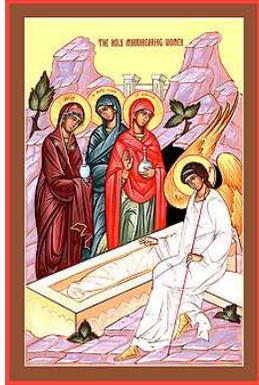


# *St. Nicholas Orthodox Church*

*28 Cross Street, Auburn, New York 13021*

*May 16, 2021 – Holy Myrrhbearers*



**Christ is Risen! Indeed He is  
Risen**

**Христось воскресе!  
Воистину воскресе!**

## **Schedule of Services**

***Holy Myrrhbearer's Sunday, May 16 – 9:00 AM – Divine  
Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour and Sisterhood Meeting.  
Wednesday, May 19 – 8:30 AM - Divine Liturgy  
Saturday, May 22 – 5:00 PM – Vespers  
Sunday, May 23 – 9:00 AM – Divine Liturgy with Coffee Hour***

***We are still looking for individuals/families who would be  
willing to host coffee hour after Sunday Liturgy. So far only a  
handful of people have offered, Please let me know if you are  
interested. Thanks!***

### **Coffee Hour Hosts**

**May 16 – Greg and Beth Szymaniak  
May 23 - Debbie Slobodiak and Bobby Young  
May 30 - Glenn and Pauline Peters  
June 6 – Howard Clark and Nick Pingrin  
June 13 – Pork Chop Dinner  
June 20 – Holy Pentecost and Father's Day– No Coffee Hour  
June 27 – Fr. Michael and Matushka Julie**

**The Paschal Service of Burial of the Departed Handmaiden of God Olga Melnick will take place this Wednesday, May 19 at 11:00 AM at Ss. Peter and Paul Cemetery in Syracuse. The family has asked that those who would like to attend please wear masks and practice physical distancing.**

**The Sisterhood will be making Pierogies this Friday and Saturday, May 21 and 22. Please join in this enjoyable project!**

#### **Donations**

##### **In Memory of Elizabeth Hryvko**

**\$50 by John Yanchisin and the Stefanak Families, \$30 by Nancy Ziobro, \$50 by Wayne and Mary Devaney, \$25 by Joy Orzel, \$20 by Kathleen Anthony, \$200 by Nancy Rodak, \$10 by Bob and Linda Flynn, \$200 by Kathleen Hryvko, \$25 by Amy Bosek, \$25 by Valerie Baim and Family for the General Fund.**

**\$75 by Michelle Pavlyak for the Renovation Fund.**

**\$25 by Jacqueline Aversa for the Benevolence Fund**

**\$10 by Linda and Bob Flynn, \$25 Colin and Lori Hutchenson, \$50 by Mike and Joan Panek, Jeff and Anne Locke for the Hall Fund, \$20 by David and Kathy Wild for the Driveway Fund**

##### **In Memory of David Lupo**

**\$50 by Bill and Mikki Aversa, \$25 by Nancy Baumes, \$200 by unknown contributor, for the Benevolence fund. \$40 in votive lights by the Aversa Family, \$25 in Decorated Candles by the Donch Family**

**\$50 by Len, Jessica, and Tim Daniluk in Memory of all Mothers, Grandmothers and Godmothers for the Renovation Fund**

## **Martyrs Peter, Dionysius, Andrew, Paul, and Christina who suffered under Decius**



**Commemorated on May 18**

**The Holy Martyrs Peter, Dionysius, Andrew, Paul, and Christina suffered under emperor Decius (249-251). Peter suffered in the city of Lampsaka. Brought to trial before the prefect Optimines, he bravely confessed his faith in Christ. They tried to force the youth to deny the Lord and worship the goddess Venus. The martyr refused to do this, declaring for everyone to hear, that a Christian would not bow to the idol of a lecherous woman.**

