How do we view those who are different from us? How do we concretely treat them? In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus taught one of His eternal lessons through the Golden Rule - “Treat others the way you want to be treated.” We all want to be treated with respect, love, kindness, and dignity. As the sign to the right says, we are called to love our neighbors, including our neighbors who don’t look like you, think like you, love like you, speak like you, pray like you, or even vote like you. Think about that. Do you love and respectfully treat those who are different from you?

Our Orthodox Christian theology teaches us that love for God can’t be separated from our love for our neighbor. These are the two greatest commandments of our Faith and are two sides of the same coin. If we truly love God, we must love our neighbor precisely because each and every neighbor is created in the image and likeness of God.

Now, the reality is that we place many labels on one another. We sometimes place labels on people simply to help identify ourselves - Male/Female. American/Foreigner. Christian/non-Christian. Democrat/Republican. Unfortunately, sometimes we use these same labels to create division in a negative way, or to caricaturize and demonize the groups different from us.

We all can clearly see how extremely divided our country is. During these last days of May, we have seen the old and painful wounds of racism torn open once again since the death of George Floyd and the aftermath of the protests throughout our country. (Read the article on page 2.)

With our upcoming presidential election in November, we will only see the vitriol and divisive rhetoric increase. This past week I was appalled to see President Trump repost a tweet from some Texas political rally of Cowboys for Trump, where the main speaker actually said, “The only good democrat is a dead democrat.” I listened in disbelief, and then listened again to...
The mission of Sts. Constantine and Helen Church is to proclaim the Good News of Salvation through the Orthodox Christian Faith for the glory of our Triune God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

We are a community of believers who journey towards our Lord Jesus Christ and one another through our WORSHIP, FELLOWSHIP, SPIRITUAL GROWTH, WITNESS, and SERVICE. We invite all people to join us on this journey in the Kingdom of Heaven.

We are under the jurisdiction of
His Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
His Eminence, Archbishop Elpidophoros of America
His Eminence, Metropolitan Methodios of Boston

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make sure I didn’t mishear the speaker. After applause, the speaker went on to say, “I don’t mean that literally.” But for the President of the United States to re-post such a tweet is unbelievable, and only reflects the extreme divisiveness and bitterness within politics.

These are but two examples of terrible division. As followers of Jesus Christ, however, we are called to act as peacemakers. “Blessed are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God.” We are called to actively work for peace, to work for reconciliation, to help unite one another. Are we doing this? How are we reconciling those at odds with one another and bringing peace to a divided people.

Let us sincerely and truly try to love one another, including loving our neighbors who don’t look like you, think like you, love like you, speak like you, pray like you, or even vote like you.

With love and hope in Jesus Christ our Lord,

+Luke

REOPENING OUR CHURCH

We reopened our Church to all people on Sunday, May 24th and had 29 members of our Church Family come together and worship. The following Sunday, May 31st, we had 57 people pray together. And I’m sure more will come the following Sundays, even though I want everyone to be very careful and to come only when you feel comfortable and ready. We have opened our church but we don’t want anyone to feel guilty about not coming. If you feel compromised in health, or just feel not quite ready, take your time in joining us once again. Of course we miss you, and want to see you. Just know that we are trying to take every precaution to keep everyone safe.

Even though our church never actually closed - in the sense that I continued to worship in the church five times a week with a different handful of people at each service, and many of you prayed and participated with us via live stream - it was still very special and emotional to worship together with a larger group of people and to see some whom I haven’t seen in three months!

Of course, we can’t hug one another. We have to cover our faces with masks. We keep social distancing in place. We have people graciously sitting in assigned seats the ushers lead them to, so I’m seeing people sit in places where I’ve never seen them sit before in the church! We even take everyone’s temperature before anyone enters the church. And of course we sanitize the church after each service. We do all this to be extremely cautious so that everyone will stay safe.

It’s been a while since we have all been together, and we still aren’t sure how things will be in a month or two from now, no less in the Fall. Yet, we do know that God is with us. He has been with us throughout this pandemic. He is with us now as we reopen. And He will be with us no matter what tomorrow will bring! God is with us. May we always strive to stay with Him!

On another note, our Parish Council decided that although our annual GREEK FESTIVAL will probably NOT happen in September, in its place we will try to still hold three different one-day DRIVE THRU FOOD FAIRS during the summer. The first one in this series is our annual GYRO FEST, which we have moved to Saturday, June 27th. The 2ND FOOD FAIR will take place on Saturday, July 22nd. The 3rd FOOD FAIR will be on August 15th. Each Food Fair will offer something different, along with Greek Pastries. Although we will not have the fellowship and fun that we typically have at our annual Festival, we will have the opportunity to enjoy delicious food and support our Church through these fundraisers. We will also give the opportunity for individuals and businesses to buy a banner, like the ones we use at our annual festival, which we will display at each Food Fair Event.
Throughout our country, we see mayhem. Protests filled with anger, cities burning, and utter chaos. After two months of quarantine from a pandemic, we now confront the even greater threat and evil in our society with the terrible virus of racism raising its ugly head again.

We’ve all seen the protests that have turned into rioting. For anyone who watched the video of George Floyd dying from the knee of a police officer pushing down on his neck for eight minutes – the same George Floyd who may have forged a check to buy something in a convenience store, yet was treated as a dangerous criminal and killed without any justice in broad daylight – for anyone who watched this horrible video, you have to be shocked, deeply disturbed, terribly saddened, and angry.

I’m sure many of us have also seen the video of Ahmaud Abery, the black man who was simply jogging through his neighborhood in Brunswick, GA and who gets accosted by a white man and his son who took it upon themselves to stop him – why? because he was a black man jogging down the street?? – and to shoot and kill this man in cold blood. An unarmed jogger who wasn’t disturbing them or anyone else? And neither of the white shooters were arrested for 58 days! Both of these incidents just seem so unbelievable, unimaginable for all of us. It’s hard to comprehend such appalling racism and hatred.

And then what about the interaction in Central Park between Christian Cooper, the black man simply watching birds and Amy Cooper, the white woman with an unleased dog who ignored his requests for her to leash her dog and instead calls the police on Mr. Cooper. Why? Because he’s black and he asked her to lease her dog? Quite a different form of racism than the first two stories, but still a form of racism none the less.

It almost seems like we’re making up these stories, and yet here we are in 2020 with the most recent incidents of racism that have made the news. And only moments of racism caught on video. How many instances happen that are never recorded?

I want us to try to sincerely think about what it must be like to experience such racism? To live every day knowing that such incidents could happen to you. Can any of us ever feel deep rooted hatred for no other reason that the color of our skin?

I’m seeing throughout social media those who acknowledge and condemn the police brutality against George Floyd, yet some of these same people just can’t understand why people need to protest and criticize when such protests turn to chaos and violence. Think about this. Remember when Colin Kaepernick, the NFL football player, tried to peacefully protest the injustices in our country by simply kneeling on one knee during the national anthem before football games? What did that type of protest achieve? And how annoyed did people get, even in the highest office in the land, to his peaceful protests? Did society want to listen to what he was protesting about, and how many people actually did something concrete to address the evils of social injustice he highlighted?

