Clergy usually initiate programs of outreach that are good in themselves; but these lull laity into believing these programs comprise ministry in society and world. Both clergy and laity collude around two things: keeping laity in the church, and continuing to hold clergy primarily responsible for mission.

The church offers warm relationships and common purpose, a "community of memory" that gives us a past, meaning and values, and a chance to care for one another in ways we find difficult in society. In contrast, laity's ministry in the world is complex, often difficult and unclear. Many experience struggles of conscience, tensions and worry in their work, loneliness in the gray areas of public conduct and practice. So they collude with the clergy to keep themselves focused within church programs. Clergy, for their part, though they may intend to support laity's ministry in society, are caught with the need for many "hands" if worship, education, and outreach are to be worthy of the name. And "anyway, our Prison Ministry is surely ministry in the world!" So clergy and laity collude around keeping the laity in church.

TURNING POINTS

There is a crucial moment in lay people's lives - a moment when a good many ideas and values about their identity and vocation get formed. It is that time when they become aware - sometimes for the first time - that they **ARE** the church. Many have a profound experience - perhaps of conversion or awakening to their call. It is then that they are in a state of readiness for careful nurture, support and education. The Church Gathered needs to be a lifelong catechumenate, providing training for the Christian life so that new and not-so-new- members may become mature - spiritually and in ministry.

MORE THAN RECRUITS

Let us see the laity as people who must be nurtured for ministry in society rather than as recruits for tasks in and for the church. In that regard people's daily work and associations are of particular importance. On the whole the church does not take much account of laity's work. In one congregation, the visiting preacher's sermon was on "ministry of the laity being primarily in the world work, jobs, community, family, as well as the church." A layman, Mike, commented afterwards, "That doesn't go for my work. I rent houses, and I guess that's one job everyone labels 'bad guys'. Seems like I spend my time fighting with tenants. So I was never able to take much church with me on the job." Parishioners around the table looked at each other knowingly; there were some wry smiles. Then, laughing a little, Mike said, "Anyway, it's too late now. I've just retired." There was some quiet laughter.

This story was told to two groups. Those at the clergy conference were filled with compassion for Mike. They considered it tragic that this man spent his life at work he felt meant nothing, and that it never had been significant to anyone, let alone the church. The other group was mostly laity. They regarded the situation as nothing unusual. They felt

rather critical of Mike, "He should have done something about it!" *Their* work, for the most part, had never been counted as significant by the church.

In the congregations of one church jurisdiction, there was a strange silence about unemployment. More than one pastor was heard to say, "I haven't heard anything; I don't think we have a problem here." Then, at a symposium on employment another said, "One of my leading laymen has lost his job and they're selling their house - and he can't tell me." The 200 laity gathered there had seemed to feel their employment or unemployment was a private matter, not of much concern to the church.

GIFTS FOR MINISTRY

A central process for the empowerment of the laity has been Identification of Gifts. There are two basic approaches. The first leads to discernment of one or more New Testament gifts of the Spirit, the second to discernment of lifelong gifts and talents, all God-given. The first approach leads more logically to ministry within and to the church. The second is more directly related to ministry in all of life.

Both processes have been life-changing for thousands of lay people. But among the leadership (clergy and lay) there is a lack of awareness about the significance of the two outcomes, and even a tendency for some to speak of "spiritual" gifts as being higher than "market-place talents," making the use of gifts in worldly ministries of lesser value.

SUPPORT

A great deal of support needs to be given to laity if they are to have the courage to sally forth day after day to try to do what is right. And they need a group in which to think aloud about the strategies and the consequences for actions they may or may not take, and should or should not take.

When you ask lay people to think of an experience beyond the walls of the church, in which they felt called upon to act, to do or say something that seemed within themselves to be "right," you find that people are trying to "stand" in difficult situations, to speak up for what is right, to refuse to go along with the majority . . . but this is not easy. Jobs can be lost, people can be ostracized, there's a great cost to pay for whistle-blowing and advocacy. Someone has said, "When I feed the hungry, I am called a saint; when I ask why they are hungry, I am called a communist."

The larger society is the place where people of integrity, honesty, and courage are needed if we are to help build a world. The whole of life is the place for servant ministry. The institutions and structures of society constitute a world of power. Laity's ministry here must be prophetic as well as pastoral. The church must encourage them to be ministers for the common good in their daily lives.

Questions for Discussion:

1. Applying Jean Haldane's experience on recognizing ministry: *Can you think of a personal experience when you feel you were ministered to? Can you think of a personal experience when you ministered to someone else?*
2. What do you consider to be your ministries "in the world?"
3. Do you wish there were a time at the church when you could talk with others about some of the situations you encounter "in the world?" *Are there any natural times in the parish schedule or in a parish group that this could occur?*
4. Does it help you to think of your work "in the world" as a potential Christian ministry?

Jean Haldane is a consultant on Laity and Ministry Development for the Episcopal Church and other denominations. (Reprinted by permission from ACTION INFORMATION, published by The Alban Institute, Inc., 4125 Nebraska Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20016. Copyright 1989. All rights reserved.)