



The Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
301 Struthers Liberty Rd
Campbell, OH 44405
OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



AUGUST BULLETIN SPONSOR

Audrey Chengelis

Liturgical and Events Schedule

Sunday, August 20

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Monthly Panachida / Social

Wednesday, August 23

10:00 AM: Calling hours at the church for Thomas Kristian

11:00 AM: Funeral Service

Mercy meal to be held here in church basement

Saturday, August 26

6:00 pm Vespers / Confessions

Sunday, August 27

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Monthly Panachida / Social / Council Meeting



ANNUAL GARLIC BEING SOLD FOR CHARITY

Every year Steven Simko & Michael Centofanti sell garlic to support a charity. This year, on Sunday August 27, they will be selling garlic for \$1 a head. This year's charity will benefit the workers of St. Basil.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. May God bless all of you.

40 Day Remembrance

August 27 Walter Litzie

September 24 His Eminence Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo / Thomas Kristian

1 Corinthians 9:2-12 (Epistle)

If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defense to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who plows should plow in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

IOCC EVENT / UKRAINE RELIEF DINNER & PRAYER SERVICE

Sunday, September 24, 2023

Service 4:00pm / Dinner 5:00 pm

St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Cathedral

419 South Dithridge St

Pittsburgh (Oakland), PA 15213

If interested, please see Fr. Andrew., who has tickets. Tickets are \$50. RSVP is necessary by September 19.

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

<https://www.stjohnthebaptist-campbell.org/>

padrebartek@gmail.com

PLEASE KEEP OUR SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a "Thinking of You" card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

Mrs. Mary Fredericks
648 Dumont Ave
Campbell, OH 44405

Mrs. Audrey Chengelis
6210 Catawba Drive
Canfield, OH 44406

Mrs. Julia Simko
Inn At Poland Way
6501 Poland Way / Rm 122
Poland OH, 44514

Mrs. Mary Jane Puskas
Maplecrest Nursing Home
400 Sexton St
Struthers, OH 44471

Emilia Yannitto
8017 Salinas Tr.
Boardman, OH 44512-5402

Matushka Helen Psinka
1040 State St / Rm 1015
Concordia Villa St Joseph
Baden, PA 15005

Mrs. Dorothy Shirilla
8362 Van Dr.
Poland, OH 44514

Mrs. Pauline Fesz
488 Harmony Lane
Campbell, OH 44405

Mrs. Marion Zwinski
6190 Springfield Rd / Apt 17c
Poland, OH 44514-3196

Joan Cross
18 Fruitland Drive
New Castle, PA 16105

Irene & Al Mazanek
1285 Fairfax-Manor Dr
Carmel, IN 46032

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon Offers Condolences For the Repose of His Eminence Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and All Japan

On August 13, 2023 His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon sent a letter of condolence to His Eminence Archbishop Seraphim of the Holy Autonomous Orthodox Church in Japan on the occasion of the repose of His Eminence Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and All Japan. In his letter, His Beatitude assured His Eminence of his prayers and mentioned the long-standing ties of friendship between our Churches.

The text of the letter reads as follows:

Your Eminence, dear brother and concelebrant in the Lord's Mysteries,

Christ is in our midst!

Please accept my condolences on the recent falling asleep in the Lord of His Eminence Metropolitan Daniel of Tokyo and All Japan. On behalf of the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, we extend our sympathy to the grieving clergy and faithful of the Holy Autonomous Orthodox Church in Japan, and we assure you of our prayers both for His Eminence's repose and for the grieving flock he leaves behind. The historic connection between our Churches has left indelible bonds of love and fellowship in our hearts, and the children of the Orthodox Church in America cannot but mourn with you who mourn (sir. 7:34, Rom. 12:15).

For more than twenty years, His Eminence served the Lord as the primate of Japan—Nippon, "the place whence the sun rises." May the true Sun of righteousness, the never-setting Light of the age to come, rise eternally over His Eminence, raising him up with that rising, rewarding His Eminence's many years of labor in the heat of the day with eternal refreshment and everlasting participation in the tranquil brightness of the Holy Trinity.