Maybe it’s hard to for some to understand why people protest and why some protests turn violent, but it’s hard to understand simply because we may not want to acknowledge the deep hurt, pain, and humiliation that lead to anger. Racism is a scourge in our country from its foundation with slavery and the way we treated the indigenous peoples of America, then took on different forms even after the Civil War and abolition of slavery, and continued yet again in other forms after the Civil Rights Movement.

Racism is alive and well in our country, as well as throughout humanity because its egocentric root is in the heart of our fallen human nature. Only people who have truly, sincerely, deeply cleansed and purified their hearts from the deceptions of their ego, of the arrogance that makes them think they are better than another, can overcome the temptations of racism, or any other form of labeling other people. Until we truly and sincerely repent and allow God’s divine light to purify our hearts, a light which will help us see every person in this world as a fellow child of God, only then will we overcoming this curse of racism.

I’ve heard very sincere and well-meaning people actually say to me, “No, I don’t believe racism still exists in our country.” Are they blind? Or are they
just insensitive to the reality of others? Racism and all forms of prejudice and bias will always exist because of our fallen human nature. Thus, we have to constantly be on guard and battle against these temptations of evil within ourselves, and within our society.

Another well-meaning person told me just recently, “Well, it’s a lot better now then it used to be.” Well, that may be true, yet this is NOT an acceptable attitude! Sure, we don’t have slavery anymore. Yes, we don’t have blacks treated as second class citizens by law. OK, we had a black president and we can see plenty of African-Americans who have succeeded in society. That’s all fine and good, but none of that takes away the fact that racism continues to haunt people of color, because it’s a part of our fallen, ego-centric selves. Countless lynchings occurred in the South during the Jim Crow era, yet imagine, two months ago a black jogger runs down the street for exercise and gets shot and killed, for absolutely no reason at all, and the two white men who killed him only get arrested after 58 days because a video pops up and goes viral. The spirit of lynchings seems quite alive and well in the hearts of some people!

I want us to understand and empathize with those who face various forms of racism every day? If we want to understand how peaceful protests can turn into violent riots, try to put yourself in the shoes of those who have been discriminated against, humiliated, and treated unjustly. I read a moving facebook post that helped me realize how insidious racism is. Read this story that Deltha Katherine Harbin posted:

"My husband Phillip is 31 years old. My husband can proofread a paper to perfection. He makes the best pork chops and neckbones. My husband was raised in an extremely wholesome home where they were not even allowed to watch Harry Potter. My husband has never tried any drugs, not even weed. He has never stolen from anyone, not even a corner store. My husband treats me and our sons like royalty. He serves at our local church faithfully and helps anyone he can. None of this stopped my husband from becoming a suspect in Semmes, Alabama.

My husband wanted to do me a favor one night when he got home late from work. He got my keys and drove around the corner to fill my tank at the gas station. While there, an older white woman was at a pump across from him and he noticed she appeared very nervous and stared at him. He said she got in her vehicle and got on her phone and pulled off to an area near the gas station. Within minutes, police cars pulled in and surrounded him. He was questioned about why he was out. He was questioned about his activity earlier in the day. He was told he fit a description. They asked whose car he was driving. He was told he could not leave. He was told the description was simply a black man. Not a 5 ft 7 inch black man of around 220 lbs who loves WWE, macaroni and cheese, and the Temptations. Just black.

The older woman was watching and the cops revealed she had called in his suspicious behavior of pumping gas. And now he was a suspect because he fit the description of being black. He was humiliated. He was emasculated. He was angry. He was helpless. He was on his way to being cuffed when a white man stepped in. An older white man told the officers they were wrong and that my husband had come from a different direction than the robbery they had mentioned. The officers released my husband after this. Not because my husband told them multiple times he was innocent. Not because there were two car seats in the back of my car. My husband's voice meant nothing. The only voice that penetrated those badges was a white one.

My hard working, kind-hearted, silly husband was guilty because of his skin and there was absolutely nothing he could do about it. The sight of him caused a woman to call the police. He said he wanted to scream. He wanted to fight. He wanted yell at the top of his lungs that he was a man and he mattered. If he had, he would be deemed aggressive. He would be resisting so he said he kept telling himself he had to make it home to me and the boys. He knew these men could kill him and justify it.

He came home a changed man. I am a changed woman. We cried. We prayed and we have healed since this took place but it changed us. Issues that once felt somewhat distant became our reality. So, when you dismiss the plight of black men in America, you diminish the ever present fear within our community. You are willfully ignorant. If you think people make this up or are only apprehended by the police when they deserve it... YOU are part of the problem.

Open your eyes but more importantly open your hearts to the reality of being black [or being a minority] in America. We don't get the luxury of ignoring it because we live it. [In the
FIGHTING THE EVIL OF RACISM

post I saw a beautiful picture of Deltha’s husband and their two precious children.] This picture of my precious family looks threatening to some people. My boys are cuddly and cute until they aren’t anymore and then they become a threat, too. My heart aches for our country and I feel so helpless. Lord, please heal the hearts and minds in our land!"

Wow! This woman gives us a clear picture of what racism does, how it makes someone feel, how it dehumanizes a person. Can any of us say something like this has ever happened to us? I can only imagine that if such an event did happen to you, and you constantly heard other stories even worse that happen to people simply because of their skin color, you would get frustrated, and even angry? And maybe your anger would turn into violence.

Any form of racism is evil. Racism poisons the people who hate, and it tries to poison those on the receiving end, tempting them to return hate with hate, to return violence with violence.

Martin Luther King described the only cure to such evil: “ Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that. Hate multiplies hate, violence multiplies violence in a descending spiral of destruction ... The chain reaction of evil - hate begetting hate must be broken, or we shall be plunged into the dark abyss of annihilation.”

But what about us who are bystanders? How will we respond? When racist acts occur around us, do we stay silent, do we stay indifferent, do we become indignant for a short time and then go on with our lives, or will we truly try to empathize with those suffering such discrimination, and push for change – change within our own hearts, as well as change within society.

During all the horrific injustice that Martin Luther King and his people faced during the Civil Rights movement, King lamented especially about the apathy and passivity of most people.

“Those who passively accept evil are as much involved in the evil as the ones who help to perpetrate it.... Anyone who accepts evil without protesting against it is really cooperating with it...The ultimate tragedy is not the oppression and cruelty by the bad people but the silence over such racism by the good people.”

We can’t stay silent. We can’t stay passive. We have to fight the roots of racism and any other forms of our ego that leads us to label and despise others. We must fight this evil within our own hearts, and then fight against it within society as a whole. We must never forget that every person is a child of God, created in His image and likeness, and thus, we are brothers and sisters with all. Every true follower of Christ should always deeply respect, honor, and love this other person, no matter how different they may seem.

