



Welcome!

Whether you are searching for a new church home or just visiting, we are glad you're with us today. If you have a prayer request, are looking for more information about the Orthodox Faith, would like to join our parish, or would like to speak with Fr Thomas, we invite you to fill out a visitor's card and drop it in the offering basket as your offering today. We want to get to know you! God bless you!

This Week

- Sunday, August 29: Beheading of St John**
10:00 am Divine Liturgy
After Liturgy...Trisagion for the Departed
in memory of Mat Janet Mihalick
- Tuesday, August 31**
9:00 am Daily Matins
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours
- Thursday, September 2**
9:00 am Daily Matins
9:30 am-12:00 pm Office Hours
- Saturday, September 4**
....4:30 pm Confessions
5:00 pm Great Vespers with Cathedral Vigil
- Sunday, September 5**
10:00 am Divine Liturgy



To our Visitors: Holy Communion is reserved for Orthodox Christians who prepare themselves by prayer and fasting. Non-Orthodox visitors are welcome to come forward to venerate the cross and receive the Antidoron (blessed bread) at the conclusion of the service.

Archpriest Thomas Soroka, *Rector*
Deacon Luke Loboda, *Attached*
Deacon John Skowron, *Attached*

Beheading of St John the Baptist

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA
OrthodoxPittsburgh.org August 29, 2021

Announcements

- Today we commemorate the **Beheading of St John the Baptist**. It is observed as a strict fast day. Please do your best to abstain from meat and dairy and to eat simply. Wine and oil are permitted. Everyone is invited downstairs for a light Lenten Coffee Hour.
- Our **Parish Picnic will be held on Sunday, September 12** at Clever Park in Robinson Township. **Divine Liturgy will begin there at 10:30 am** and the picnic at noon. Those who wish to may bring a side dish to share (see Clayton Harris for more info). for See you there!
- **We are requesting completed baskets to be donated for auctioning at our Church Picnic on Sunday, September 12.** Any theme will work; gift cards too! Use your imagination and get creative! **Please bring your completed baskets to the picnic, ready for the auction. Someone will be there to receive it.** Questions can be directed to Donya Yewisiak, Lindy Hamilton or Suzy Polny. We cannot wait to see what ideas you come up with! Let's create some fun! Thank you!
- **We are updating our parish photo directory** and need your help! **Please send Kristie Mertz a recent photo of you and/or your family** (KristieMertz@orthodoxpittsburgh.org), or see her or Dn John at coffee hour to have them take your photo.



Prayers

- **Ill and infirm: Known to be hospitalized:** (none) **Home:** Robert Robes, George Shaytar. **Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home:** Garnette Kerchum, Eleanor Kovacs, Natalie Popovich, Olga Tryszyn.
- **Vigil Lights From John Mahalchak Family** for the health of friends & family; for John, Cheryl, Gregory, and Kayla Elizabeth. From **Marsha Wasilko** for the health of the Wasilko family. From **Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants of the Wasilko and Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko & Dyczko families. From **Nancy Shaytar** for the health of husband, George. From **Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of sisters, Doris & Marsha. From **Mat. Joni Soroka** for the health of Natalie on her 20th birthday; for the health and safety of all students, teachers, and staff. From **Mat. Nancy K. Mell & Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. From **Albena Ivanova** for the departed servant, Father George. From **Alexandria Tirpak** for the departed servant, mother, Amelia (8/26/54); for special intentions. From **Kristie Mertz** for a great school year for Ethan, Katarina, Annaliese, and Theodor.
- to our August donors, the **Yewisiak and Soroka families** for all categories (Bulletin \$60, Holy Bread \$50, Communion Wine \$40, Altar Candles \$25, Incense \$10) in memory of Fr Vladimir Soroka (16th anniversary of his falling asleep, August 4)



St Nicholas Church will strive to glorify God through Orthodox Christian worship, sincere love and care for one another, and service to those in need around us.

