

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic

Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky

Reader Hours: Gloria Bench

Sunday, May 7, 2023

Choir Director: Wash King

Reader Epistle: Edward Pierson

4th SUNDAY OF PASCHA – SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

Christ is Risen! Indeed, He is Risen!

Christos Voskrese! Voistinu Voskrese!

Christos Anesti Alithos Anesti

El Messieh Kahm! Hakken Kahm!

Cristos a Inviat! Adevarat a Inviat!

Services:

- | | |
|------------------|--|
| Sunday, May 7 | 8:45 AM – Church School |
| Sunday, May 7 | 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship (Sunday of the Paralytic) |
| | Adult Class: "Living with Grief as Orthodox Christians," pages 121-127 |
| Saturday, May 13 | 5:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions |
| Sunday, May 14 | 8:45 AM – Church School |
| Sunday, May 14 | 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy & Fellowship (The Samaritan Woman) |
| | Parish Council Meeting |
| Saturday, May 20 | 5:00 PM – Great Vespers & Confessions |
| Sunday, May 21 | 8:45 AM – Church School |
| Sunday, May 21 | 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy, Parastas, Auction |

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. James Weremedic, Matushka Lisa Weremedic

Andrew Balliet, Michael Birosik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Danielle Bogosh, Elizabeth Brennan, Stephanie Chmel, Ilene Devine, Kimberly Evetushick, Nadine Fegley, Julia Forte, Michael & Julia Harahus, Karen & Rose Harkins, Nancy King, Michael Kulick, Olga Kushnir, Anna Marie Mantey, Dorothy & Joseph Macenka, Mildred O'Shura, Anna Pierson, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Helen Sheers, Olga Sidoriak, Mary Simone, Jolie Skelton, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, George Yurchak, & Marie Yurchak.

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 Church Hall for Coffee Hour. If you do not have a home church, we invite you to become a part of our Church Family. Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.

Candles (May 7)

7-day Vigils-Altar...In memory of **Michael Harb** offered by Jeanne & John Cannon
Altar Candles... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members
Vigil Crosses...For the Health of **Jolie Skelton** offered by Terri Bogosh
7-day Vigils-Tetrapod...For the Health of **Sal Herbert** offered by Millie O'Shura
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Justin King** offered by David & Chris King

May Birthdays: 2- Lynn Sharpe, 5- Sal Herbert, 17- Russell King, 17- Julia Forte
21- Lindsey Ruch, 31- Marie Skripnek

May Anniversary: May 9- Richard & Julie McHugh

Financials 4/30/23: *Operating Acct:* Weekly Envelopes \$1,008, Holy Days \$300
Altar Candles \$10, Candles \$69, Donations \$ 1,100

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

May 7	John Evetushick	May 14	Marie Berezniak
May 21	AUCTION	May 28	OPEN

Coming Events:

Chinese (Silent) Auction – May 21: Donations and monetary gifts would be greatly appreciated. See Helen King, Marie Skripnek, or Gloria Bench

Yard Sale – June 10:

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.

“IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO ME & DRINK”

The Wednesday following the “Sunday of the Paralytic” is the exact midpoint between the celebration of Pascha and the Feast of the Descent of the Holy Spirit. For centuries, our Holy Orthodox Church has emphasized the significance of this day, referring to it as MID-PENTECOST. The Feast of Mid-Pentecost is viewed as a “link” between these great holy days of the Church, and is based upon the following words of St. John’s Gospel: “NOW ABOUT THE MIDDLE OF THE FEAST, JESUS WENT UP INTO THE TEMPLE AND TAUGHT.” (John 7:14)

What was it that Christ taught while in Jerusalem for the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles? He spoke of the “higher authority” that His words represented: “MY DOCTRINE IS NOT MINE, BUT HIS WHO SENT ME.” (John 7:16) During the festivities of this important Jewish celebration, which commemorated the water flowing from the rock which Moses struck in the wilderness, Jesus boldly proclaimed: “IF ANYONE THIRSTS, LET HIM COME TO ME AND DRINK. HE WHO BELIEVES IN ME, AS THE SCRIPTURE HAS SAID, OUT OF HIS HEART WILL FLOW RIVERS OF LIVING WATERS.” (John 7:37-38)

The Feast of Mid-Pentecost is designed to strengthen our faith in the Risen Lord. It reminds us to focus on the coming of the Holy Spirit, which we will commemorate 50 days after our Savior’s glorious Resurrection.

The Orthodox Weekly Bulletin Vestal, Cliffwood, New Jersey Litho in U.S.A.

