



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



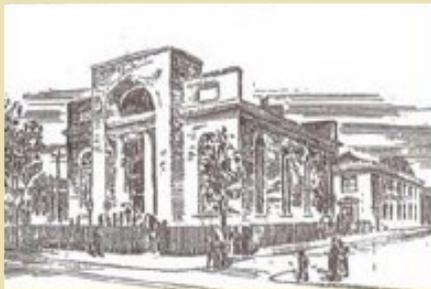
723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

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All Saints Sunday

Gospel Reading Matthew 10: 32 - 38; 19: 27 - 30



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The Lord said to his disciples, "Every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Then Peter said in reply, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you.

What then shall we have?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

Apostle Reading Hebrews 11: 33 - 12: 2



Brothers, through faith the prophets conquered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, refusing to accept release, in order to obtain a better resurrection. Others suffered mocking and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned to death, they were sawn in two, they were killed by the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, persecuted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wan-

dered in deserts and mountains, and in caves and holes in the ground. Yet all these, though they were commended for their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better so that they would not, without us, be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.

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Synaxarion. Sunday June 14 – All Saints Sunday (First Sunday after Pentecost): Holy Prophet Elisha; Holy Hierarch Methodius, patriarch of Constantinople; Monday June 15 – Apostles' Fast Begins

Learning from Martyrs and Confessors

It is tempting to think that what we read about in the Scriptures and the history of the Church occurred in a world so different from ours that it has become irrelevant. This Sunday of All Saints reminds us that our Lord's fundamental calling to every generation does not change, but challenges the assumptions of every culture and the preferences of every human being. That calling is to participate personally in the holiness of God and to seek first His Kingdom, regardless of the cost.



When we hear today of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia who are killed, abused, or become refugees due to their faithfulness to Jesus Christ, His words from today's gospel reading should come to mind: "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My Name's sake, will receive a hundred fold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first." When we hear of terrorist attacks upon churches, the kidnapping of bishops and priests, and other atrocities, we should recall the graphic descriptions in Hebrews of the suffering of the Old Testament saints who hoped for the Messiah: "Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

The first saints recognized by the Church were martyrs and confessors, people who accepted death or severe physical suffering instead of denying their Savior. As St. Polycarp said when urged to save his life by denying Christ, "For eighty and six years have I been his servant, and he has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" Whether at the hands of the pagan Romans, Persian and Islamic empires, Communists, Fascists, ISIS or other terrorist groups, countless Christians have made—and continue to make—the ultimate witness for the Lord. According to His promise, He will acknowledge them before the Father because they acknowledged Him in the most profound way possible.

For Orthodox Christians, the saints are not dead figures from the past, but alive in Christ. There is one Church in heaven and on earth, and we are members of the Body of Christ together with them. They are the white-robed martyrs around the throne of God who worship Him eternally.

We pray and worship God together with them, asking for their intercessions and seeking to follow their example of holiness. As our epistle reading states, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfection of our faith." As shining examples of what it means to love and serve Christ, the saints inspire us to ever greater faithfulness to

Him. They are living proof that He has conquered death and that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we may participate personally in His holy and eternal life. They point us to Him.

On this Sunday of All Saints, we commemorate all those who have entered in holiness into this great cloud of witnesses, especially those whose names we do not know. The Holy Spirit has revealed the names of many saints to the Church for our edification, but that is hardly an exhaustive list. And since humility is a necessary quality of holiness, that should not be surprising. When we remember the harsh realities of martyrdom and persecution through which they bore witness, it becomes immediately clear that the saintly path is not one of self-exaltation or pride. No, it is how those who are last — those who give up even life, family, and the most basic necessities — become first in a Kingdom not of this world.

Regardless of the country or time period in which we live, Christ calls us — no less than the martyrs and confessors — to acknowledge Him before others, to love Him even more than our families, and to take up our crosses. Today He calls us to be faithful witnesses to Him in a culture that has little place for principled self-restraint of any kind. **We live in a time when many worship at the altars of immediate gratification and self-indulgence in every area of life.** The selfishness, anger, hatred, and violence that we see so often in our culture reflect a failure to control our passions, which is a symptom of our collective disdain for putting anything or anyone before doing or saying whatever we feel like at the moment. **Holiness in the relationship between man and woman, as well as faithful self-sacrifice in rearing children, are strange goals in our age of promiscuity and pornography, when many see no higher standard in life than fulfilling whatever desires they happen to have at the moment.** Gluttony, greed, and trying obsessively to get what we want when we want it make many so spiritually and morally weak that they probably cannot even imagine living otherwise.

And the fact that we celebrate these ways of thinking and living in the name of freedom or being true to ourselves makes them all the more dangerous.

To be true to ourselves as human beings means to become holy, to direct all our desires to their ultimate fulfillment in the Lord, and to be healed from our self-imposed slavery to self-centered desire. The saints are icons of what it means to be true to ourselves as those created in God's image and likeness. The martyrs and confessors are shining examples of how to love and serve Christ above all else, and to order all our other attachments in light of our most fundamental commitment to Him. Their example calls us to acknowledge Him each day by living in this way. We acknowledge Him by taking up our crosses as we resist the pervasive temptations in our culture to worship ourselves, our possessions, our pleasures, and our loved ones. It may seem strange for Christ to warn against loving family members more than Him, but think for a moment how destructive it is for anyone to become a false god to another person. That kind of idolatry leads only to abuse, disappointment, and despair; we diminish ourselves and others when we do that. We distort marriage, family, and sex when we make them ends in themselves. It is far better to serve Christ in our family members through prayer, encouragement, and self-denial. That is how we and our loved ones will find fulfillment, blessing, and joy together as God's children.

