



Weekly Bulletin

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

A Community of the Orthodox Church in America

Witnessing to the Ancient Faith in Trumbull County for over 80 Years

Father Brian Crivella, Pastor

2021

Number 39

The Friend of the Bridegroom: "He Must Increase and I Must Decrease."

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| Sunday | Oct 17th | <i>17th Sun aftr Pntcst / Tone 8 / Martyr Susanna, Princess of Georgia</i> Readings: 2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1 Luke 8:5-15 9:30 am Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour |
| Wednesday | Oct 20th | <i>Greatmartyr Artemius at Antioch</i> Readings: Ephesians 5:25-33 Luke 9:44-50 9:30 am Divine Liturgy |
| Saturday | Oct 23rd | <i>Holy Apostle James, the Brother of the Lord</i> 4:00 pm Choir Practice 5:00 pm Great Vespers followed by Confessions |
| Sunday | Oct 24th | <i>18th Sun aftr Pntcst / Tone 1 / Martyr Arethas and 4,299 Martyrs with him</i> Readings: 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 Luke 16:19-31 9:30 am Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour |

ATTENDANCE / STEWARDSHIP / October 10th

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| Attendance: (Adults: 58, Children 14) | 72 |
| Weekly Offering | \$3530.00 |
| Candle Offerings | \$131.00 |
| Project Mexico | \$360.00 |

Youth Group Event at Iron Mills Farmstead

On Saturday, October 30th at 12:00pm our church Youth Group will have a family outing at Iron Mills Farm in New Wilmington PA to enjoy family activities and food. Children are allowed (and encouraged!) to wear their Halloween costumes provided they're not scary or gory. Admission will be paid for by the Church Youth Group for everyone who signs up at the candlestand.

Hannah's House

Our parish is still collecting supplies for Hannah's House throughout the month of October. A flyer with a list of supplies that can be donated can be found at the candlestand, and supplies can be dropped off there.

Prayers for the Archbishop & Our Diocese

Please keep Archbishop Paul in your prayers. At the Diocese Assembly His Eminence announced that his health has been waning, and that he intends to retire from the episcopacy in the next year or two. May God watch over His Eminence and raise up a worthy and Godly successor to shepherd our Diocese when the time comes!

PRAYER CORNER + + + + +

Fr. Mark Leasure / Brother Andrew / Carol Bobosh / Claudia Maximoff / Richard Alberini / Jeremiah Roscoe / Dana Ronyak / Donnie & Cherie Davidson / Jennifer Brainard / Michael, Catherine, & Zoe Stan / Dana Lutz / Ellen Marie / Joanne Kaschak / Lilian / Alice & Matthew / Magie & Kenny Sanders / Bill Paluch / Nina Lowry / Alyssa Angle / Josephine Grabko / James Livermore / Sarah Crivella / The Faculty, Teachers, and Students of Holy Trinity Orthodox Academy

Newly Married: Aaron & Tatyana Rutz

Expecting: Lauren Mihalyo, Matushka Carly Koranda & Their unborn Children

Newborn: Serafina & her parents Julianna & Bobby

Memory Eternal: Matthew Kaznica (10/2)

Birthdays: Vince Mediate (Sun), Des Puhak (Tues), Peter Stan (Thurs) & Declan Brown (Fri)

Anniversaries: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Candle Commemorations

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|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Theotokos | In Memory of Karen Kaschak |
| Altar | In Memory of Catherine Cuckovich |
| Christ | For the Health of St. John's Parish |

The Collapse into Chaos, Where Only God Makes Sense By Fr. Stephen Freeman

Nothing is more traumatic than the onset of chaos. Predictability breaks down, goodness seems to disappear, and the madness of sheer survival takes over. In chaos, everything seems plausible since reason itself has become unreachable.

A recent spate of reading took me down the rabbit hole into the madness of the 14th century. For all of the “structure” and stability of the Middle Ages, a society where everyone seemed to have a place and all of the places were arranged into a meaningful pattern, brutality and greed often bared their teeth with a rapacious grin. Wars and violence were common, as were famines and worse. The Catholic Church of that time (for all of the pageantry and beauty of its buildings) was frequently governed by a corruption that would make our modern scandals seem but a minor thing.