CHRIST TEACHING IN THE TEMPLE

**4th SUNDAY OF PASCHA — Tone 3 – Sunday of the Paralytic
Repose of St. Alexis Toth, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America (1909).**

Acts 9:32-42 (Epistle)

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.

There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed.

And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately.

So, all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room.

And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up.

Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

John 5:1-15 (Gospel)

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, "Do you want to be made well?"

The sick man answered Him, "Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another, steps down before me."

Jesus said to him, "Rise, take up your bed and walk."

And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed."

He answered them, "He who made me well said to me, 'Take up your bed and walk.'"

Then they asked him, "Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?"

But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place.

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you."

The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Sunday of the Paralytic

Kontakion — Tone 3 - By Your divine intercession, O Lord, / as You raised up the paralytic of old, / so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts; / so that being saved I may sing to You: / "Glory to Your power, O compassionate Christ!"

Many miracles in the Old Testament involve water. To name but a few, the water of the Nile turned to blood after Moses lifted his rod and struck the water before Pharaoh and His servants (Exodus 7:20). Not only was the Nile turned to blood, but also "their rivers, their canals, their ponds, and all their pools of water, that they may become blood; and there shall be blood throughout the land of Egypt, both in vessels of wood and in vessels of stone" (Exodus 7:19).

In chapter 14 of Exodus, Moses divided the waters of the Red Sea, and the Hebrews passed over as if on dry land. When they were safely across, the waters came together, and their Egyptian pursuers were drowned.

On their forty-year journey to the Promised Land, the Hebrews camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for them to drink. The people murmured against Moses, asking him why he had led them out of Egypt. God told Moses to strike the rock at Horeb. Then water came out of it so that everyone could drink (Exodus 17:6).

In Judges 6:36-40 we read about Gideon and the dew on the fleece. When Gideon squeezed the fleece, there was enough to fill a bowl with water.

On the Fourth Sunday of Pascha, the Church remembers the man who lay paralyzed at the Sheep Pool in Jerusalem for thirty-eight years, waiting for someone to put him into the pool. The first person to enter the pool after an Angel troubled the water would be healed of his infirmities, but someone always entered the pool before him. Seeing the man, the Lord felt compassion for him and healed him.

The Lord healed the paralytic during the days of the Passover, when He had gone to Jerusalem for the Feast, and He remained there teaching and working miracles. According to Saint John the Theologian, this miracle took place on the Sabbath.

Like some Old Testament miracles, many of Christ's miracles also involved water, and they prefigure the Church's Baptism, which cleanses us of every sin. In the Sheep Pool, once a year, only one person was healed, but Christ saves endless multitudes by divine Baptism. Sometimes, as in the case of Saint Vladimir (July 15), Baptism can also heal our bodily infirmities.

In the Canon for the Paralytic, the Angel who stirred the water in the Sheep Pool is identified as the Archangel Michael. Some of the Troparia call him "Leader of the Angels," and "Supreme Commander" (Ode 1). In Ode 3 we ask him to "protect us from falling into the passions of life." In Ode 6, we ask Saint Michael to guide us on the paths of life." In Ode 8, we ask him to pray with all the Bodiless Hosts, that we may be granted deliverance from our offenses, correction of our life, and the enjoyment of eternal blessings.

As we remember the paralytic, let us ask Christ to "raise up our souls, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts" (Kontakion of the paralytic).

Rest of Saint Alexis Toth, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America

Troparion — Tone 4 - O righteous Father Alexis, / our heavenly intercessor and teacher, / divine adornment of the Church of Christ! / Entreat the Master of All / to strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America, / to grant peace to the world / and to our souls, great mercy!

Kontakion — Tone 5 - Let us, the faithful, praise the Priest Alexis, / a bright beacon of Orthodoxy in America, / a model of patience and humility, / a worthy shepherd of the Flock of Christ. / He called back the sheep who had been led astray / and brought them by his preaching / to the Heavenly Kingdom!

Our holy Father Alexis, the defender of the Orthodox Faith and zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard, was born in Austro-Hungary on March 18, 1854 into a poor Carpatho-Russian family. Like many others in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Toths were Eastern Rite Catholics. Alexis' father and brother were priests and his uncle was a bishop in the Uniate church. He received an excellent education and knew several languages (Carpatho-Russian, Hungarian, Russian, German, Latin, and a reading knowledge of Greek). He married Rosalie Mihalich, a priest's daughter, and was ordained on April 18, 1878 to serve as second priest in a Uniate parish. His wife died soon afterwards, followed by their only child—losses which the saint endured with the patience of Job.