THE COMMON COMMUNION SPOON

by Fr. Alkiviadis C. Calivas

Liturgical spoons existed from at least the sixth-seventh century. But it does not mean that they were used for Communion. In fact, canon 101 of the Penthekte Synod (691-692) prohibits the use of any receptacle for the reception of the consecrated Bread other than the human hand. The canon reads: “So that if anyone should wish to partake of the pure Body during the time of the synaxis...let him form his hands into the shape of a cross, and thus approaching, let him receive the communion of grace...For we nowise welcome those men who make certain receptacles out of gold or any other material to serve instead of their hands for the reception of the divine gift.”

Before the eleventh/twelfth century everyone, clergy and people alike, received the Holy Gifts separately, in the manner the clergy do to this day. When the people approached, they extended their hands, right over left with palms open, on which the priest placed a portion of the holy Bread. After consuming the Bread, the communicants were offered the Cup by the deacon.

The first clear evidence for the use of communion spoons appeared in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. As we learn from the noted canonist Theodore BalSAMON (+ca. 1195), the common spoon had become
the established norm in many places by the mid-twelfth century. Commenting on canon 101 of the Penthekte Synod, he complained that the traditional way of distributing Communion was being abandoned in some areas.

Centuries later, in a comment on the same canon, St. Nikodemos (+1809) suggests that the introduction of the communion spoon came about as a result of the scarcity of deacons. By the late twelfth century many churches were served by a single priest, which made the administration of the eucharistic elements separately both awkward and difficult. The problem was solved with the introduction of the spoon. The priest was now able to offer the eucharistic elements together in a spoon. In addition, St. Nikodemos tells us that the placement of the holy Gifts directly into the mouth of communicants helped to curb abuses and avoid spillage when drinking from the Cup. Evidently, some people were careless and dropped particles of the Holy Bread. Others hid it and “used it for wicked purposes.”

The use of the communion spoon was not enacted by a synod, ecumenical or local. Its use came about gradually. Initially, the spoon may have been used to commune the sick and the dying. At first, as one would expect, its use in the Liturgy met with some resistance, as any significant liturgical innovation would. Replacing the centuries old manner of receiving the consecrated Gifts directly into the mouth of communicants helped to curb abuses and avoid spillage when drinking from the Cup. Evidently, some people were careless and dropped particles of the Holy Bread. Others hid it and “used it for wicked purposes.”

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The real fears, reservations, and apprehensions of the people should not be dismissed [in relation to receiving Holy Communion.]

People want to feel safe, listened to, and protected by their Church. They do not want to be exposed to unnecessary risks.

The method by which Communion is administered is purely functional. It serves a practical purpose. Thus, as warranted by needs and circumstances, a local Church in its collective wisdom and authority is free to adapt, modify, and manage the method by which Holy Communion is distributed. Whatever method a Church chooses, the single most important concern is that it does not violate any dogmas and that it is appropriate; that it upholds and maintains the dignity of the sacred act of communing.

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We learn from St. Nikodemos that during plagues priests were known to use arbitrary methods to administer communion to the sick and dying. In a comment on canon 28 of the Penthekte Synod, he chides the clergy for using unsuitable methods to deliver Communion to the sick. He recommends a more appropriate method. He writes: “Hence, both priests and prelates must employ some shift in time of a plague to enable them to administer communion to the sick without violating this canon; not, however, by placing the holy Bread in currants, but in some sacred vessel, so that the dying and the sick may take it thence with tongs or the like. The vessel and the tongs are to be placed in vinegar, and the vinegar is to be poured into a funnel, or in any other manner that they can that is safer and canonical.”

St. Nikodemos’ brief note is significant in two ways. First, he insists the vessels used for Communion be sterilized with vinegar, a popular disinfectant from ancient times. This is an acknowledgment that the vessels or instruments used for communing could be contaminated by dangerous parasitic microbes. Second, he insists that the instrument be fitting for the purpose.

In the past forty years several worldwide deadly epidemics, AIDS, SARS, Ebola, and MERS provoked fear among the people. Presently, the world is experiencing another more frightening global threat: the pandemic coronavirus or COVID-19, a contagion with lethal force which has upended all social, economic, political, cultural, and religious norms. People are apprehensive and frightened. The disease has already infected millions of people and claimed the lives of thousands globally. As with the preceding epidemics, the highly contagious coronavirus has many people wondering and questioning the continued use of a common spoon for Communion.
The real fears, reservations, and apprehensions of the people should not be dismissed with an air of superiority or a call to greater faith, as if the act of communing is void of human considerations and the limitations of the created order. People want to feel safe, listened to, and protected by their Church. They do not want to be exposed to unnecessary risks, nor should they be.

Statements like, “the Eucharist is the Body and Blood of Christ, and the medicine of immortality,” or “the Eucharist is a divine remedy, a divine medicine,” may be true. But they are not sufficient to calm the fears and concerns of the faithful. People are not questioning the sacred character and identity of the Holy Gifts but the reliability of the instrument by which the Gifts are offered to them.

In my sixty-four years in the priesthood, I have consumed the chalice thousands of times after countless Divine Liturgies without fear or hesitation, as every priest does. I am not certain, however, that every faithful parishioner would do the same, if they were asked. My point is this. Holy Communion should be a source of joy, hope and strength for everyone and not a test or measure of one’s faith in God’s providential care (Matt. 4:5-7). St. Paul reminds us that the love of Christ requires that we care for all persons, whatever their situation and be sensitive and responsive to their just needs and concerns for the sake of the Gospel (1 Cor. 9: 19-23).

Orthodox sacramental theology, distinguishes between what is mystical and what is physical. The divine realities in each sacrament are distinct from the material elements by which they are mediated. We believe and confess that the eucharistic Gifts—the bread and wine—are changed into the Body and Blood of Christ through the prayer of the Church and the power and operation of the Holy Spirit. The change, however, is mystical and not physical. The bread and wine preserve their natural properties and qualities and are bound to the natural laws of their kind. The mode by which the transformation of the Gifts takes place remains a profound mystery. But we know by faith that the change occurs, so that Christ may become our food in order to impart his life to us (John 6:56).

The communion spoon is an imperfect material object. It does not share in the incorruptibility of the risen and deified Body of Christ which is really present to us through the eucharistic elements. On its own, the spoon is simply a spoon, a utensil. Its dignity is derived from its use as the instrument by which the Body and Blood of Christ is offered to his people. Long ago, it replaced an older venerable form of communing. The use of a spoon to commune the people was an innovation.

Today, the very thought of replacing the common spoon has caused great anxiety in some circles. There are those among the clergy and the laity who see the replacement of the common spoon or any other kind of departure from the current practice as a repudiation of the doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist. Of course, this is not true.

In response to the present deadly pandemic, three local Churches have already instituted changes in the manner by which Holy Communion is distributed. Circumstances require that every local Church study the issue carefully taking into consideration the cultural and hygienic sensibilities of the people and the sanitary measures and protocols of their respective countries.