永遠の記憶! May His Eminence's memory be eternal!

Yours in Christ,
+Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

CONGRATULATIONS

To Sarah & Josh on their new daughter, Zoe, who was born this past Sunday morning. Many Years!

To Annie Jesko who was asked & accepted the position of Great Lakes Ambassador to the OCF. Many Years!

MEMORY ETERNAL

Our parishioner, Thomas Kristian, fell asleep in the Lord Tuesday, August 15th. May his memory be eternal! His funeral will be this Wednesday.

PRAYER LIST– Updated 8-17-23

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / George Horodnic / Irene Horodnic / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / Paula Kennedy / George Kolesar / Barbara Kolesar / Mary Jane Puskas / Kenny Ruff / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Marion Zwinski / Mary and her unborn child

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Archbishop Benjamin / Bishop Matthias / Fr. James Gleason (Fr.) / sub-deacon Wylie Meath (Fr.) / Bruce (Hryb) / Bret (Zelinsky) / Dominic (Centofanti) / Ellen (Clark) / Katie (Garrity) / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Ellen (Kessler) / Eleanor Marie (Kidder) / Paul (Kolesar) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / Mea (Mahan) / Mary (Mahan) / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Karen Muzyka (Fr.) / Matushka Raissa (Nicoloff) / Eugene (Pallai) / Ksenia and her unborn child (Petrochko) / Matushka Helen (Psinka) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Kristianna & infant Mary Louise (Robinson) / William Romanchak (Fr.) / Julia (Shirilla) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Richard (Tusinac) / Brian (Shirilla) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Paula (Voytilla) / Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Sarah and her newborn baby / Drew (Willison) / Emilia Yannitto / Zoland Zile, (Fr.)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

Prophet Samuel

Commemorated on August 20

The Prophet Samuel was the fifteenth and last of the Judges of Israel, living more than 1146 years before the Birth of Christ. He was descended from the Tribe of Levi, and was the son of Elkanah from Ramathaim-Zophim of Mount Ephraim. He was born, having been besought from the Lord through the prayers of his mother Hannah (therefore he received the name Samuel, which means “besought from God”). Even before birth, he was dedicated to God. Her song, “My heart exults in the Lord,” is the third Old Testament ode of the Canon (1 Sam/1 Kings 2:1-10).

When the boy reached the age of three, his mother went with him to Shiloh and in accord with her vow dedicated him to the worship of God. She gave him into the care of the High Priest Eli, who at this time was a judge over Israel. The prophet grew in the fear of God, and at twelve years of age he had a revelation that God would punish the house of the High Priest Eli, because he did not restrain the impiety of his sons. Eli’s whole family was wiped out in a single day.

The prophecy was fulfilled when the Philistines, having slain in battle 30,000 Israelites (among them Hophni and Phinees, the sons of Eli the High Priest), gained victory and captured the Ark of the Covenant. Hearing this, the High Priest Eli fell backwards from his seat at the gate, and breaking his back, he died. The wife of Phinees, upon

hearing what had happened in this very hour, gave birth to a son (Ichabod) and died with the words: “The glory has departed from Israel, for the Ark of God is taken away” (1 Sam/1 Kgs 4: 22).

Upon the death of Eli, Samuel became the judge of the nation of Israel. The Ark of God was returned by the Philistines on their own initiative. After returning to God, the Israelites returned to all the cities that the Philistines had taken. In his old age, the Prophet Samuel made his sons Joel and Abiah judges over Israel, but they did not follow the integrity and righteous judgment of their father, since they were motivated by greed.

Then the elders of Israel, wanting the nation of God to be “like other nations” (1 Sam/1 Kgs 8: 20), demanded of the Prophet Samuel that they have a king. The Prophet Samuel anointed Saul as king, but saw in this a downfall of the people, whom God Himself had governed until this time, announcing His will through “judges,” His chosen saints. Resigning the position of judge, the Prophet Samuel asked the people if they consented to his continued governance, but no one stepped forward for him.

