

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

Sunday, September 25, 2022

Choir Director: Wash King

15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (1st of Luke)

Glory Be to Jesus Christ!

Glory Be Forever!

Services:

Sunday, Sept. 25- 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by Fellowship Hour

Saturday, Oct. 1- 5:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, Oct. 2- 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by Fellowship Hour

Saturday, Oct. 8- 5:00 PM – Great Vespers and Confessions

Sunday, Oct. 9- 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy followed by Fellowship Hour

We WELCOME all our visitors today! *We want to let you know that 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. Please Note: Only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves may approach the Chalice and receive Holy Communion.*

Prayer List:

Fr. Andrew Diehl, Matushka Lisa Weremedic

Andrew Balliet, Michael Birocik, Clark Andrew Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Danielle Bogosh, Ashley Buchana, Clarrisa Buchana, Emaila Buchanan, Emmalyn Naomi Buchanan, Evanna Jane Buchanan, Rowan Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Irene Davis, Ilene Devine, Nadine Fegley, Julia Forte, Karen Harkins, Peter Holoziak, Nancy King, Russell King, Michael Kulick, John & Olga Kushnir, Mary Maholick, Anna Marie Mantey, Mildred O'Shura, Dale Renninger, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Olga Sidoriak, Mary Simone, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Michael Teno, Elizabeth Warcholak, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, George Yurchak, & Marie Yurchak.

If anyone is in need of a priest, please call Fr 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.

Candles (September 25)

7-Day Vigils/Altar... For the Good Health of **Bob & Marigrace Parfitt** offered by Russell & Geri King
Altar Candles... In memory of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak
Vigil Crosses... For the Good Health of **Karen Harkins & Family** offered by Russell & Geri King
7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... For the Good Health of **Eleanor Sidoriak** offered by Olga Sidoriak
Decorated Candles/Tetrapod- In memory of **Olga Scarloss** offered by Natalie & Michael Bolinski

September Birthdays:

14- Mat. Lisa Weremedic, 18- Adam Balliet, 20- Joseph Macenka (99), 30- Eleanor Sidoriak;

October Birthdays: 3- Fr. James Weremedic, 5- Barbara Teno, 7- Michael Harahus, 10- Andrew Balliet, 20- Martha Stafiniak, 26- Peggy Lampman, 27- Fr. Paul Ropitsky.

September Anniversaries:

1- John & Olga Kushnir, 17- John & Ann Yaroma, 20- Michael & Wendy Kulick

October Anniversaries: 1- Odess & Claire Remington, 3- John & Mary Evetushick

*We celebrate the Baptism of Clarissa Mae Buchanan and the
Illumination of Ashley Ann, Emmalyn Naomi, and Evanna Jane
Buchanan! May God Grant Ashley Ann, Emmalyn Naomi, Evanna
Buchanan and Samuel, Amelia and Rowan Buchanan and their
Sponsor Claire Remington Many Blessed Years!*

Financials 9/14-18/22: Operating Acct: Candles 116 - Altar Candles 10 - Offerings 530
Non-Envelope 190 - Holy Days 128 - Donations 100 = Total \$1,074.00. Cemetery Fund 20.

Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. Thank you!

Fellowship Hour Hosts:

September 25	Michael Tatusko	October 2	Lena Berezniak
October 9	John Evetushick	October 16	Russell King
October 23	Marie Skripnek		

There is a sign-up sheet for Fellowship Hour in the vestibule if you would like to host.

Upcoming Event – Yard Sale Saturday, October 8, 2022 – (9 AM to 2 PM)
Items can be dropped off Monday to Friday (1 PM to 4 PM) in the church basement
Or by calling Helen King at 570-645-9484

Please use Amazon Smile when ordering from Amazon.

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

Baptism: “When all is said and done....”