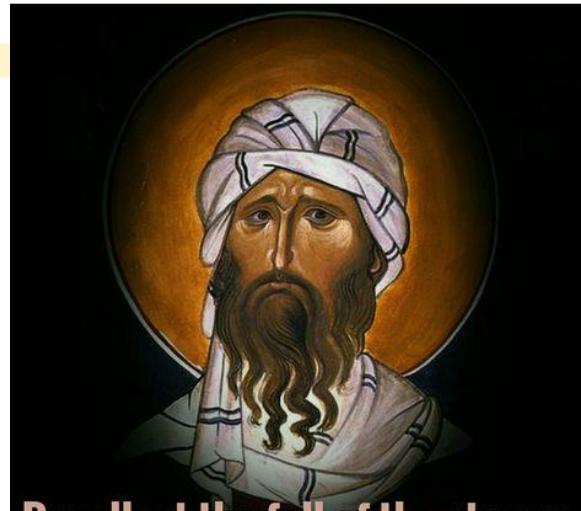
Riches are Not Sinful

And these things I say, not because riches are a sin: the sin is in not distributing them to the poor, and in the wrong use of them. For God made nothing evil but all things very good; so that riches too are good; i.e. if they do not master their owners; if the wants of our neighbors be done away by them. For neither is that light good which instead of dissipating darkness rather makes it intense: nor should I call that wealth, which instead of doing away poverty rather increases it. For the rich man seeks not to take from others but to help others: but he that seeks to receive from others is no longer rich, but is emphatically poor. So that it is not riches that are an evil, but the needy mind which turns wealth into poverty. These are more wretched than those who ask alms in the narrow streets, carrying a wallet and mutilated in body. I say, clothed in rags as they are, not so miserable as those in silks and shining garments. Those who strut in the market-place are more to be pitied than those who haunt the crossings of the streets, and enter into the courts, and cry from their cellars, and ask charity. For these for their part do utter praises to God, and speak words of mercy and a strict morality. And therefore we pity them, and stretch out the hand, and never find fault with them. But those who are rich to bad purpose; cruelty and inhumanity, ravening and satanical lust, are in the words they belch out. And therefore by all are they detested and laughed to scorn. Do but consider; which of the two among all men is reckoned disgraceful, to beg of the rich or the poor. Every one, I suppose, sees it at once:— of the poor. Now this, if you mark it, is what the rich do; for they dared not apply to those who are richer than themselves: whereas those who beg do so of the wealthy: for one beggar asks not alms of another, but of a rich man; but the rich man tears the poor in pieces. (*Chrysostom*)

conjugal love. Nonetheless, these two peoples are brothers of the human race, emerging from the same father. Because the truth [was told to Herod] in the form of a severe rebuke, John, just like the Law, was kept in prison. On Herod's birthday, the daughter of Herodias danced; that is, [she used] the enticements of the flesh. Just as lustfulness was generated from Israel's unbelief and many pleasures, so were Herodias's seductive movements. In Israel's case, the people surrendered themselves completely for sale by an oath. On account of sin and worldly desire they sold their gifts of eternal life. Now prompted by her mother, that is, by unbelief, the daughter of Herodias requested that the head of John—the glory of the Law—be delivered to her. By the authority of its divine commandments, the Law accused Israel of incest.

Herod indicated earlier that he wanted to kill John, though he was restrained from doing so out of fear of the people who regarded John as a prophet. But now that John's head was demanded, especially since he was bound by the scruple of having given an oath, why would Herod be grieved? It is clearly contradictory that he wanted it before, but did not want it now. His present concerns do not correspond to the wishes expressed earlier. There is, however, a pattern in the facts of the previous events. In these matters, there is an outline of a sequential order established here. When sensuality originates from unbelief, the glory of the Law is mitigated. While the people were cognizant of the Law's goodness, they closed their eyes to their [own] sensual conditions, though not without any worry about their own peril. They knew that they should not have forsaken the glory of such commandments, but they submitted to sin, as if compelled by an oath. Once they were corrupted and overcome, even afflicted, by fear and the example of their present leaders, they yielded to the seductions of pleasure. Amidst the continued revelries of this licentious company, John's head was

brought in on a platter (in the absence of the Law, the pleasure of the flesh and worldly indulgence were exalted), which the daughter offered to her mother. And thus shameful Israel, with its pleasures and the unbelief of its lineage, surrendered the glory of the Law to that of the pagans. Now that the era of the Law was ended, buried along with John, his disciples reported these events to the Lord, coming, as it were, from the Law to the Gospels. (St Hilary of Poitiers, *Commentary on Matthew*, 14.3; 14.7-8)



Recollect the fall of the strong, that you may remain humble under thy virtues. And think of the heavy sins of those who fell and repented; and of the praise and honour they received afterwards, so that you may acquire courage during repentance. -Isaac the Syrian

Hymns and Readings for Sunday, August 29

Tone 1 Troparion (Resurrection)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body, Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life: "Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom!// Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind!"

Tone 2 Troparion (Forerunner)

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for thee, O Forerunner. Thou wast shown in truth to be the most honorable of the Prophets, for thou wast deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan Him Whom they foretold. Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy, thou didst proclaim to those in hell God Who appeared in the flesh, Who takes away the sin of the world,// and grants us great mercy.