One model calls for each parish procure a sufficient number of reusable metal spoons, all of the same type and material. The used spoons are collected and properly sterilized after each Liturgy and are reused multiple times. The goal is to administer Communion in the safest, most practical, and most dignified way possible. Whatever the model, the fundamental intent is the same: to mitigate the transmission of dangerous parasitic microbes. Of the several methods, the use of multiple metal reusable spoons seems to be the safest and most practical, and the one closest to the received tradition. The people are used to the spoon.

A change in the manner by which Communion is distributed to the people is already happening. The question is whether all the Churches will reach an agreement within the foreseeable future or, will local variations apply until the use of multiple individual metal spoons or some other form becomes the standard? In any event, a change may come. It is important, therefore, that everyone – clergy and people alike – are properly prepared.
I recently came across a very insightful remark from a conservative writer (Denise McAllister) who was engaged in an online debate with someone over what the government should or should not be able to mandate. She wrote: "My freedom doesn’t end where your irrational fear begins." But of course the question of whether one’s fears are rational or irrational is the question we have to consider.

There is unfortunately no risk free way for us to live in this world. If we were to avoid all risks, none of us would ever get into an automobile, but most of us do, because we consider that to be a manageable risk. If you drive while listening to the radio, or drinking a cup of coffee, you are adding to your risks... but these added risks are generally considered to be fairly minimal.

It is curious that while many local governments have closed churches, or severely restricted attendance, they have allowed marijuana shops and liquor stores to stay open. As a judge in Illinois recently pointed out, only 5 months ago, marijuana shops were not even legal, but they are now considered to be essential, but churches (which are protected by the 1st Amendment to the US Constitution are not (at least in many states). But, apparently, some risks are worth taking -- it's just a question of what you think is important.

Even Dr. Anthony Fauci, who has said that it is not yet safe for churches to give communion to their people, when asked whether people should refrain from hooking up with strangers for sex, said: "If you're willing to take a risk—and you know, everybody has their own tolerance for risks—you could figure out if you want to meet somebody. And it depends on the level of the interaction that you want to have.... If you're looking for a friend, sit in a room and put a mask on, and you know, chat a bit. If you want to go a little bit more intimate, well, then that's your choice regarding a risk" (Newsweek: "Dr. Fauci Says You Can Meet a Tinder Date 'If You're Willing to Take a Risk'" 4/16/20). So it is all a matter of your priorities.

The question of how the various levels of government in the United States have handled the Coronavirus is something that we will probably be debating for years to come, but within the Orthodox Church, there is also an ongoing debate regarding how various bishops have handled this crisis. The bishops have responded to this crisis in various ways. Some only imposed restrictions on services in those places in which this was mandated by the local authorities; while others either restricted attendance or cancelled them altogether, regardless of government mandates being imposed or not. I have seen many who have argued that bishops who imposed such restrictions are outright heretics and apostates. But I have never heard such arguments when a parish has cancelled services because of severe weather.

It may be, that as we reflect on this crisis, many bishops will regret that they overreacted. It could also have been that if this virus proves to be as deadly as many say, that some bishops might have regretted under-reacting. So this is not a question of heresy, but a question of wisdom -- i.e., what was the reasonable thing to do under the circumstances. We might disagree with a bishop's decisions, but even if he judged wrongly, one has to assume his motivations were good, and that a desire to subvert the faith was not among those motivations. But what concerns me most at present, is where some bishops are headed with their responses to how we should proceed liturgically in the wake of this virus.

We currently have bishops mandating the use of a different spoon for each communicant, and some who have instituted the practice of giving people communion in the hand (with a portion of the intincted Eucharist), all driven by the fear that giving people communion with a communion spoon, as the Church has been doing for nearly a thousand years now, might cause someone to get the virus. The question we should ask, however, is whether or not this fear is rational or irrational.

It has been pointed out that the practice of the Church in the first millennium was for people to receive communion much in the same way that Orthodox clergy still do: first with the Body of Christ in the hand, and then by receiving the Blood directly from the chalice. Why did the Church end that practice, and begin communing people with a spoon? Because people were carelessly dropping portions of the Eucharist, and because of some peo
ple taking the Eucharist home for superstitious purposes. There is little reason to believe that people in our time will be more pious and careful than people in the first millennium.

While many are appealing to the older practice as a basis for what they propose as a solution to concerns over this virus, none are actually suggesting we return to that practice, because obviously, if the laity were all partaking from a common chalice, this would not be an improvement over using a single spoon. In fact, while the spoon is dipped back into the chalice and washed in the Blood of Christ after each person is communed, this does not happen to the outside of the chalice.

Those advocating for the use of multiple, or even disposable spoons, appeal to precedents from the past for how those known to be sick with infectious diseases have been communed. But the key factor is that this is how people who were known to have an infectious disease were communed -- such methods were never used as a preventative measure. Also, when a priest communed the sick, he normally does so with the reserved sacrament, and so the wine that is in the chalice is unconsecrated.

The question I have asked many people who have advocated that such changes are necessary is very simple: Is there any evidence that anyone has ever gotten sick from receiving communion with a spoon? There answer to this question is "no." But some people then retort that this is simply because no one has ever done a scientific study of the question, but this is not true. It is true that, to my knowledge at least, there have been no studies involving the use of communion spoons, but there have actually been several studies of people using a common chalice -- which would be more likely to be a means of transmitting disease than a communion spoon, for the aforementioned reason -- and so such studies are a good way to answer the question of whether our fears are rational or irrational.

John Sanidopoulos, in his article "Scientific Studies on the Transmission of Infectious Diseases Through Holy Communion" has pointed to 6 relevant studies done between 1943 and 1998. One study found that even under ideal circumstances, the use of a common chalice showed 0.001% of organisms being transferred, but when studying conditions that actually followed real world practice, no transmission could be detected. In another study, three groups of people were studied: those who go to Church and receive communion, those who go to Church but who do not receive communion, and those who do not go to Church at all. What they found was that even among those who received communion as often as daily, there was no increase one's risk of infection. And so even if you do not believe in God, fears of getting sick because of getting a virus from a communion spoon is irrational -- and if you do believe in God, and actually believe the Eucharist is truly Christ's Body and Blood), then you should have nothing to worry about.

In Fr. Calivas article "A Note on the Common Communion Spoon," he says that he himself has no such fears, but expresses his concern for those who do: "In my sixty-four years in the priesthood, I have consumed the chalice thousands of times after countless Divine Liturgies without fear or hesitation, as every priest does. I am not certain, however, that every faithful parishioner would do the same, if they were asked."

I have not been a priest for even half as long, but my experience supports Fr. Alkiviadis' conclusion that there is nothing to fear. When I commune the faithful, the last mouth that I place the spoon into before handing it off to the deacon is my own (to ensure that there is nothing left of the Eucharist on the spoon), and I have not so much as had a fever since several years before I was ordained a priest. If a virus could be transmitted via a communion spoon, there should be widespread instances of priests with oral herpes (which can be spread by the use of eating utensils that have been used by someone with that virus), but as a matter of fact, there is no evidence that anyone has gotten such a virus in this way.