“The aim of the Christian life is to return to that perfect grace of the most holy and life-giving Spirit, which was originally conferred upon us through divine baptism”—Saint Ignatius Xanthopoulos and Saint Kallistos

Our recent celebration of the Great Feast of Theophany—the Baptism of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ—provides a fitting context in which to reflect upon the great Mystery of Holy Baptism. We can do this effectively by turning to some of the great saints and theologians of the Church, who consistently and brilliantly speak of the meaning of this Sacrament of Illumination. At times, what they have to say may seem to be “unrealistic”—as if their rhetorical skills in describing the effect of Baptism outstrip a realistic assessment of Baptism as experienced by the great majority of members of the Church. However, we should also keep in mind that the Fathers of the Church were “maximalists” when describing and delineating the full effect of the “life in Christ” as it presented itself before them as something to be lived and then shared with others through their example and their writing. The Fathers always presented us with the fullness of the Gospel so that we, in turn, would not be tempted to reduce that same Gospel to the level of an uninspiring moralism or conventional religious piety.

It is Saint Cyril of Alexandria (+444) who explains how the Lord’s Baptism establishes the “pattern” and sets an “example” for our own baptism. And Saint Cyril links together baptism and “never-ceasing prayer:” “It was necessary, therefore, that the Word of the Father, when He humbled Himself unto emptiness, and deigned to assume our likeness, should become for our sakes the pattern and way of every good work. For it follows, that He Who in everything is first, in this also set the example. In order, therefore, that we may learn both the power itself of holy baptism, and how much we gain by approaching so great a grace, he commences the work Himself; and having been baptized, prays that you, my beloved, may learn that never-ceasing prayer is a thing most fitting for those who have once been counted worthy of holy baptism.”

It is Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (4th c.) who explained the meaning of a Sacrament as a genuine participation in what we could call the reality of grace that lies hidden within—and is then conferred upon the participant—through the rite of the Sacrament. Through “imitation” of the death and resurrection of Christ through the rite of Baptism, we sacramentally die and rise with Christ “in truth:” “O what a strange and inconceivable thing it is! We did not really die, we were not really buried; we were not crucified and raised again; our imitation of Christ was but in figure, while our salvation is truth. Christ actually was crucified and buried, and truly rose again; and all these things have been transmitted to us, that we might by imitation participate in his suffering, and so gain salvation in truth.”

A true Baptism must include the invocation of the Holy Trinity, as Christ taught His disciples [Matthew 28:16-20]. Father George Florovsky makes this point clearly: “The Trinitarian invocation is required because outside the Trinitarian faith it is impossible to know Christ, to recognize in Jesus the Incarnate Lord, ‘One of the Holy Trinity.’” A fine explanation of the meaning of the Trinitarian invocation and its effect upon the person being so baptized is found in a passage from Saint Nicholas Cabasilas (+14th c.): “As the name of the Trinity is invoked, the candidate is

immersed three times in the water and then three times rises up from the water once more; and immediately he enters into possession of all that he seeks. He is born and created; he receives the good seal; he is granted all the happiness that he desires; darkness before, he now becomes light; non-existent before, he now receives existence. God claims him for His own and adopts him as a child. From prison and utter enslavement, he is led to a royal throne.”

The water of baptism destroys one life and reveals another; it drowns the old man and raises up the new. To be baptized is to be born according to Christ; it is to receive existence, to come into being out of nothing. And yet, a Sacrament is not some form of “holy magic,” as if conferring a kind of mechanically bestowed grace regardless of a person’s level of commitment to the life in Christ. The process of salvation—which we often refer to as theosis (deification)—is a synergistic process combining divine grace and human freedom. This also implies an ascetic struggle. We must cooperate with God if we are to experience the transforming grace of Holy Baptism. Saint Gregory of Nyssa (+395) said this well in his Great Catechism: “...If the life after initiation (baptism) is of the same quality as the uninitiated life (before baptism), then, though it may be a bold thing to say, I will say it without flinching; in the case of such people the water is merely water, for the gift of the Holy Spirit in no way shows itself in what takes place.... A child born to any one is entirely akin to his parent. If then you have received God, and have become a child of God, display in the purpose of your life the God that is in you, display in yourself the Father that gave you birth.”

A great saint of the more recent past—Seraphim of Sarov (+1833)—places Baptism in the context of one’s whole earthly existence. This is part of God’s providential care for each of His “adopted” children. If life is indeed a period of testing, then the grace of Baptism, which is nothing less than the gift of the Holy Spirit bestowed upon us in the Sacrament, gives us the strength to prevail in this “lifelong test of man on earth:” “And what in the world can be higher and more precious than the gift of the Holy Spirit sent down to us from on high in the Sacrament of Baptism? This grace of Baptism is so great and indispensable, so vital for man, that it is not taken away even from a heretic until his death. That is, it is not taken away from him until the end of the period of appointment on high by God’s providence as a lifelong test of man on earth—a test to see what a man can accomplish by means of the strength of grace given to him on high in the time allotted to him by God.”

