



# Welcome!

Whether you're searching for a new church home or just visiting, we're 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

## Wednesday, September 26

6:30 pm – Daily Vespers

7:00 pm – Bible Study (Acts 9 continued)

## Saturday, September 29

4:30 pm - Confessions

5:00pm – Vespers and Cathedral Vigil

## Sunday, September 30

9:15 am – Adult Education

10:00 am Divine Liturgy

Church School after Communion

**Slavic Food Fest**  
**Saturday, October 13**  
**We need your support!**

**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*  
Mat. Janet Mihalick, *Choir Director*

## 17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost/Conception of John the Baptist

McKees Rocks/Pittsburgh, PA

OrthodoxPittsburgh.org

September 23, 2018

# Announcements

➤ This Thursday a panel discussion entitled, “**Love and Marriage but No Baby Carriage: New Reproductive Technologies in Light of Orthodox Christian Belief and Ethics**,” featuring three experts in the field of bioethics will be held at **St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral, 8290 Thompson Run Rd, Pittsburgh PA 15237 on Thursday, September 27 beginning at 7:00 pm.** The focus will be on new reproductive technologies in light of Orthodox Christian beliefs and ethics. Speaking on the panel will be: Jennifer Lohl, President, Center for Bioethics and Culture Network, Pleasant Hill CA; Dr Albert Rossi, Director of Counseling and Psychological Services, St Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, Crestwood NY; and Archpriest George Johnson, Rector, St John the Baptist Orthodox Church, Conemaugh PA.

➤ **Our September hoagie sale** is being held on Wednesday, September 26. Italian Hoagies and wraps are \$6.50 each and the Turkey hoagies and wraps are \$7.00 each. Orders can be placed by calling 412-974-9912, faxing 724-926-4052 or emailing [rjmbmsam1@verizon.net](mailto:rjmbmsam1@verizon.net). Orders are due on Sunday evening, September 23. Orders can be picked up between noon and 1 pm September 26 at the church hall.



# Prayers

➤ **Ill and infirm: Known to be Hospitalized; (None).** Home: Georgiann Robes. Alexandra Summers (40 days). Shut in, Rehabilitation, or Nursing Home: Olga Bednar, Olga Tryszyn, Mary Zapp.

➤ **From Mat. Nancy K. Mell and Gregory Mell** for the departed servant, Dn. Joseph Mell; for the health of family. **From Marsha Wasilko** for the departed servant, Andrew Kasnot (9/20/15); for the health of the Wasilko family. **From Charles A. Wasilko** for the health of (sisters) Doris & Marsha. **From Doris Wasilko** for the departed servants from the Wasilko and Dyczko families; for the health of the Wasilko family. **From Dawna Beckett** for the departed servant, Donald Eugene Petkash on his birthday (9/1); for the health of Olga Petkash. **From Olga Noskov** for the departed servant, Tatiana; for the health of Ilya and Yaroslav; for Aleksander & Olga on our 25<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary.

# Slavic Food Fest 2018

➤ **GOT “STUFF”?** Our Festival Basket Auction needs it! Good ‘STUFF’ . new “STUFF” . extra “STUFF”. Please bring in items or your filled baskets ASAP. All can be placed on the table by the back door of the Fellowship Hall. Your Basket Committee, Marsha Wasilko, Michelle Bittner and Suzy Polny greatly appreciate your donations. REMEMBER . . TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE! Thank you!

➤ We are in need of **baked goods** for the Slavic Food Festival Bake Sale. A sign-up sheet for the bake sale will be located on the bulletin board in the church basement. See Sasha Gajewski with any questions. [alexandra.mihalick@gmail.com](mailto:alexandra.mihalick@gmail.com) or (814) 341-6827

# Thank you

➤ to **Sandi Tirpak** for donating all of the September monthly categories of Bulletin (\$60), Holy Bread (\$50), Communion Wine (\$40); Altar Candles (\$25) and Incense (\$10).