I can appreciate Fr. Alkiviadis' concern for people who have irrational fears, but why should we encourage such irrational fears to persist by acting in a way that communicates to them that we believe those fears are well found?

I am afraid that we as a society may be raising up a generation of germaphobes who will spend their lives paralyzed by such irrational fears, who will be so concerned about dying from the many germs and viruses that abound in our world, that they are unable to actually live. But it is far more concerning to contemplate the message that the Church would be sending to the faithful, if we act as if receiving communion is a physically dangerous act. It is indeed spiritually dangerous to receive communion in an unworthy manner (1 Cor
As we are reopening our churches, a lot of discussions have arisen as to the method of distribution of the Holy Gifts in the Orthodox Churches. Some people have been talking about the need for using multiple spoons, others are proposing new innovative methods. The underlying feeling of everyone is the fear of death.

These are certainly scary times, as even our scientists don’t fully understand how the coronavirus spreads and how to prevent infection, while the doctors do not yet have a good treatment for the sick or any effective preventive measures.

So, justifiably, people are concerned about the danger of the spreading of the disease while in church and even through the reception of Holy Communion.

In order to find reassurance and comfort in the spiritual treasures of our Orthodox Faith, I invite you to listen to the voice of the Holy Fathers coming to us from the depths of time; the voice of those who understood the transformation of the bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Christ as the greatest miracle occurring on the Earth. They saw it as the Source of Power against the demons, the Bread of Life, the Source of Eternal Life, the Medicine of Immortality, the Antidote against death.

St. Ignatius of Antioch (early 2nd century) describes the Eucharistic gatherings in this way: “Make every effort to come together more frequently to give thanks and glory to God. For when you meet together frequently, the powers of Satan are overthrown and his destructiveness is nullified by the unanimity of your faith. There is nothing better than peace, by which all warfare among those in heaven and those on earth is abolished.” (Letter to the Ephesians 13:1-2)

He also describes the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist as “the medicine of immortality, the antidote we take in order not to die but to live forever in Jesus Christ” (Letter to the Eph 20:2).

With this understanding, that Holy Communion is the Bread of Life, it is important that we not ap-

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THE CHALICE, THE SPOON, AND OUR FEAR OF DEATH

By Fr. Panayiotis Papageorgiou

As we are reopening our churches, a lot of discussions have arisen as to the method of distribution of the Holy Gifts in the Orthodox Churches. Some people have been talking about the need for using multiple spoons, others are proposing new innovative methods. The underlying feeling of everyone is the fear of death.

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With this understanding, that Holy Communion is the Bread of Life, it is important that we not ap-
The Consecrated Elements (Holy Communion), though ‘corporeal’ and subject to corruption themselves, act upon us as uncreated divinity in order to transform and perfect our fallen nature, not to change us from being physically corruptible, but to enable us to become partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), even in the here and now.

Therefore, to those who receive Holy Communion with faith and true repentance the Lord’s body becomes a ‘safeguard’ for strength, healing and health of soul and body, maintenance and deification of their fallen human nature.

The consecrated elements in the Holy Eucharist operate as the deified body of Jesus. Through corruptible matter, God grants life uncorrupted. And although immortality is an eschatological condition, and we shall all, sooner or later, cross to the other side and receive it in its fullness, yet ‘doses’ of incorruption are given to us in this mortal life according to the measure of each one’s faith, his/her longing and godly fear and love. *We are transformed into a different mode of existence by the touch of Christ’s Body and Blood. We are sanctified and deified by being united with Him.*

The Chalice and Spoon of Holy Communion are also *changed* as they come into contact with Christ’s Body and Blood. *They are transformed to a different mode of existence; they are sanctified. Their nature is not changed, but, rather, in the same way as a blade becomes fire when thrown into the fire . . . the Chalice and the Spoon are also changed and sanctified. Their mode of existence is altered so that they may transfer life to us, just as his garment heals the flow of blood in the woman when she touches it, just as the sea is calmed by the touch of Christ for the safety of the disciples, just as the daughter of Jarius and the son of the widow are brought back to life by the touch of Christ.*

The Body and Blood of Christ, along with the sacred vessels (the Chalice and the Spoon) utilized to deliver it to us cannot be a threat to our bodily health if we approach with the "Fear of God with Faith and with Love." On the contrary, they will lead us to healing of soul and body and eternal life as they deliver to us *the healing, salvific touch of Christ.*

Hence, as we return to Holy Communion, let us surrender in faith to God’s mercy and forgiveness and ask that He may restore us again in His good favor, and protect us from disease and eternal condemnation.

COVID-19 is a tribulation (δοκιμασία), a test to our faith. The only way to overcome tribulations is by surrendering to God’s Love and Mercy completely and unconditionally in faith and trust. Holy Communion is the place to do that, even as He is offered to us through the shared Chalice and Spoon. Let us, then, begin to prepare ourselves to come to Holy Communion.

Just as the Parish Council members are working diligently to clean and disinfect the church buildings from the poisonous Coronavirus, which threatens to lead us to sickness and the death of our bodies, let us diligently cleanse and disinfect our hearts and souls from the poisonous sins and sinful vices, which threaten to lead us to eternal death of both soul and body. As we prepare with prayer, turning with love to God, let us shed our rationalistic thoughts and fill our hearts and minds with positive spiritual thoughts of faith and trust in the Lord. He will never fail us!
Koulaxizoglou who came from Anatolia (Turkey) and resettled in Lydia during the population exchange between the Greeks and the Turks in 1923. He and his family survived through the hard times of the German and Bulgarian occupations in WWII and the ensuing years of the Greek Civil War. In 1956, Gus came to America and enrolled at Nichols College. He lived with his uncle Kosma Hadjoglou and Aunt Stella until he married. They provided a loving home in Webster from which this promising young man could start his new life.

In 1958, Constantine met Vasiliki “Bessie” Katsetos at a dance and they married in January 1959. He and his beloved wife started a family and became the parents of four loving daughters.

From the time Constantine was a child, he has had a love for Christ and His teachings, always putting others before himself. He is a devoted life-long member of Sts. Constantine & Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Webster and a Godparent of this parish, one of the group of dedicated people who helped the church when it was consecrated.

He held the titles of President and Treasurer of the parish council in years past. He also served as a greeter and usher for a number of years, welcoming members and visitors alike with his endearing smile. He was always involved in the annual Greek festival, building and setting up the bar stand and working long hours as the bartender. He would use his skills as a handyman and carpenter wherever needed. You would even see Constantine lending a hand to the ladies’ Philoptochos Society with pastry and bread baking. Whatever he did for the church, it was all for the love and glory of God. He has always been a hardworking, generous and affable individual!

Gus was born in the town of Lydia, near Kavala, Greece to Seraphim and Alexandra Koulaxizoglou who came from Anatolia (Turkey) and resettled in Lydia during the population exchange between the Greeks and the Turks in 1923. He and his family survived through the hard times of the German and Bulgarian occupations in WWII and the ensuing years of the Greek Civil War. In 1956, Gus came to America and enrolled at Nichols College. He lived with his uncle Kosma Hadjoglou and Aunt Stella until he married. They provided a loving home in Webster from which this promising young man could start his new life.