Within the life of the Church, all theology is ultimately best expressed through doxology—the living praise of the living God that brings joy and gladness to our spirits through the grace of the Holy Spirit. Doxology—the glorification of God—is a kind of prayerful/poeticized theology that allows us to approach the mystery of God in Christ with humility and praise. One of the many wonderful hymns of the Feast of Theophany summarizes its theological and spiritual content in a manner befitting the depth of its significance for us: “The true Light has appeared, and grants enlightenment to all. Christ, Who is above all purity, is baptized with us; He sanctifies the water and it becomes a cleansing for our souls. The outward sign is earthly, the inward grace is higher than the heavens; Salvation comes through washing, and through water the Spirit: Descending into the water we ascend to God. Wonderful are Thy works, O Lord: Glory to Thee!”

And so, when all is said and done, in the end we approach God and sing “Glory to Thee!”

Baptism: “When all is said and done....” - Orthodox Church in America (oca.org) January 14, 2015

15th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6. Repose of Ven. Sergius (Sérgii) the Wonderworker, Abbot of Rádonezh (1392). Ven. Euphrosynē of Alexandria (5th c.). Ven. Euphrosynē of Suzdal' (1250).

2 Corinthians 4:6-15 (Epistle)

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us.

We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body.

For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh.

So, then death is working in us, but life in you.

And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you.

For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Galatians 5:22-6:2 (Epistle, Saint)

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.

Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Luke 5:1-11 (Gospel)

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and were washing their nets.

Then He got into one of the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the multitudes from the boat.

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon, "Launch out into the deep and let down your nets a catch." for But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless, at Your word I will let down the net."

And when they had done this, they caught a great number of fish, and their net was breaking.

So, they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"

For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men."

So, when they had brought their boats to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

Rest of Venerable Sergius the Wonderworker, Abbot of Radonezh

Commemorated on September 25

Saint Sergius of Radonezh was born in the village of Varnitsa, near Rostov, on May 3, 1314. His parents were the pious and illustrious nobles Cyril and Maria (September 28). The Lord chose him while still in his mother's womb. In the Life of Saint Sergius it is reported that even before the birth of her son, Saint Maria and those praying heard the thrice-repeated cry of the infant at the Divine Liturgy: before the reading of the Holy Gospel, during the Cherubic hymn, and when the priest pronounced: "Holy Things are for the Holy."

God gave Cyril and Maria a son whom they named Bartholomew. From his very first days of life the infant amazed everyone by his fasting. On Wednesdays and Fridays, he would not accept milk from his mother, and on other days, if Maria used oil in the food, the infant also refused the milk of his mother. Noticing this, Maria refrained altogether from food with oil.

At the age of seven, Bartholomew was sent to study together with his brothers: his older brother Stephen, and his younger brother Peter. His brothers learned successfully, but Bartholomew fell behind in his studies, even though the teacher gave him much special attention. The parents scolded the child, the teacher chastised him, and his class mates made fun of his lack of comprehension. Finally, Bartholomew besought the Lord with tears to grant him the ability to read.

Once, his father sent Bartholomew out after the horses in the field. Along the way he met an angel sent by God under the appearance of a monk. The Elder stood at prayer beneath an oak in a field. Bartholomew approached him, and bowing, waited for the Elder to finish praying. The monk blessed him, gave him a kiss and asked what he wanted. Bartholomew answered, "With all my soul I want to learn reading and writing. Holy Father, pray for me to God, that He may help me to become literate." The monk fulfilled Bartholomew's request, offering up his prayer to God. In blessing the child, he said to him: "Henceforth, my child, God gives you to understand reading and writing, and in this you will surpass your brothers and peers" (See the famous M. Nesterov painting "Vision of Bartholomew"). Then the Elder took a vessel and gave Bartholomew a piece of prosphora. "Take, child, and eat," said he. "This is given to you as a sign of the grace of God, and for the understanding of Holy Scripture." The Elder wanted to leave, but Bartholomew asked him to visit at the home of his parents. His parents received their guest with joy and offered him their hospitality.