In May, 1879, Father Alexis was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Presov and also Administrator of the Diocesan Administration. He was also entrusted with the directorship of an orphanage. At Presov Seminary, Father Toth taught Church History and Canon Law, which served him well in his later life in America. Saint Alexis did not serve long as a professor or an administrator, for the Lord had a different future planned for him. In October, 1889 he was appointed to serve as pastor of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Like another Abraham, he left his country and his relatives to fulfill the will of God (Gen 12:1).

Upon his arrival in America, Father Alexis presented himself to the local Roman Catholic diocesan authority, Archbishop Ireland, since there was no Uniate bishop in America at that time. Archbishop Ireland belonged to the party of American Catholics who favored the "Americanization" of all Roman Catholics. His vision for the future was founded on a common faith, customs, and the use of the English language for everything except liturgical celebrations. Naturally, ethnic parishes and non-Latin rite clergy did not fit into this vision. Thus, when Father Toth came to present his credentials, Archbishop Ireland greeted him with open hostility. He refused to recognize him as a legitimate Catholic priest or to grant permission for him to serve in his diocese.

As a historian and professor of Canon Law, Father Toth knew his rights under the terms of the Unia and would not accept Archbishop Ireland's unjust decisions. In October of 1890, there was a meeting of eight of the ten Uniate priests in America at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania under the chairmanship of Father Toth. By this time the American bishops had written to Rome demanding the recall to Europe of all Uniate priests in America, fearing that Uniate priests and parishes would hinder the assimilation of immigrants into American culture. Uniate bishops in Europe refused to listen to the priests' pleas for help.

Archbishop Ireland sent a letter to his parishes ordering their members not to attend Father Toth's parish nor to accept any priestly ministrations from him. Expecting imminent deportation, Father Toth explained the situation to his parishioners and suggested it might be best for him to leave and return to Europe.

"No," they said. "Let's go to the Russian bishop. Why should we always submit ourselves to foreigners?" It was decided to write to the Russian consul in San Francisco in order to ask for the name and address of the Russian bishop. Ivan Mlinar went to San Francisco to make initial contact with Bishop Vladimir; then in February, 1891 Father Toth and his church warden, Paul Podany, also made the journey. Subsequently, Bishop Vladimir came to Minneapolis and on March 25, 1891 received Father Toth and 361 parishioners into the Orthodox Church of their ancestors. The parishioners regarded this event as a new Triumph of Orthodoxy, crying out with joy: "Glory to God for His great mercy!"

This initiative came from the people themselves, and was not the result of any coercion from outsiders. The Russian Orthodox Church was unaware of the existence of these Slavic Uniate immigrants to America, but responded positively to their petition to be reunited to the Orthodox Church.

The example of Saint Alexis and his parish in returning to Orthodoxy was an encouragement to hundreds of other Uniates. The ever-memorable one was like a candle upon a candlestick giving light to others (Mt.5:15), and his flock may be likened to the leaven mixed with meal which leavened the whole (Mt.13:33). Through his fearless preaching he uprooted the tares which had sprung up in the wheat of true doctrine, and exposed the false teachings which had led his people astray. Although he did not hesitate to point out errors in the doctrines of other denominations, he was careful to warn his flock against intolerance. His writings and sermons are filled with admonitions to respect other people and to refrain from attacking their faith.

While it is true that he made some strong comments, especially in his private correspondence with the church administration, it must be remembered that this was done while defending the Orthodox Church and the American Mission from unfounded accusations by people who used much harsher language than Father Toth. His opponents may be characterized by intolerance, rude behaviour, unethical methods and threats against him and his parishioners. Yet, when Father Alexis was offended or deceived by other people he forgave them, and he would often ask his bishop to forgive his omissions and mistakes.

In the midst of great hardships, this herald of godly theology and sound doctrine poured forth an inexhaustible stream of Orthodox writings for new converts, and gave practical advice on how to live in an Orthodox manner.

For example, his article "How We should Live in America" stresses the importance of education, cleanliness, sobriety, and the presence of children in church on Sundays and Holy Days.

Although the Minneapolis parish was received into the Orthodox Church in March, 1891, it was not until July, 1892 that the Holy Synod of Russia recognized and accepted the parish into the Diocese of Alaska and the Aleutians. This resolution reached America only in October, 1892. During that time there was a climate of religious and ethnic hostility against the new converts. Father Alexis was accused of selling out his own Carpatho-Russian people and his religion to the "Muscovites" for financial gain.