The early part of the century saw the strange phenomenon of the “Avignon Papacy,” where, under the domination of the French kings, the papacy was moved from Rome to Avignon, France. It was only one symptom of the turmoil and struggle that marked Church-State relations. Into the middle of a messy century, the Black Death struck, killing anywhere from one-third to one-half of the population of Europe over a period of eight years. To read detailed descriptions of that plague is a fearful gaze into the worst scenarios in human experience. We did not handle it well.

One of the most immediate victims of the plague was the reasonability of the world. The cause of the plague was unknown and unimaginable in a world without knowledge of bacteria and viruses. Everything that comprised the medical knowledge of the time was useless – nothing worked. At the same time, theories of how God managed history and interacted with the world seemed equally useless. Prayers, fasting, repentance, every suggested action left the contagion unfazed. The pious died as horribly as the sinful.

It has been suggested (and not without merit) that the seeds of modernity were sown in the years of the plague and their aftermath. If that is so, then it would be correct to say that among the victims of the Black Death was the so-called “enchantment” of that time. One reason for that early disenchantment was the simple fact that it did not work. Its failure left a fissure between the Medieval Church and the popular imagination. It was an empty space waiting to be filled.

With a distance of nearly 700 years and a bit of science, it is possible to read about such events and such a chaotic time with both a sense of detachment as well as a sense of understanding. We know what caused the plague (*Yersinia pestis*), just as we can easily judge the failures of the society of that time. Time and distance create an illusion of omniscience. We bring that illusion into our own experience and expound to one another about the failures of our own age as well as what would count as a solution.

For some, the religious failures of the 14th century serve to bolster a general critique of religious belief itself. One of the blind spots of modernity is to imagine ourselves to be in a non-religious, secularized world. I describe it as a blind spot inasmuch as the modern mind-set is itself thoroughly religious in its make-up. No medieval theologian had a “theory of everything” anywhere as complete as the mind of modernity. The modern world is not

“disenchanted” so much as it has a “modern enchantment.” We have faith in market forces, medicine, government, democracy, technology, algorithms, and the march of progress. We think we know the meaning of history. The human mind is not compatible with “disenchantment.” It is, and always has been, an enchanted space.

I have seen a microcosm of the 14th century. It happens all the time. However, in our days, it happens in an isolated family or community. Everything seems to be going smoothly until it doesn't. The loss of a job, the closing of a factory, the onset of disease in a family, an unexpected accident, and similar events, sometimes seem to cascade in the life of a family or a community, leaving its members in stunned silence and the chaos of meaninglessness. I have sat with such families as a pastor or counselor. There are no words to be spoken that will fill the emptiness that has become their world.

Where is God?

It seems to me that God is either *in the chaos* or nowhere. That He seems nowhere for many people suggests to me that our explanations (whether Medieval or Modern) are simply inadequate – our religions are often too little and beside the point. The rationality of our own reasoning becomes a substitute for the rationality of the Logos, the only Reason that matters.

It seems utterly critical to me that we understand that Christ (the Logos) is Christ Crucified. As St. Paul says, “I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.” (1 Cor. 2:2) This is not just the Logos, the Lord of order and reason, but the Logos Crucified, the Lord of chaos and unmeaning. We confess that He “tramples down death by death” (smashes chaos by chaos). In doing so we refuse to exclude chaos from our faith and understanding. We confess that *this* chaos is *that* chaos. *This* death is *that* death. *This* suffering is *that* suffering. *All* suffering is *His* suffering and we proclaim Christ crucified so that nothing is excluded.

“Then comes the end, when He delivers the kingdom to God the Father, when He puts an end to all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He has put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that will be destroyed is death. For “He has put all things under His feet.” (1 Cor. 15:24–26)

Christ crucified sweeps away our false religions (both Medieval and Modern), our feeble efforts to enchant the universe with explanations and understanding. All the false religions are represented in St. Paul's rebuke:

“...but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.” (1 Cor 1:23–25)

I have come to the conclusion that all wars (even and *especially* our culture wars) are religious in nature. They are wars of opposing religions – or, more accurately, opposing idolatries. They seek to impose order in the face of chaos. Our actions, it would seem, despise the wounds of Christ, before which we should stand in awe and silence.

The Lord (of order and chaos) is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silence before Him.