After denouncing the first king, Saul, for his disobedience to God, the Prophet Samuel anointed David as king. He had offered David asylum, saving him from the pursuit of King Saul. The Prophet Samuel died in extreme old age. His life is recorded in the Bible (1 Sam/1 Kgs; Sirach 46:13-20).

In the year 406 A.D. the relics of the Prophet Samuel were transferred from Judea to Constantinople

2023 Forum Attendees Receive Results of Orthodox Convert Survey

The 2023 Parish Development Forum recently welcomed 90 clergy and laity registrants to explore the Forum theme of “Our Parish and the Future.” Host parish for the Forum was Holy Trinity Church in Parma OH. The Forum was dedicated to the memory and legacy of recently departed Archpriest Daniel Rentel – prime mover behind the original Small Parish Forum. Once again sponsored by the OCA’s Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania, the Diocese of the Midwest and the Bulgarian Diocese, attendees were numbered from six OCA Dioceses, the Antiochian and Greek Archdioceses and the Ukrainian Churches of both US and Canada.

During the Forum the dates for the 2024 Parish Development Forum were announced tentatively as July 11 through 13, 2024.

Archpriest Stephen Frase, clergy co-chair of the Forum, noted “A significant portion of the 2023 Forum agenda was given to encouraging parishes to focus long term on defining the strengths and ‘muscles’ necessary for Orthodox parishes to flourish in the future. These focus areas included: 1) Clergy Laity dynamics as a key to a healthy parish environment; 2) Attracting and Integrating Converts and 3) Connecting Parish Ministry with the Neighborhood. We plan to build on many of these subjects as we plan the 2024 Forum.”

Joseph Kormos, lay co-chair of the Parish Development Forum, said that, “We are now hard at work building summaries, helpful tools and online follow up sessions to assist attendees in applying insights from the Forum in their home parishes. We are looking forward to continuing the work of the Forum at next summer’s session.”

In support of the ‘Attracting and Integrating Converts’ segment, Forum attendees received the summary results of a survey of Orthodox converts conducted by the Forum. The summary included responses from 773 persons who had embraced the Orthodox faith as adults.

A few key findings include:

Almost half the total survey respondents had converted since the beginning of the pandemic, with 75% of those being men.

The median age of recent converts is 31. Of those converting since 2019 over 45% agreed that the pandemic influenced their decision to seek a new faith in some direct or indirect way.

Virtually all recent converts were significantly influenced by online podcasts, websites, and other online personalities.

The “attractive qualities” of Orthodox parishes most often mentioned were: English liturgy; proximity; priest – no pressure/good teacher; welcoming, helpful, encouraging parishioners: “children welcome”; and parish diversity.

NOTE: You can see the full survey results on the national OCA website www.oca.org

Matthew 18:23-35 (Gospel)

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, ‘Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, ‘Pay me what you owe!’ So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.’ And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, ‘You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?’ And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses.”