In reality he did not receive any financial support for a long time, for his parish was very poor. Until his priestly salary began to arrive from Russia, the righteous one was obliged to work in a bakery in order to support himself. Even though his funds were meager, he did not neglect to give alms to the poor and needy. He shared his money with other clergy worse off than himself, and contributed to the building of churches and to the education of seminarians in Minneapolis. He was not anxious about his life (Mt.6:25), what he would eat or drink or wear. Trusting in God to take care of him, Saint Alexis followed the admonition of Our Savior to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt.6:33). So, he bore the tribulation, slander, and physical attacks with patience and spiritual joy, reminding us that "godliness is stronger than all" (Wisdom of Solomon 10:12).

Bishops Vladimir, Nicholas, Saint Tikhon, and Platon recognized the special gifts of Father Toth, so they often sent him forth to preach and teach wherever there were people of Slavic background. Even though he was aware of his shortcomings and inadequacies, yet he was obedient to the instructions of the bishops. He did not hesitate or make excuses, but went immediately to fulfill his mission. Saint Alexis visited many Uniate parishes, explaining the differences between Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Uniatism, stressing that the true way to salvation is in Orthodoxy.

Like Josiah, "he behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of his people" (Sir 49:2). He was instrumental in the formation or return of seventeen parishes, planting a vineyard of Christ in America, and increasing its fruitful yield many times over. By 1909, the time of his blessed repose, many thousands of Carpatho-Russian and Galician Uniates had returned to Orthodoxy. This was a major event in the history of the North American Mission, which would continue to shape the future of Orthodoxy in this country for many generations to come. Any future growth or success may truly be regarded as the result of Father Toth's apostolic labors.

Who can tell of the saint's spiritual struggles? Who can speak of the prayers which his pious soul poured forth unto God? He did not make a public display of his piety, but prayed to God in secret with all modesty, with contrition and inward tears. God, Who, sees everything done in secret, openly rewarded the saint (Mt.6:6). It is inconceivable that Saint Alexis could have accomplished his apostolic labors unless God had blessed and strengthened him for such work. Today the Church continues to reap the fruits of his teaching and preaching. Father Toth's efforts did not go unrecognized in his own lifetime. He received a jeweled miter from the Holy Synod, as well as the Order of Saint Vladimir and the Order of Saint Anna from Czar Nicholas II for distinguished service and devotion to God and country. In 1907, he was considered as a candidate for the episcopal office. He declined this honor, however, humbly pointing out that this responsibility should be given to a younger, healthier man.

At the end of 1908, Saint Alexis' health began to decline due to a complication of illnesses. He went to the seashore in southern New Jersey in an attempt to regain his health, but soon returned to Wilkes-Barre, where he was confined to bed for two months. The righteous one reposed on Friday, May 7, 1909.

In January, 1993 a certain man prayed to Saint Alexis to help him obtain information about his son from whom he had been separated for twenty-eight years. Placing his confidence in the saint's boldness before God, he awaited an answer to his prayer. The very next day the man's son telephoned him. It seems the young man was in church when he was suddenly filled with an overwhelming desire to contact his father. He had been taken to another state by his mother, and she changed his name when he was a child. This is why his father was unable to locate him. Having learned from his mother that his father was an Orthodox Christian, he was able with the help of an Orthodox priest to obtain his father's phone number in a distant city. As a result of that telephone call, the young man later visited his father, who rejoiced to see what sort of man his son had become. The father gave thanks to God and to Saint Alexis for reuniting him with his son.

Saint Alexis was a true man of God who guided many Carpatho-Russian and Galician immigrants through the dark confusion of religious challenges in the New World and back to the unity of the Orthodox Church through his grace-filled words and by his holy example. In his last will and testament Saint Alexis commended his soul to God's mercy, asking forgiveness from everyone and forgiving everybody. His holy relics now rest at Saint Tikhon Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania where the faithful may come to venerate them and to entreat Saint Alexis' intercessions on their behalf.

**COMMEMORATION OF DEPARTED SOULS
PENTECOST SUNDAY - JUNE 2023**

Dear Father,
Kindly include the following names of the beloved souls
to be remembered in the Pentecost Memorial Services

Family Name: _____

Parish Cemetery-Summit Hill

Sunday, June 4 at 1:00 PM
Rain Date, Sunday, June 11 at 1:00 PM

First Names:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Submitted by _____

Offering _____

Please send your list and offering made payable to:

V. Rev. James Weremedic
c/o St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street, Coaldale, PA 18218

**COMMEMORATION OF DEPARTED SOULS
PENTECOST SUNDAY - JUNE 2023**

Dear Father,
Kindly include the following names of the beloved souls
to be remembered in the Pentecost Memorial Services

Family Name: _____

Sky View Mausoleum-Hometown

Saturday, June 3 at 2:00 PM
Rain Date, Saturday, June 10 at 2:00 PM

First Names:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Submitted by _____

Offering _____

Please send your list and offering made payable to:

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