**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.**

# Union with Us

Rightly, then, do we believe that now also the bread which is consecrated by the Word of God is changed into the Body of God the Word. For that Body was once, by implication, bread, but has been consecrated by the inhabitation of the Word that tabernacled in the flesh. Therefore, from the same cause as that by which the bread that was transformed in that Body was changed to a Divine potency, a similar result takes place now. For as in that case, too, the grace of the Word used to make holy the Body, the substance of which came of the bread, and in a manner was itself bread, so also in this case the bread, as says the Apostle, "is sanctified by the Word of God and prayer"; not that it advances by the process of eating to the stage of passing into the body of the Word, but it is at once changed into the body by means of the Word, as the Word itself said, "This is My Body." Seeing, too, that all flesh is nourished by what is moist (for without this combination our earthly part would not continue to live), just as we support by food which is firm and solid the solid part of our body, in like manner we supplement the moist part from the kindred element; and this, when within us, by its faculty of being transmitted, is changed to blood, and especially if through the wine it receives the faculty of being transmuted into heat. Since, then, that God-containing flesh partook for its substance and support of this particular nourishment also, and since the God who was manifested infused Himself into perishable humanity for this purpose, viz. that by this communion with Deity mankind might at the same time be deified, for this end it is that, by dispensation of His grace, He disseminates Himself in every believer through that flesh, whose substance comes from bread and wine, blending Himself with the bodies of believers, to secure that, by this union with the immortal, man, too, may be a sharer in incorruption. He gives these gifts by virtue of the benediction through which He transelements the natural quality of these visible things to that immortal thing. (*St Gregory of Nyssa, "The Great Catechism"*)

*(Thekla, continued)* The Providence of God preserved the holy martyr unharmed through all her torments. Finally, they tied her to two oxen and began to chase her with red-hot rods, but the strong cords broke asunder like cobwebs, and the oxen ran off, leaving Saint Thekla unharmed. The people began shouting, “Great is the God of the Christians!” The prefect himself became terrified, realizing that the holy martyr was being kept safe by the Almighty God, Whom she served. He then gave orders to set free the servant of God Thekla.

With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Saint Thekla then settled in a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. Saint Thekla converted many pagans to Christ, and the Church appropriately names her as “Equal- to-the-Apostles.” Even a pagan priest, trying to assault her purity and punished for his impudence, was brought by her to holy Baptism. More than once the Enemy of the race of man tried to destroy Saint Thekla through people blinded by sin, but the power of God always preserved this faithful servant of Christ.

When Saint Thekla was already a ninety-year-old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. They were unable to comprehend that the saint was healing the sick by the power of the grace of Christ, and they presumed that the virgin-goddess Artemis was her special helper. Envious of Saint Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they came near her, Saint Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and a rock split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. Thus did Saint Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

The holy Church glorifies the Protomartyr Thekla as “ the glory of women and guide for the suffering, opening up the way through every torment.” From of old many churches were dedicated to her, one of which was built at Constantinople by the holy Equal of the Apostles Constantine (May 21). The Protomartyr Thekla, a prayerful intercessor for ascetics, is also invoked during the tonsure of women into monasticism.

## Today in Church School

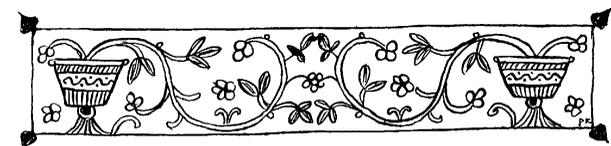
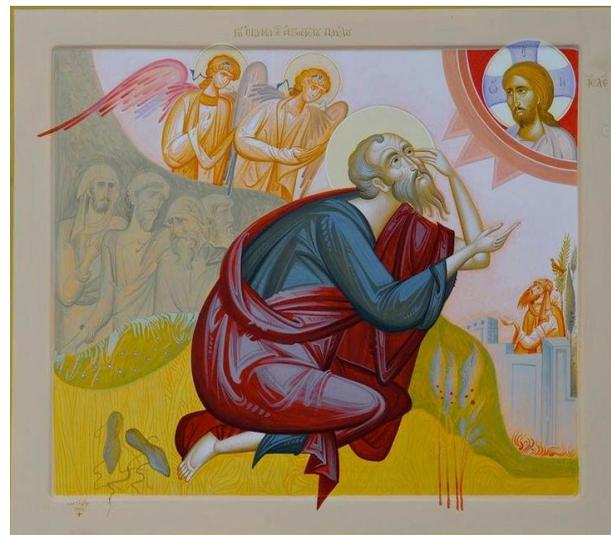
**Today's lesson:** Conversion of Saul (Paul)