REPOSED LIST FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

- | | |
|--|---|
| Joseph Uhrin (1973) © Sophie Kotanchik (1964) 1- Peter Vansuch (1971) © 2- Dr. Zervas (1931) © 4- Rose Bartek (1984) 4- Nicholas Kioussis (1956) © 4- Mary Kovach (1963) © 5- Elias Lisko (1925) © 6- Julia Sirilla (1992) © 6- George Libertin (2019) © 6- Mike Kropinak (1959) © 7- Helene Flaherty (2015) 7- Helen Kropinak (1991) © 7- George Rusnak, Jr (2021) © 7- Mike Gerakios (1937) © 8- Stella Gebbia (1998) © 8- Christina Krajnak (1920) © 9- Anna Marie Tennis (1973) © 10- Olga Zelina Kucheruk (2013) © 11- Carl D. Essex (2014) 11- George Tobak, Sr (1972) © 11- John Kropinak (1926) © 12- Fr. Stephen Jula (2014) 12- Michael Pacak (1978) © 12- John Kristian (1956) © 13- Daria Voytilla (2019) © 13- Elia Milovancovich (1933) © 13- John Holecko (1939) © 14- Bobby Almasche (2022) 14- Kaliopo Koulianos (1950) © 15- Archpriest John Matusiak (2019) 15- Eugene Sanders (2014) © 15- Alice Stalian (1920) © 15- John Georgeadis (1941) © 16- Shawn Larriccia (2022) 16- Anna Livosky (1984) © 16- Joseph Fedorchoh (1987) © 16- Justin Pubos (1989) © 16- Anna Mikita (1999) © | 17- Mary Pikos (1943) © 17- Jack Vallas (1944) © 18- Mary Duritza (1984) © 18- Anna Cverko (1982) © 18- George Madich (1920) © 19- Fr. George Dyak (1995) 19- Steve Hanuscin (1920) © 19- Harry Kidon (1925) © 20- John Kaschak (1976) © 21- Fr. Paul Herbert (2016) 22- Fr. Peter Molchany (1990) 22- Mary Rusnak (1991) © 22- George Roseta (1922) © 22- Basil Sarokos (1930) © 22- Kostas Zombobi (1930) © 22- Joseph Raschak (1930) © 22- Mary Karcotis (1943) © 22- Infant John Emil Graban (1956) © 23- Helen Gerakios (1925) © 24- Rosica Rago (1922) © 24- Felogia Fradzeskus (1924) © 25- Steve Kalas (1938) © 26- Michael Hally (1991) © 26- George Tabus (2000) © 27- John Vrabel (1972) © 27- Christopher Forgac (1976) © 27- Mike Lawrence (1961) © 28- Matthew Lariccia Sr (1992) 28- John Simko (1969) © 28- Simeon Kaliscak (1921) © 28- Harry Sosnovchik (1925) © 28- George Despetarich (1956) © 29- Anna Vrabel (1972) © 29- Pani Gizella Mihaly (1975) 29- Joseph Vansuch (1964) © 30- Mike Pihunias (1948) © 31- Mike Lawrence (1930) © 31- George Vasilos (1930) © |
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AUGUST Liturgical Attendance

| Day | Vespers | Divine Liturgy | Communi-cants |
|------------------|---------|----------------|---------------|
| Sunday, Aug 6 | | 62 | 37 |
| Sunday, Aug 13 | | 66 | 47 |
| Monday, Aug. 14 | 13 | | |
| Tuesday, Aug. 15 | | 16 | |

GOOD NEWS!

On Wednesday, September 6, 2023 Fr. Andrew will be sworn in as the Campbell Fire Department's Chaplain between 7:00-7:30pm at City Hall. All are welcomed to attend!

August Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

4- Meiriam Dardovski 5- Darrin Feldman
 9- Elaine Basala 12- Layne Demkosky
 12- Reader Nick Vansuch 12-Ethan Donofrio
 13- Frank Batura Jr
 13- Ed Kusinski 14- Eli Arvan
 14- Katie Zelinsky 15- Anthony Cavaliere
 16- Anthony Jesko, Jr. 18- Stephen Calzone III
 18- Mary Margaret James 21- Kaylee Calzone
 28- Ricky Whitham 29- AB Michael of NY/NJ
 31- Sharon LaVallee 31- Fr. Emilian Huthyan
 31- Melanie Rusnak

ANNIVERSARIES

10- Fr. Michael & Pani Mellissa Chendorain
 18- Nicola & Shelly Nicoloff
 18- Philip & Trudy Ellmore
 21- Fr. Gregory & Matushka Xenia Burner
 21- Dc. David & Mat. Gemmel
 27- Fr. Michael & Presbyteria Jessica
 28- Fr. Eli Bremer Priestly ordination
 29- Zoland & Claudia Zile
 30- Fr. Peter & Pani Bernadette

NAMES DAY

9- Retired Bishop Matthias of Chicago
 23- AB Irene of Canada

AUGUST BULLETIN / CANDLE SPONSORSHIP

Wine: (\$50 for the month) In honor of my daughter Mary Margaret James on the occasion of her birthday