The Elder replied that it was proper to partake of spiritual nourishment first, and he bade their son to read the Psalter. Bartholomew began to read, and his parents were amazed at the change that had occurred with their son. In parting, the Elder prophetically said of Saint Sergius, "Your son shall be great before God and the people. He shall become a chosen habitation of the Holy Spirit."

After this the holy child read without difficulty and understood the contents of books. He became immersed in prayer with a special fervor, not missing a single church service.

Already in childhood he imposed upon himself a strict fast. He ate nothing on Wednesdays and Fridays, and on the other days he sustained himself on bread and water. About the year 1328, the parents of Saint Sergius moved from Rostov to Radonezh. When their older sons married, Cyril and Maria received the monastic schema shortly before their death at the Khot'kov monastery of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos, not far from Radonezh.

Later on, the older brother Stephen was widowed and became a monk at this monastery. Having buried his parents, Bartholomew and his brother Stephen withdrew into the forest (12 versts from Radonezh) to live in the wilderness. At first, they made cells, and then a small church, and with the blessing of Metropolitan Theognostus, it was consecrated in the name of the Most Holy Trinity. But soon, unable to bear the difficulties of life in the wilderness, Stephen left his brother and went on to the Moscow Theophany monastery, where he became close to Saint Alexis, afterwards Metropolitan of Moscow. (February 12).

On October 7, 1337 Bartholomew was tonsured by Igumen Metrophanes, taking the name of the holy Martyr Sergius (October 7), and he started to build a new habitation to the glory of the Life-Creating Trinity. Suffering temptations and demonic apparitions, Saint Sergius advanced from strength to

strength. Gradually he became known to other monks seeking his guidance. Saint Sergius accepted all with love, and soon a brotherhood of twelve monks were gathered in the small monastery. Their experienced spiritual guide distinguished himself by an extraordinary love for work. With his own hands he built several cells, he carried water, he chopped wood, baked bread, sewed clothing, prepared food for the brethren and humbly took on other tasks. Saint Sergius combined the heavy work with prayer, vigil and fasting.

The brethren were amazed that with such severe exertion the health of their guide did not deteriorate, but rather became all the heartier. It was not without difficulty that they implored Saint Sergius to accept the position of igumen of the monastery. In 1354 Bishop Athanasius of Volyn ordained the saint a hieromonk and elevated him to the rank of igumen. Just as before, monastic obediences were strictly fulfilled at the monastery. With the expansion of the monastery, its needs also grew. Often the monks had only scant food, but through the prayers of Saint Sergius unknown people provided the necessities.

Reports of the exploits of Saint Sergius became known even at Constantinople, and Patriarch Philotheus sent to the monk a cross, a "paraman" (monastic clothing, a four-cornered cloth tied with cords to the chest and worn beneath other garb, and adorned with symbols of the Lord's Passion) and schema-robe in blessing for new deeds, and a grammota of blessing, in which the Patriarch counselled the chosen of God to organize a cenobitic monastery. The monk set off with the patriarchal missive to Saint Alexis, and received from him the counsel to introduce a strict manner of cenobitic life. The monks began to grumble at the strictness of the monastic Rule, and Saint Sergius was compelled to forsake the monastery. At the River Kirzhach he founded a monastery in honor of the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos. Matters at the former monastery went quickly into disarray, and the remaining monks recourse to Saint Alexis that he should get the saint to return. Saint Sergius unquestioningly obeyed the holy hierarch, and left in place of himself at the Kirzhachsk monastery his disciple, Saint Roman.

Already during his lifetime Saint Sergius had been vouchsafed the gift of wonderworking. He raised a lad, at a point when the despairing father had given up on his only son as lost. Reports about the miracles worked by Saint Sergius began quickly to spread about, and the sick began to come to him, both from the surrounding villages and also from remote places. And no one left from Saint Sergius without receiving healing of infirmities and edifying counsel. Everyone gave glory for Saint Sergius, and revered him on an equal with the ancient holy Fathers. But human glory did not hold allure for the great ascetic, and as before he remained the example of monastic humility.