**Questions to ask/review:**

- Who was Saul? What was Saul doing at the stoning of St. Stephen?
- Why was Saul traveling to Damascus?
- What happened to him on his trip? What did Christ say to him?
- How did Ananias meeting Saul? What happened?
- Why does the Church use the name Paul? (this was his Greek name, which was used when he traveled)

**Suggested Activities at home:**

- Read the story of Saul in Acts 9.
- Play games or attempt to complete a maze with a blindfold.
- Discuss how the event of being blinded would change your life.
- Prayer: Lord Jesus, grant me sight to see you in my life, that I may follow you always. Amen.



## Protomartyr Thekla

The Holy Protomartyr and Equal of the Apostles Thekla was born in the city of Iconium. She was the daughter of rich and illustrious parents, and she was distinguished by extraordinary beauty. At eighteen years of age they betrothed her to an eminent youth. But after she heard the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul about the Savior, Saint Thekla with all her heart came to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and she steadfastly resolved not to enter into marriage, but rather to devote all her life to preaching the Gospel.

Saint Thekla’s mother was opposed to her daughter’s plans and insisted that she marry her betrothed. Saint Thekla’s fiancé also complained to the prefect of the city about the Apostle Paul, accusing him of turning his bride against him. The prefect locked up Saint Paul in prison.

During the night Saint Thekla secretly ran away from her house, and she bribed the prison guards, giving them all her gold ornaments, and so made her way into the prison to the prisoner. For three days she sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul, listening to his fatherly precepts. Thekla’s disappearance was discovered, and servants were sent out everywhere looking for her. Finally, they found her in the prison and brought her home by force.

At his trial Saint Paul was sentenced to banishment from the city. Again they urged Saint Thekla to consent to the marriage, but she would not change her mind. Neither the tears of her mother, nor her wrath, nor the threats of the prefect could separate Saint Thekla from her love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Her mother in a insane rage demanded from the judges a death sentence against her unyielding daughter, and Saint Thekla was sentenced to be burned. Without flinching, the holy martyr went into the fire and made the Sign of the Cross over

herself. At this moment the Savior appeared to her, blessing her present deed, and inexpressible joy filled her holy soul.

The flames of the fire shot up high, but the martyr was surrounded by a light and the flames did not touch her. Thunder boomed, and a strong downpour of rain and hail extinguished the fire. The torturers scattered in fear. Saint Thekla, kept safe by the Lord, left the city and with the help of a certain Christian youth, searched for the Apostle Paul. The holy apostle and his companions, among whom was Saint Barnabas, were hidden in a cave not far from the city, praying fervently, that the Lord would strengthen Saint Thekla in her sufferings.

After this, Saint Thekla went with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Saint Thekla refused his offer of marriage, and so she was condemned to death for being a Christian. Twice they set loose hungry wild animals upon her, but they would not touch the holy virgin. Instead, they lay down meekly and licked her feet.



# Hymns and Readings for Today

Sept 23, 2018

## **Troparion of the Resurrection Tone 8**

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!  
Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us  
from our sufferings!  
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: Glory to Thee.

## **Troparion of St Nicholas Tone 4**

You appeared to your flock as a rule of faith,  
an image of humility, and a teacher of abstinence.  
Because of your lowliness heaven was opened to  
you!  
Because of your poverty riches were granted to  
you!  
O holy Bishop Nicholas,  
pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

## **Troparion of the Feast Tone 4**

Rejoice, O barren one, who formerly did not bear a  
child,  
for you have conceived the Lamp of the Sun, Who  
is to illumine the whole universe darkened by  
blindness!  
Rejoice, O Zachariah,  
and cry out with boldness:  
"The Prophet of the Most High desires to be born!"

## **Kontakion of the Resurrection Tone 8**

By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead  
and resurrect Adam.  
Eve exults in Thy resurrection,  
and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead,  
O greatly Merciful One.

## **Kontakion of the Feast Tone 1**

Great Zachariah rejoices with his wife, the far-  
famed Elizabeth,  
for she has fittingly conceived John the  
<sup>^</sup>Forerunner,  
whom an Angel announced in gladness;  
and whom we rightly honor//  
as an initiate of the grace of God.