Tone 1 Kontakion (Resurrection)

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself. Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee:// "Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!"

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the

Holy Spirit.

Tone 5 Kontakion (Forerunner)

The glorious beheading of the Forerunner became an act of divine dispensation, for he preached to those in hell the coming of the Savior. Let Herodias lament, for she entreated lawless murder, loving not the Law of God, nor eternal life,// but that which is false and temporal.

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 Kontakion (Theotokos)

Steadfast protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator, do not despise the cry of us sinners, but in your goodness come speedily to help us who call on you in faith. Hasten to hear our intercessions and to intercede for us, O Theotokos. For you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 1 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee! (*Ps 32/33:22*)

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (Forerunner)

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord / and shall hope in Him. (*Ps. 63:11a*)

Epistle of the Sunday (1 Corinthians 4:9-16)

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we

labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now.

I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

Epistle of the Feast (Acts 13:25-33)

And as John was finishing his course, he said, ‘Who do you think I am? I am not He. But behold, there comes One after me, the sandals of whose feet I am not worthy to loose.’

“Men and brethren, sons of the family of Abraham, and those among you who fear God, to you the word of this salvation has been sent. For those who dwell in Jerusalem, and their rulers, because they did not know Him, nor even the voices of the Prophets which are read every Sabbath, have fulfilled them in condemning Him. And though they found no cause for death in Him, they asked Pilate that He should be put to death. Now when they had fulfilled all that was written concerning Him, they took Him down from the tree and laid Him in a tomb. But God raised Him from the dead. He was seen for many days by those who came up with Him from Galilee to Jerusalem, who are His witnesses to the people. And we declare to you glad tidings—that promise which was made to the fathers. God has fulfilled this for us their children, in that He has raised up Jesus. As it is also written in the second Psalm: ‘You are My Son, today I have begotten You.’

Gospel of the Sunday (Matthew 17:14-23)

And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, “Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often

falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him.”

Then Jesus answered and said, “O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me.” And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?”

So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

Gospel of the Feast (Mark 6:14-30)

Now King Herod heard of Him, for His name had become well known. And he said, “John the Baptist is risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.”

Others said, “It is Elijah.”

And others said, “It is the Prophet, or like one of the prophets.”

But when Herod heard, he said, “This is John, whom I beheaded; he has been raised from the dead!” For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife; for he had married her. Because John had said to Herod, “It

is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.”

Therefore Herodias held it against him and wanted to kill him, but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just and holy man, and he protected him. And when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

Then an opportune day came when Herod on his birthday gave a feast for his nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. And when Herodias’ daughter herself came in and danced, and pleased Herod and those who sat with him, the king said to the girl, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.” He also swore to her, “Whatever you ask me, I will give you, up to half my kingdom.”

So she went out and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?”

And she said, “The head of John the Baptist!”

Immediately she came in with haste to the king and asked, saying, “I want you to give me at once the head of John the Baptist on a platter.”

And the king was exceedingly sorry; yet, because of the oaths and because of those who sat with him, he did not want to refuse her. Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in prison, brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the girl; and the girl gave it to her mother. When his disciples heard of it, they came and took away his corpse and laid it in a tomb.

Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told Him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

Communion Hymns

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! The righteous shall be in everlasting

remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings!. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! (Ps 148:1, 115/116:13)

A Deeper View of John

At that time, Herod the tetrarch heard reports about Jesus, etc. We have often stated that we should use all diligence in the reading of the Gospels because, in the events that are recounted, there is often a **principle of deeper understanding underlying them**. The narration of all the events occurs in its order, and an image of the underlying cause is prefigured in these events, as is understood in the case of Herod and John. Now Herod was the leader of the people and by the right of his authority announced his marriage to Herodias, the spouse of his brother Philip. This Herodias had a daughter, and when her dancing pleased Herod on his birthday, she received a promise from him that she could have whatever reward she wished. The girl, prompted by her mother, requested that the head of John, who had been held for a long time in prison, be brought to her and offered on a plate. Although Herod was saddened, he fulfilled his promise, and the girl then presented the reward to her mother. Then John’s disciples, after having buried him, went to Jesus.

John, as we have often expressed, represented a pattern of the Law, because the Law predicted Christ, and John (who proceeded from the Law) foretold that Christ came from the Law. Then there is Herod, chief of the people, and as chief of the people he assumed their name and embraced all their causes. John had warned Herod that he should not marry his brother’s wife. There are and have been two peoples: one of the circumcision and the other of the pagans. The Law warned Israel, however, not to join itself to the works and unbelief of the pagans. Indeed, unbelief is associated with the pagans, being connected to them as if by the bond of