One time Saint Stephen, Bishop of Perm (April 27), who deeply revered Saint Sergius, was on journey from his diocese to Moscow. The roadway passed eight versts distant from the Sergiev monastery. Intending to visit the monastery on his return trip, the saint stopped, and having recited a prayer, he bowed to Saint Sergius with the words: "Peace be to thee, spiritual brother." At this instant Saint Sergius was sitting in the trapeza for a meal with the brethren. In reply to the blessing of the holy hierarch, Saint Sergius rose up, recited a prayer, and made a return blessing to Saint Stephen. Certain of the disciples, astonished at the extraordinary action of Saint Sergius, hastened off to the indicated place, and became convinced of the veracity of the vision.

Gradually the monks began to witness also other similar actions. Once, during Liturgy, an angel of the Lord served with the saint, but Saint Sergius in his humility forbade anyone to talk about this until after his death.

Saint Sergius was connected with Saint Alexis by close bonds of spiritual friendship and brotherly love. Saint Alexis in his declining years summoned Saint Sergius to him and besought him to accept to be Russian Metropolitan, but Saint Sergius humbly declined to be primate.

The Russian Land at this time suffered under the Mongol-Tatar Yoke. Having gathered an army, Great-prince Demetrius Ioannovich of the Don went to monastery of Saint Sergius to ask blessing in the pending struggle. Saint Sergius gave blessing to two monks of his monastery to render help to the great-prince: the Schemamonk Andrei [Oslyaba] and the Schemamonk Alexander [Peresvet], and he predicted the victory for prince Demetrius. The prophecy of Saint Sergius was fulfilled: on September 8, 1380, on the feastday of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, Russian soldiers gained a total

victory over the Tatar hordes at Kulikovo Pole (Kulikovo Field), and set in place the beginning of the liberation of the Russian Land from the Mongol Yoke. During the fighting Saint Sergius and the brethren stood at prayer and besought God to grant victory to the Russian forces.

For his angelic manner of life Saint Sergius was granted a heavenly vision by God. One time by night Abba Sergius was reading the rule of prayer beneath an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos. Having completed the reading of the canon to the Mother of God, he sat down to rest, but suddenly he said to his disciple, Saint Mikhei (May 6), that there awaited them a wondrous visitation. After a moment the Mother of God appeared accompanied by the holy Apostles Peter and John the Theologian. Due to the extraordinary bright light Saint Sergius fell down, but the Most Holy Theotokos touched Her hands to him, and in blessing him promised always to be Protectress of his holy monastery.

Having reached old age, and foreseeing his own end six months beforehand, Saint Sergius summoned the brethren to him and designated his disciple Saint Nikon (November 17), who was experienced in the spiritual life and obedience, to be igumen. In tranquil solitude Saint Sergius fell asleep in the Lord on September 25, 1392. On the night before, the great saint of God summoned the brethren a final time to give them his final instruction: "Brethren, be attentive to yourselves. Have first the fear of God, purity of soul and unhyppocritical love..."

Rest of Venerable Sergius the Wonderworker, Abbot of Radonezh

Troparion — Tone 4 - Athlete of virtues, / true warrior of Christ God, / you struggled mightily against the passions in this temporal life; / in psalmody, vigils, and fasting, you were an example to your disciples; / therefore, the most Holy Spirit dwelt in you, / and you were radiantly adorned by His activity. / Since you possess boldness before the Holy Trinity, / remember the flock which you gathered wisely, / and do not forget to visit your children as you promised, O Venerable Sergius our Father.

Troparion — Tone 8 - In the purity of your life, you combined the stream of your tears with later ascetical contests of faith, / thereby exuding a spiritual font, O Venerable Sergius, / in which you wash the spiritual and bodily impurity of all those who lovingly revere your memory. / Therefore, we, your children, cry out to you: "O Father, pray to the Holy Trinity for our souls."

Kontakion — Tone 8 - Wounded by love for Christ, O venerable one, and following Him with unwavering desire, / you despised all carnal pleasures, and as the sun, you shone upon the land of your birth. / Therefore, Christ has enriched you with the gift of working miracles. / Remember us who honor your most illustrious memory, / that we may call to you: "Rejoice, O divinely-wise Sergius."