## **Prokeimenon of the Sunday (Psalm 76) Tone 8**

Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!

## **Prokeimenon of the Sunday (Psalm 63) Tone 7**

The righteous shall rejoice in the Lord and shall hope  
in Him.

## **Epistle of the Sunday (II Cor 6:16-7:1)**

And what agreement has the temple of God with  
idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As  
God has said: "I will dwell in them and walk among  
them. I will be their God, and they shall be My  
people."

Therefore, "Come out from among them and be  
separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is  
unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to  
you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says  
the LORD Almighty."

Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us  
cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and  
spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

## **Epistle of the Feast (Gal 4:22-31)**

For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one  
by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. But  
he who was of the bondwoman was born according  
to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through  
promise, which things are symbolic. For these are  
the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which  
gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar – for this  
Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to  
Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her  
children – but the Jerusalem above is free, which is  
the mother of us all. For it is written: "Rejoice, O  
barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and  
shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate  
has many more children Than she who has a  
husband." Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are  
children of promise.

But, as he who was born according to the flesh  
then persecuted him who was born according to the  
Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what does  
the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and  
her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be  
heir with the son of the freewoman." So then,

brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but  
of the free.

## **Gospel of the Sunday (Luke 5:1-10)**

So it was, as the multitude pressed about Him to  
hear the word of God, that He stood by the Lake of  
Gennesaret, and saw two boats standing by the  
lake; but the fishermen had gone from them and  
were washing their nets. Then He got into one of  
the boats, which was Simon's, and asked him to  
put out a little from the land. And He sat down and  
taught the multitudes from the boat.

When He had stopped speaking, He said to Simon,  
"Launch out into the deep and let down your nets  
for a catch."

But Simon answered and said to Him, "Master, we  
have toiled all night and caught nothing;  
nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net."  
And when they had done this, they caught a great  
number of fish, and their net was breaking. So they  
signaled to their partners in the other boat to come  
and help them. And they came and filled both the  
boats, so that they began to sink. When Simon  
Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying,  
"Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord!"  
For he and all who were with him were astonished at  
the catch of fish which they had taken; and so also  
were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, who  
were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to  
Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will  
catch men." So when they had brought their boats  
to land, they forsook all and followed Him.

## **Gospel of the Feast (Luke 1:5-25)**

There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea,  
a certain priest named Zacharias, of the division of  
Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and  
her name was Elizabeth. And they were both  
righteous before God, walking in all the  
commandments and ordinances of the Lord  
blameless. But they had no child, because  
Elizabeth was barren, and they were both well  
advanced in years. So it was, that while he was  
serving as priest before God in the order of his  
division, according to the custom of the priesthood,  
his lot fell to burn incense when he went into the  
temple of the Lord. And the whole multitude of the  
people was praying outside at the hour of incense.

Then an angel of the Lord appeared to him,  
standing on the right side of the altar of incense.  
And when Zacharias saw him, he was troubled, and  
fear fell upon him. But the angel said to him, "Do  
not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard;  
and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and  
you shall call his name John. And you will have joy  
and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. For  
he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall  
drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be  
filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's  
womb. And he will turn many of the children of  
Israel to the Lord their God. He will also go before  
Him in the spirit and power of Elijah, 'to turn the  
hearts of the fathers to the children,' and the  
disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make  
ready a people prepared for the Lord.

And Zacharias said to the angel, "How shall I know  
this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well  
advanced in years."

And the angel answered and said to him, "I am  
Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and  
was sent to speak to you and bring you these glad  
tidings. But behold, you will be mute and not able to  
speak until the day these things take place,  
because you did not believe my words which will be  
fulfilled in their own time."

And the people waited for Zacharias, and marveled  
that he lingered so long in the temple. But when he  
came out, he could not speak to them; and they  
perceived that he had seen a vision in the temple,  
for he beckoned to them and remained speechless.  
So it was, as soon as the days of his service were  
completed, that he departed to his own house.

Now after those days his wife Elizabeth conceived;  
and she hid herself five months, saying, "Thus the  
Lord has dealt with me, in the days when He looked  
on me, to take away my reproach among people."