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Constantine worked at local grocery stores until he and his cousin took over their uncle’s bar establishment and he became a business partner/owner of the old Star Cafe. This started Constantine’s career of owning and operating restaurants in Webster, including his final establishment New Rainbow Pizza House.
OLGA POLOUKHINE AND THE ICONOGRAPHY IN OUR CHURCH

Olga Poloukhine has been a lifelong member of the Orthodox Church, but a special and beloved member of our Saints Constantine and Helen Church Family over the past four years. She has been very active in the life of our Church, from attending almost every worship service, whether on weekdays or Sundays, as well as participating in our weekly Bible Study, helping with our Church Bookstore, and in serving on our Parish Council during the past two years.

One very special contribution that Olga has made to our community has been using her artistic gifts to beautify our Church by freely offering 16 different traditional and unique hand-painted icons that can be seen on the walls of our Sanctuary and in our Church Hall. (as well as on these pages).

Olga comes from an aristocratic Russian family - where her maternal grandfather, Sergei Schidlovsky was the last Vice President of the Russian Duma, or Parliament, after Tzar Nicholas II abdicated his throne and before the Bolsheviks took control in Russia. Her paternal great-grandfather was an advisor to the Tsar and the Chairman of the State Council of the Russian Empire. Her paternal grandfather was murdered during the Revolution for his political position, and Olga shared with me a very moving story about how her grandmother providentially met the man responsible for her husband’s murder years later on the streets of Paris, and was able to forgive the man!

Her maternal grandparents and her mother (who was only around 16 at this time) escaped the chaos of the Bolshevik Revolution following World War I. Her father’s family also fled Russia at the start of the Revolution. Both ended up in Paris. They left a life of privilege to enter the world of displaced immigrants, joining the large Russian émigré community in France.

In Paris, Olga’s mother, Sophie Koulomzin, became a member of the Russian Student Christian Movement and interacted with many of the leading Russian religious thinkers of her day, including Nikolai Berdyaev, Fr. Sergius Bulgakov, and Semyon Frank, as well as with St. Maria (Skobstova) of Paris, the twice-divorced intellectual who became a Russian nun who served the marginalized Russian immigrants in Paris.
through homes of hospitality. St. Maria ended her life in a Nazi concentration camp because of her work in saving a number of Jews from the Nazis. She died in the Ravensbruck Concentration Camp.

Out of this fellowship, Olga’s mother Sophie cultivated her theological acumen and passion for education, especially for children. Her mother studied at Columbia University in the US via a fellowship given by the YMCA, and returned to Paris where she married. Following the horrors and struggles of World War 2, she brought her family, which included 14 year old Olga, to the States. Here, Olga’s mother became a renowned Orthodox Christian religious educator. She founded the Orthodox Christian Education Commission (OCED), taught at St. Vladimir’s Seminary for 20 years, and wrote numerous books. In July 1999, Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow, the primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, issued her the “Order of St. Olga” for her many years of service to the Church. Olga was blessed to accompany her mother on this special trip.

I asked Olga if we could do an article in this month’s issue of “The Light” to highlight her beautiful iconography and to thank her for all that she has done for our Church through her icons as well as through the witness of her faith and life. In fact just this week, Olga brought to our church her latest icon of St. Modestos of Jerusalem, who is known as the Patron Saint of Animals.

Olga, tell us something about your life?

“The Church has always been the central part of my life. My entire worldview, from my childhood into old age, has been formed by Jesus Christ and our Orthodox Church and Faith. My parents were imbued with the spirit of the Church, and I was raised in this spirit.
(continued from page 9)

As for art, I was born an artist. This is a part of who I have always been. Throughout my life, I have gone through many different phases as an artist. I studied art as an Art Major at Rutgers University. I began my career in an advertising studio, but quickly left that and began teaching art in an elementary school as I attended Colombia’s Teachers College. I later became a professional artist with an agent who sold my work in NYC.

Even as a professional artist I was always a part of the Church. It was interesting how in the Church community I was looked at as the free-spirited, “crazy” artist. Yet in my artist circles, they couldn’t understand my traditional views of faith, family, and world. I quickly realized, however, that I didn’t fit into the SoHo art community. My main community was always the Church.

After the birth of my first child, I continued substitute teaching until my second child. Then I focused on my children. I have four children, but one died shortly after birth. As my children grew up, I looked to practice my art in different ways.

I didn’t begin iconography until my mid-40s. My husband Nick retired as a neurosurgeon and decided to take up iconography. After a period of time, he lost interest in iconography but by then, I had learned the technique and was applying it to my other art. Eventually, I began to focus specifically on iconography.

One difference I see in painting my own works and painting icons is that, when you paint your own work, you have to put yourself into it. When you paint an icon, painting becomes a prayer. The focus is on allowing the Holy Spirit to inspire and to guide all you do. Of course, throughout the painting of an icon I put pray into my effort. Thus, painting an icon feeds one’s soul. I don’t look at iconography as a craft. I’m not a good craftsman. Painting icons is something that touches the soul. I believe that my spiritual journey led me to iconography, and painting icons has blessed me.

I feel more connected to God when I paint icons. Icons follow an ancient, sacred Tradition. Of course, the iconographer must put something of themselves into the icon, but we always realize that we are a part of something much greater than ourselves. We are a part of Sacred Tradition. And we must take care to follow that Tradition faithfully.

In the life of the Church, iconography is important because it is the visual Word of God, a living visual. Icons are windows into heaven. They can help people connect with God. There is power in their art and beauty. Icons can speak to a person in a very different way then the written word. I think throughout history of the illiterate faithful who could not read Holy Scripture, and yet they could still learn sacred Scripture through icons.”

Olga, what does your Orthodox Christian faith mean to you?

“Everything. My faith is the central part of who I am, of my life. Even when I was young and we
couldn’t go to Church during the War, our faith was still integral to who we were. We would invite a priest monk who would travel 60 miles under very dangerous circumstances to come to our home to serve the Divine Liturgy, to listen to our Confession, to offer Holy Unction, and to help us stay connected to the Church. We couldn’t imagine life without the Church, even in the midst of war.

As a young girl before I was married, I realized that my husband had to be Orthodox because I couldn’t imagine a life which wasn’t integrally connected to the life of the Church. I’ve tried to live my life in Christ. I’m sure I’ve failed in countless ways, but I love God with all my heart and pray that I can stay faithful to Him and all His ways in my life.

When I look at my children and grandchildren, I don’t try to give them too much advice about the faith. I hope to live my life in a way that will speak to them about faith. Just like in my art, if I try to verbalize what I do in my painting, I can’t. My words won’t be able to express my art. In similar ways, it’s hard to express what I believe and the fundamental importance of my faith in words. I pray that my life can show what I believe and who I am.

At this stage of your life, what do you hope for?

What do we pray for in every Divine Liturgy? We pray that “the remaining time of our lives may be passed in peace and repentance” and then we pray for a “Christian end to our lives, painless, blameless, and peaceful, and for a good account before the fearful judgement seat of Christ.”