Incense: (\$25 for the month) In memory of Anthony & Marian Shepelevich - Given by Donna Chiarelli & Joanna Shepelevich

Bulletin: (\$50 or the month) Sponsored by Audrey Chengelis

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: (\$50 for the month) In honor of Reader Nick Vansuch on the occasion of his birthday, for Sarah Wilson & her unborn baby

Altar Candles: (\$50 for the month) In Memory of George & Ruth Libertin - Given by Nick & Monica

Tetrapod Candles: (\$50 for the month) In honor of Michael Centofanti on the occasion of his birthday - Given by Martha Centofanti & Sue Kennedy

Candles @ St John the Baptist Icon: (\$30) In honor of my brother Michael's b-day- Given by Nancy Tusinac

Candles @ Protection Icon: (\$30 for month or \$20 for just a week) In memory of my family & friends - Given by AP Andrew

Candles @ St. Panteleimon Icon: In memory of Mary Kennedy on the occasion of her birthday - Given by Martha Centofanti & Sue Kennedy

Candles @ Icon of Mary: In honor of my daughter Mary on her 40th birthday - Given by Nancy Tusinac; In memory of my mother Olga Zelina - Given by Mr & Mrs John Koval

Candles @ St. Herman in front of Church: \$30 for month or \$20 for just a week **TAKEN**

Flowers: \$75 In memory of my mother Olga Zelina -Given by Mr. & Mrs. John Koval

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

\$1000

7th Annual Dinner & Raffle Benefit

Saturday, October 14, 2023

Located at

St. Michael's Byzantine Church Hall

463 Robinson Rd. • Campbell, Ohio

Cocktail Hour
Appetizers
Beer & Wine
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Dinner
By Chef Linda
6 p.m.

- COCKTAIL HOUR, 2 DINNERS, 1 RAFFLE TICKET - \$100.00
- COCKTAIL HOUR, DINNER, RAFFLE TICKET - \$70.00
- Cash Drawings • Grand Prize \$1000 • 3 Side Board Drawings
- Lottery Tree • 50/50 Raffle

TICKET DEADLINE IS SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

Make Check out to: St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
Contact Church Council Member or Crystal: 330-507-3156

CHURCH ETTIQUETTE

- 1) **COME!** Never miss church unless it is absolutely necessary. George Washington's pastor said of him, "no company ever kept him from church."
- 2) **COME EARLY!** Rushing into church the last minute or late is not conducive to true worship.
- 3) **COME WITH YOUR WHOLE FAMILY** "The church service is not a convention that a family should send a delegate."
- 4) **TAKE A PLACE TOWARD THE FRONT OF THE CHURCH.** Leave the rear seats for those who may come late, parents with children and the backsliders.
- 5) **BE DEVOUT.** The church is not a theater or place of amusement. It is a place to worship God, not to whisper, talk, lounge or sleep. God's house deserves our very utmost reverence.
- 6) **HELP STRANGERS TO FIND & FOLLOW THE SERVICE.** If they have no book share yours with them. Sing! Join in the worship! Don't just sit.
- 7) **ALWAYS REMEMBER - STRANGERS ARE THE GUESTS OF THE CHURCH MEMBERS.** Treat visitors with the same courtesy as you would if they should visit in your home or how you would like to be treated as a guest.
- 8) **GIVE A GOOD OFFERING.** God loveth a cheerful giver. Freely you have received; freely give.
- 9) **NEVER RUSH FOR THE DOOR.** After the benediction do not leave the church as though it was on fire. Speak and be spoken to by others. Be congenial.
- 10) **NEVER STAY AWAY FROM THE CHURCH.** Don't stay away from the church because you think the church is not perfect. It is a hospital for all sinners. How lonesome you would feel in a perfect church.

Author Unknown

Blessing of Campbell First Responders Staff and Vehicles



Sunday, September 24, 2023

11:30 AM Blessing



11:45 AM Complimentary lunch at the church

All City Officials & First Responders welcome!