Our path to holiness will likely be through our daily struggle to be faithful in small ways that few will notice or celebrate. The question is not whether to serve God through grand gestures or extraordinary circumstances, but whether there is something of the martyr and the confessor in each of us. That means dying to our self-centeredness out of love for Christ. That means loving people in Christ, ordering our relationships such that they fulfill His purposes for us and them, even when that requires suffering. And it means turning the other cheek and loving our enemies, even when we risk being rejected, criticized, or ignored for being out of step with the ways of the world.

No, that is not easy. But when we remember the martyrs and confessors and all that they endured— and still endure – for faithfulness to Christ, we should have confident hope that the same Lord Who strengthened them even to the shedding of blood will surely not abandon us in our smaller struggles each day. And unless we are faithful in small challenges, we will never be prepared for the large ones. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfection of our faith.” It is through His love, mercy, and grace that we too may share in the holiness that shines so brightly in all the saints.

Fr. Philip LeMasters

(Source: <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com>)

HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from June 14 to June 29, 2020

**Sunday June 14
(All Saints Sunday -
First Sunday after Pentecost) - last day before the
Apostles' Fast:**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

**Monday June 19 -
Apostles' fast begins**

**Saturday June 20
— fish allowed**

**Sunday June 21 (Second
Sunday after Pentecost) --
fish allowed) :**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

**Wednesday June 24
- Nativity of St. John the Baptist
(fish allowed):**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

**Sunday June 28 (Third Sun-
day after Pentecost) — fish
allowed:**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

**Monday June 29 -
Synaxis of the Holy
Apostles Peter and Paul:**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

Sermon on All Saints Sunday

The Greek word for “acknowledge” in today’s Gospel lesson means to confess. That is to openly declare faith in the Lord Jesus. But since many will come before him on the day of judgment who have even worked miracles in his name and will still hear the words, “Depart from me you workers of iniquity, for I never knew you,” there must be more to confessing and acknowledging Jesus than just an open, verbal declaration or demonstration of faith in him.



Last week we learned that praying “in the name of Jesus” means much more than using the right words, it has more to do with the existence of a certain spiritual state of the soul than with words. St. Paul points to the condition necessary to praying “in the name of Jesus” as having no self except Christ living in us. To pray in his name is to allow the living Christ to pray in us. It is about a truly Christian and mystical state of being.

So acknowledging or confessing Jesus openly before men is not about not words and external forms, like preaching on street corners, it is about allowing the Christ who lives in us to be seen through our deeds, words, and silence. It is about living as he lived, loving as he loved, speaking as he spoke, and sacrificing everything for the sake of others as he did.

If our words are right, but our life is not, then what good are our words? Holy Scripture tells us that good fruit cannot come from bad trees. Good words, to be good, must proceed from a pure heart.

When the heart is good, the words will also be good, and many will be attracted to the goodness. Beautiful actions proceeding from a pure heart is the most effective way to preach the Gospel.

“When the flower blooms the bees will come uninvited.”

I hear Christians complain about an increase in hostility to the faith, but before we complain about contemporary persecution and opposition to the Church in American society it would be more helpful, I think, to look at ourselves. Why is it that people seem more resistant to the Church (at least some think so) now than in times past?

Could it possibly be that the flower is no longer blooming? Perhaps the scent of holiness is no longer detected from us. Have the scandals and hypocrisy that

we have seen in the churches these days dimmed the light so much that people can no longer see it?

I like what Dr. Kalomiris said about atheism. His take on it was that there are no atheists there are only people who hate the God in whom they have been taught to believe. The other side of this argument is that the example Christians set has a definite effect on how the world responds to the Church. If the whole cosmos moans in

anticipation of the revealing of the sons and daughters of God, it is no surprise when the world moans even louder when the self-proclaimed children of God turn out to be frauds.

People are attracted by true holiness. In the presence of the holy we find ourselves at home. People are attracted by love and not condemnation. Condemnation does not liberate, it oppresses. We must not be oppressors. Is the message preached from the pulpits and airwaves oppressive?

People are attracted by a message that makes a positive difference in their lives, that makes life appreciably better. Are we so busy talking about pie in the sky that we have forgotten that Christ is with us now and the kingdom is within? Does the message we preach offer a way to make life better now or only in the future? If not, it is no wonder people look elsewhere for solutions to the difficulties of life.

It is also true that holiness and goodness are not a sure defense against persecution. But whatever the case we are only blessed if we are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, not for being jerks.

The point is not to worry about persecution. If it comes, it comes. If it doesn’t, it doesn’t. Our job is to spend each moment loving God and our neighbors no matter what happens.

The heart of the faith is this: having a direct experience of God who is Absolute Being, Absolute Love, Absolute Mercy in an immediate, fully awakened engagement with Christ in the living of everyday life. Anything other than that is missing the point.

Fr. Antony Hughes