That is my prayer at this stage of my life. For my life to be peaceful, full of repentance, and one that can offer a good witness on the day of judgement.

On a smaller scale, I also do hope to live beyond this Coronavirus pandemic so that I can still go and visit my other children and friends!

WHAT ARE ICONS?

An icon is a sacred image of Jesus Christ or a holy person or feast in another reality, place, and time, which has an important spiritual role. Icons are much more than just a beautiful piece of art – they are “windows into heaven” that give us an idea of what the heavenly realm looks like.

1. Religious icons remind us of the incarnation of Christ.

Icons serve as a constant reminder of the fact that God became incarnate in human form. This is why we can portray Him in iconographic form. Moreover, because of the incarnation of Christ, we can also paint the Mother of God and other saints who lived their lives on earth and are now in heaven.

2. Holy icons depict silence.

Persons depicted in Orthodox Christianity icons don’t speak or display any actions. They show people that time does not matter, thus inviting us into the world of silence, prayer, and contemplation. Furthermore, figures and things in religious icons don’t cast shadows, as there is no night in heaven, only eternal day. That’s the divine reality, where the depicted story precludes space and time.

3. Icons are not sentimental pictures.

Although icons depict historical figures & scenes, they don’t show human emotions, as they are not intended to force an intense emotional response. However, they still show such virtues as love, compassion, forgiveness, patience, and purity.

4. Icons serve as a means of worship and veneration.

Being “windows into heaven,” icons serve as tools in worshipping God and venerating His saints. To show that amazing divine reality, iconographers use only specific colors and lines prescribed by tradition. Icons are painted the same way they were painted centuries ago, with the slightest stylistic changes. It is believed that the first icons were painted by St. Luke, who saw the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ with his own eyes.
PENTECOST
THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE CHURCH
Metropolitan Anthony Bloom

The Church of God is not an institution, it is a miracle and it is a mystery. It is a miracle because who and how could we expect that closeness of God which is revealed to us in the Church. And it is also a mystery in the original sense of the world, something which cannot be either explained or conveyed in words, something that can be known only through a spellbound communion with God.

The English word “God” comes from a Germanic root that means “Him, before whom one prostrates in adoration”. This is where our knowledge of God begins—the sense of the divine presence that forces us down to our knees, spellbound, silent, not with an empty silence that is ours at times but with a silence which is nothing but intent worshipful listening, listening to the presence, listening to that presence which is at the core of the silence. And He who speak to us within this silence is the Holy Spirit, who unveils before our minds and hearts what the words spoken by God, revealed to us in the Gospel truly convey. It is only under the guidance of the Holy Spirit that we can both believe and understand what Christ spoke because words in themselves are always equivocal, they may be clear or obscure, they may be made to mean what they never meant. And this is the role of the Holy Spirit—to make us understand God’s word as it was born in the divine silence and unfolded before us in words which we could understand. But these words are not a prison, they are an open door as Christ is the door leading to the Father and leading to eternal life.

It is the Holy Spirit who according to the promise of our Lord unveils for us the meaning of the Scriptures. It is not scholarship but it is worship and a worship that allows us to commune with the mind of God and the heart of God. The Spirit of truth, but also Him whom the Scripture calls the Paraclete, a complex word as so many of the words of ancient languages. It means “the Comforter”, Him who gives consolation. It means ‘Comforter’ in the sense that He gives us strength. It means also “Him, who brings joy”. And these three meanings are important but He can be to us the Comforter in these various ways only if we are in need of His comfort.

What kind of consolation do we need? Most of us feel perfectly comfortable in our lives and indeed in our worship and our spiritual life and who of us is in a position to say with all the intensity and depth with which St. Paul spoke these words, “For me life is Christ, death would be a gain because as long as I live in the body, I am separated from Christ.” Can we honestly say that for us life is Christ, that all that He stands for is life-giving, all that is contrary to Him, to us is death? Can we say that we have died with Christ to everything which is alien to God? Can we say that we are alive only when the things of God come our way—prayer, deep meditation, the kind of understanding which the Spirit of God reveals to us? And so we must ask ourselves very sternly a first question: Is Christ my life or not? Would it be enough for me to feel that life is fulfilled, complete to be at one with Christ in all things or do I feel that there are so many things which I love and which I am not prepared to let go off even to be with Christ?

And again, Christ is in the midst of us invisibly, mysteriously. Yes, but He is not with us in the way in which He was with the Apostles. We cannot say with St. John that we speak of what we have seen, what we have heard, what our hands have touched. We know Christ in the spirit, no longer in the flesh, and yet Christ rose in the flesh, Christ ascended and is seated at the right hand of the Father in His body glorified. Paul longed to be with Him in this companionship full of veneration, of reverence, of love. He wanted to be at one with Him without anything separating from Him. Who shall make me free of this body of corruption, of this body against which my thoughts and my prayers and my best inclinations, and my most passionate impulses for good breakdown? Can we say that?

Is death what we expect longingly because it will unite us to Christ? Or are we still pagan at heart and do we wish to flee from death? And instead of saying, “Lord, Jesus, come and come soon,” aren’t we prepared to say, “Tarry, O Lord, tarry, give me time,” in the way in which Augustine prayed to the Lord.

The Light - June 2019
after his conversion, “Lord, give me chastity but not just now.” Isn’t it that our condition — not concerning chastity alone but everything in life: not just now, O Lord, the time will come when all my energies will be spent, when age will have come and made life much less attractive or unpalatable — then take me. No, this is not it. And so, when we think of the Holy Spirit as our Comforter, as one who consoles us from the absence of Christ by making us to commune with the essence of things, where do we stand? Is He our Comforter while we need no comfort?

And again, in our ministry how often do we feel that we are totally, ultimately helpless, that what we are called to do is simply beyond human possibilities? In the beginning of the Eucharistic celebration in the Orthodox Church, when the priest is vested, when he has prepared the Holy Gifts, when he is about to give the first liturgical exclamation, when in his naivety he may think, “Now I will perform miracles on earth,” the deacon turns to him and says, “And now, Father, it is time for God to act.” All you could do, you have done, you have prayed and prepared yourself, made yourself open to God, you have vested yourself and become an image – but only an image not the thing. You have prepared the bread and the wine and now what is expected of you is something which you cannot do, you cannot by any power including apostolic succession make this bread into the Body of Christ, this wine into the Blood of Christ, you have no power over God and you have no power over the created world. It is only Christ who is the only celebrant because He is the High Priest of all creation who sending the Holy Spirit can break through into time, open it up so that eternity can flow, indeed, make eruption into it and within this eschatological situation in which eternity fills time make possible the impossible, make bread into the Body of Christ crucified and risen, the wine into the Blood of Christ crucified and risen.

And all our function depends only on the Holy Spirit. Strength? St. Paul hoped for strength, he prayed for it and the Lord answered him, “My grace suffices unto you, My strength is made perfect in weakness.” And Paul rejoices in his weakness, of our weakness, of our laziness, of our timidity, of our cowardice, of our forgetfulness. No, not that weakness! But the frailty recognized, which is given to God, the surrender of ourselves.