FINANCIALS FOR AUGUST

| | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| Expenses | \$2,639.98 |
| Income..... | \$3,148.82 |
| TOTAL | +\$508.84 |

| | |
|------------------------|---------|
| Weekly Tithe..... | \$2,656 |
| Weekly Candles | \$173 |
| Assessment..... | \$40 |
| Incense | \$25 |
| Tetrapod Candles | \$50 |
| Advent Social..... | \$50 |

OTHER INCOME

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Ohio Bureau of Workmen's Comp | \$154.82 |
|-------------------------------------|----------|



SIGN-UP / VOLUNTEERS FOR SOCIALS

It has been customary that the “O” Club , Sisterhood, & council sponsor the coffee socials.

We are asking for individuals or families to please sponsor a social on a rotating basis. With enough volunteers, the rotation of sponsors could be once a quarter. Even though the above groups take a particular Sunday, getting a break would be nice.

Bagels, donuts and coffee is perfectly fine.
A simple meal is perfectly fine.

Please see Fr. Andrew so he can put you on a schedule.

As of right now on any given month:

| | |
|---------------|------------|
| First Sunday | “O” Club |
| Second Sunday | Council |
| Third Sunday | Sisterhood |
| Fourth Sunday | Open |

The Liturgy

When the Church, which means literally the gathering or assembly of people who are called together to perform a specific task, assembles as God’s People to worship, this gathering is called the liturgy of the Church. As a word, liturgy means the common work or action of a particular group of people for the sake of all. Thus the divine liturgy of the Christian Church means the common work of God done by the people of God.

The liturgy of the Old Testament people was the official worship in the temple of Jerusalem according to the Mosaic Law, as well as the annual feasts and fasts and the private prayers and services held by the Israelites at home or in the synagogues. Synagogues by definition are houses of gathering; they are not temples since, according to the Law, there was just the one temple in Jerusalem where the priestly worship was conducted. In the synagogues the Israelites gathered for prayer and scriptural study, preaching, and contemplation of the Word of God.

In the New Testament Church the liturgy is centered in the person of Christ and is primarily a “christening” of the Old Testament liturgical life. The Christian Church retains the liturgical life of the Old Testament in a new and eternal perspective. Thus, the prayers of the Old Testament, the scriptures and the psalms, are read and sung in the light of Christ. The sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ replaces the Old Testament

sacrifices in the temple. And the Lord’s Day, Sunday, replaces the old Jewish sabbath which is Saturday.

The Jewish feasts also take on new meaning in the Christian Church, with the central feast of Passover, for example, becoming the celebration of Christ’s death and resurrection; and the feast of Pentecost becoming the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit, which fulfills the Old Testamental Law. The Christian liturgical year is also patterned after the Old Testamental prototype.

From the basic foundation of the Old Testament liturgy, the Church developed its own sacramental life with baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, chrismation, holy communion, marriage, repentance, healing, and the Churchly ministry and priesthood taking on specifically Christian forms and meaning. In addition, a great wealth of specifically Christian prayers, hymns, and blessings were developed, together with specifically Christian feasts and celebrations in remembrance of New Testamental events and saints.

The living experience of the Christian sacramental and liturgical life is a primary source of Christian doctrine. In the liturgy of the Church, the Bible and the Holy Tradition come alive and are given to the living experience of the Christian people. Thus, through prayer and sacramental worship, men are “taught by God” as it was predicted for the messianic age (Jn 6.45).

In addition to the living experience of the liturgy, the texts of the services and sacraments provide a written source of doctrine in that they may be studied and contemplated by one who desires an understanding of Christian teachings. According to the common opinion of the Orthodox Church, the sacramental and liturgical texts—the hymns, blessings, prayers, symbols, and rituals—contain no formal errors or deformations of the Christian faith and can be trusted absolutely to reveal the genuine doctrine of the Orthodox Church. It may well be that some of the historical information contained in church feasts is inaccurate or merely symbolic, but there is no question in the Church that the doctrinal and spiritual meaning of all of the feasts is genuine and authentic and provides true experience and knowledge of God.

Very Rev. Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko

