

St. Mary Magdalene Orthodox Church

July 21, 2024

4th Sunday After Pentecost

Prophet Ezekiel (6th c. B.C.)

Ven. Onuphry the Silent

Activities and Events this Week

- Monday 22
Hours 8:40am
Divine Liturgy 9:00am
Parish Feast Day
Holy Myrrhbearer and Equal to the Apostles Mary Magdalene
- Wednesday 24
Choir Rehearsal 4:30pm
- Friday 26
Hours 5:40am
Divine Liturgy 6:00am
St. Jacob Netsvetov of Alaska
- Saturday 27
Great Vespers 5:00pm
Confessions to Follow

Announcements

Parish feast day Monday (tomorrow) July 22nd. We will sing the Divine Liturgy at 9:00am. Feast days of parishes are a 2nd Pascha! Let us celebrate and give thanks to God for the intercessions of the holy- equal- to- the apostles, Mary Magdalene. If possible take the day off of work! **Perhaps we could have a breakfast potluck!**

It has be decided! We will keep the time for Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00am.

Lukas Doiel is doing much better – he now thinks he is funnier than I, as he was telling jokes!

Books have been ordered for the Fall Adult Education class. We will notify you as to when they arrive.

Sit silently each day for 20-30 minutes. Just listen... just listen... just listen.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE FAITH?

I might very well be the least qualified person to talk about faith. I don't consider myself a very faithful individual. I have always struggled with it. I could look up a definition on my cell phone but that's all it would be, a definition. It would not be something I completely live out. For me, whatever faith I have comes from my direct experience with God in my life. I would say faith is really a gift of the Holy Spirit to those who want to live in conformation of all that Jesus Christ gave His holy disciples and apostles.

One might ask, "You are a priest and you don't have faith?" I would say that I like many others, struggle with faith. It's a word we throw around - "oh just have faith." Wonderful...but how and what does that mean? My great teacher Fr. Thomas Hopko said if we wanted to identify with Christ in this world then we must do two important things. First, we must believe in God one hundred percent - no matter what. Second, we must forgive everyone of everything - no matter what. I have spoken of the second necessary quality, but I don't believe I have spoken of the first and most important one - that is believing in God. This is what I think faith is all about. "Oh, just have faith" is not something I am capable of doing unless I can first believe in God - no matter what type of problem I am up against. For this I need the help of the Holy Spirit.

In my darkest times, I was tempted to just give up on everything. But since I had lived my entire life in the Church I decided to just "blindly" put everything in God's providence. This allowed me to function as a priest and teacher when all I wanted to do was just lay down and die. As time went on, I saw little bits of prayer answered and small amounts of fear taken away. What I discovered in this process was that God answered a small bit of prayer not in my way - but in His. I begin recognizing that God's way had much more power. When a little fear was taken away - it was taken away when God decided, not me. I then recognized that God's way was indeed much more powerful than my wishes.

So for me, having faith, when I could muster enough courage, was to place all at God's feet - and just leave it there. And while I do not consider myself a "man of faith" I am able to recognize when God had helped me. It was not euphoric or earth shaking, I did not behold the uncreated light. Rather it was through hard experience that allowed me to have more faith, more trust - to believe in God maybe a little more than I had.

Listen to today's Gospel about the healing of the Roman Centurion's servant and how God marveled at the Centurion's humility and faith. He was a pagan! Where did he get the disposition to have that kind of humility and faith? How can we perhaps be like the Centurion? If you ask a faithless person like me - I would say, live the life of the Church - with all fidelity - no cutting corners. Live in the presence of the Holy Spirit. Submit to God's love and power that He wants to share with us all. I think this is where faith begins.