If I may use an image, it is that of the sail of a sailing ship. Of all the parts of the ship the sail is the frailest, the weakest and yet filled with the wind, and the word “wind” in ancient languages is the same as “spirit,” “ruah,” “πνεῦμα,” it can carry the heavy structure of the ship to its haven. This is the kind of weakness, of frailty which we have got to offer to God, such frailty that He can use it freely, without resistance, and then our strength will be stronger than anything which the created world can possess. The martyrs were frail, as frail as we were, but they abandoned themselves to God and they lived and died in the power of the Spirit. We need that strength.

And then the Paraclete is the one that gives joy, the joy of entering already now into eternity, the joy of being joined to Christ in the communion of the one body, the joy of giving our lives for Him and if necessary – our death, a joy which the world cannot give but which the world cannot take away.

I will end on one example of this joy of the Spirit. A few years ago I met an elderly Russian priest who had spent 36 years in prisons and concentration camps. He sat opposite me with eyes shining with joy and gratitude and he said, “Do you realize, can you imagine, how infinitely good God had been to me? The Soviet authorities did not allow a priest either into prisons or into camps; and He chooses me, a young, inexperienced priest and sends me first to prison and then to camp to look after his lost sheep.” There was nothing in him but gratitude and joy. And that joy, that kind of gratitude against the history of his life was truly an outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

Let us therefore in all our life, whether we pray, listen to the unutterable groanings of the Spirit within us, teaching us ultimately to call the God of Heaven our Father if we are in Jesus Christ, in the words of Irenaeus of Lyon, sons of God in the Only-Begotten Son of God. Let us open ourselves and listen intently when we have got to preach, so that it should not be a work of our intellect or learning but a sharing of something which we have learnt from God. However poor, childlike, simple it may seem, let it be God’s. And when we come to the celebration of the Holy Mysteries, let us remember that we stand where no one can stand but the High Priest of all creation, the Lord Jesus Christ and let us turn to the Holy Spirit calling Him to make the bread and the wine into the Body and Blood of Christ in an act Divine which we can only mediate by faith and in obedience to Christ’s own command. Amen.
GOD GRANT YOU MANY BLESSED YEARS!

Important Dates in JUNE:

Try to make a visit, give a call, or express your congratulations to members of our Church family who celebrate special days during this month.

**BIRTHDAYS:**

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**WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ted &amp; Gail Avlas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Matt &amp; Christa Benoit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Dan &amp; Susan Rivelli</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Bill &amp; Helen Zenon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Harry &amp; Catherine Jordanoglou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Anestis &amp; Evis Jordanoglou</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Rayne/Elise Purcell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Annalisa and George Duning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Bob and Lea Mirandola</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Angelo &amp; Dhimitra Adamopoulos</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**NAMEDAYS:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>June</th>
<th>Name</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>St Nikiphoros Nick Popiak</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>St. Methodios His Eminence Metropolitan Methodios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>St Elizabeth Elizabeth Cojocaru Lisa Healy Betty Tonna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Sts Peter and Paul Petruch Cojocaru Peter George Paul Geotis Paul Karapanos Pauline Mueller Peter Porazzo Paul Veronis</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Congratulations to Charolotte Loucia Scafari, and her parents Michael and Loucia, who received her 40 Day Church Blessing!
"The religious leaders bring before Jesus a woman caught in a very serious, sinful act – adultery. They want to condemn her. Jesus is not interested in justice according to the law, but in mercy that can lead to healing, to new life. Christ doesn’t punish or condemn the woman. He saves her. This is the spirit of God, to love and to save.

Look for our safe and convenient Online Giving at bottom left of Church webpage at www.schwebster.org

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www.AncientFaith.com

DRIVE THRU GYRO FEST

11:00am-7:00pm
Saturday, June 27
at our Church

Gyro Platter - $10.00
Just a Gyro - $8.00
Pastries and More

Ticket Purchase Call Church Office (508-943-8361) or Mike (860-481-0405)
To Sponsor or Buy a Banner Call Church Office.
Thank You to those who sponsor our monthly bulletin!

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Certified Public Accountant

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Point Breeze
Your Restaurant on Webster Lake

114 Point Breeze Road
Webster, MA
# JUNE 2020

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thu</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 31 8:30 Matin 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:00 Virtual Coffee Fellowship 12:00 Parish Council Meeting</td>
<td>June 1 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3 10:00 Zoom Bible Study 6:00pm Paraclesis following by ZOOM discussion “How to be the Church During this Time of Crisis”</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10 10:00 Bible Study via ZOOM</td>
<td>11 6:30 Paraclesis to Virgin Mary</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>10:00 Bible Study on Zoom</td>
<td>15 Apostles Fast Begins 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>16 10:00 Bible Study on Zoom</td>
<td>18 6:30 Paraclesis to Virgin Mary</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 8:30 Matin 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:00 Virtual Coffee Fellowship</td>
<td>8 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>14 8:30 Matin 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:00 Virtual Coffee Fellowship Metropolis of Boston Awards</td>
<td>17 10:00 Bible Study on Zoom</td>
<td>19 6:30 Paraclesis to Virgin Mary</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>10:00 Bible Study on Zoom</td>
<td>15 Apostles Fast Begins 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>16 10:00 Bible Study on Zoom</td>
<td>18 6:30 Paraclesis to Virgin Mary</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 8:30 Matin 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:00 Virtual Coffee Fellowship</td>
<td>22 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td>24 Nativity of John Baptist 8:30 Matins 9:15 Liturgy 10:00 Bible Study on Zoom</td>
<td>25 6:30 Paraclesis to Virgin Mary</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 8:30 Matin 9:30 Divine Liturgy 11:00 Virtual Coffee Fellowship 1:00 Parish Council Meeting on Zoom</td>
<td>29 Sts Peter and Paul 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy</td>
<td>30 Holy Apostles 8:45 Matins 9:30 Liturgy</td>
<td>July 1 10:00 Bible Study via ZOOM</td>
<td>July 2</td>
<td>July 3</td>
<td>July 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1 6:30 Paraclesis During Time of Pandemic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>GOD BLESS AMERICA! Happy Independence Day!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STAY WITH ME LORD

Stay with me, Lord,
for it is necessary to have You present so that I don’t forget
You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me, Lord,
because I am weak and I need Your strength,
that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me, Lord,
for You are my life, and without You,
I am without meaning and hope.

Stay with me, Lord,
for You are my light, and without You,
I am in darkness.

Stay with me, Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me, Lord,
so that I can hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me, Lord, for I desire to love You ever more,
and to be in Your company always.

Stay with me, Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I wish it to be
a place of consolation for You, a dwelling of Your love.

Stay with me, Lord,
and fill me with your divine love,
helping me to know that I am your beloved.

Stay with me, Lord,
for it is You alone I look for, because I love You
and ask no other reward but to love You more.