**Saint Peter was subjected to fierce tortures, but he endured them with courage, giving thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ for giving him His all-powerful help. Then he was beheaded.**

**Dionysius, Nikomachus, and two soldiers, Andrew and Paul, who had been transferred from Mesopotamia, were put on trial. They all confessed their faith in Christ and refused to offer sacrifice to idols, so they were tortured. To the great sorrow of all the Christians, Nikomachus did not persevere. He denied the Lord Jesus Christ, and**

**entered a pagan temple to offer sacrifice. He fell down in a terrible frenzy and died foaming at the mouth, tearing the skin from his body with his teeth.**

**On the following morning, Saints Dionysius, Andrew and Paul were again brought before the prefect. For confessing faith in Christ they were given to the pagans to be put to death. They bound the saints by the feet, dragged them to the place of execution, and stoned them to death.**

**Saint Christina watched the trial of Dionysius, Nikomachus, Andrew, and Paul, and all that happened. The sixteen-year-old Christina shouted, "Nikomachus, you cursed and lost man! Instead of enduring pain for a single hour, you have made yourself worthy of eternal torment!" The prefect gave orders to seize the holy virgin. Learning that she was a Christian, he gave her to dissolute men for their pleasure.**

**An angel appeared at the house where they had taken the holy virgin. Frightened by his terrible visage, the men tearfully begged the holy virgin's forgiveness and asked her to pray that the Lord's chastisement might not befall them.**

**On the following morning, Saints Dionysius, Andrew and Paul were again brought before the prefect. For confessing faith in Christ they were given to the pagans to be put to death. They bound the saints by the feet, dragged them to the place of execution, and stoned them to death. Seeing their courage, Saint Christina also ran up to die with the martyrs. She was beheaded by order of the prefect.**

# How Does God Guide the Church?



Photo: referee.com

**Anyone who believes Christ's word that the gates of hell will never prevail against His Church and that the Spirit will guide the Church into all truth (Matthew 16:18, John 16:13) must also believe that God watches over His Church to guide it throughout the centuries. This guidance does not mean that no one in authority will ever make a mistake or that everything the Church ever does will be uniformly wonderful. But it does mean that when it finally makes up its mind, the Church cannot teach error or fall into heresy regarding the message of salvation. In this (limited) sense, the Church is infallible, in that it can be relied upon by its children to teach the true Faith. But granted that God guides His Church, how does He do this?**

**I suggest that two answers may be dismissed right away as incompatible with the approach of the early Church: that of Roman Catholicism and of Evangelical Protestantism.**

**Roman Catholicism teaches that ultimately God guides His Church through the papacy, in that the Pope is the final arbiter and guarantor of true doctrine. Catholicism does not assert that everything the Pope says is infallible. But it does teach that whenever the Pope speaks *ex cathedra* (i.e. from his papal chair) with the intention of defining faith or morals, he is infallibly guided by the Holy Spirit as the successor of St. Peter so that his teaching will be preserved from error. Of**

**course he works with the rest of the episcopate as the head of the *Magisterium* in all this, but the promise of final infallibility has been given to him alone.**

**It is sufficient to note that this was not the view or approach of the early church. If it was, there would have been no need to call any of the ecumenical councils (such as the Council of Nicea)—for why call hundreds of bishops to assemble, debate, and decide when all that was required was the single opinion of the Pope? We note too that the early church never viewed the bishop of Rome as infallible or incapable of error in his pronouncements. In fact Pope Honorius (d. 638) fell into the heresy of monotheletism (which asserted that Christ had only a single will) and he was posthumously condemned and anathematized by name by the third ecumenical council—a council which Rome accepts as ecumenical. A heretical Pope was not considered as an oxymoron or as ecclesiastically traumatic, for no one thought the Pope had access to that kind of infallibility. They knew that no one bats a thousand while speaking *ex cathedra*, not even the Bishop of Rome.**

**Evangelical Protestantism teaches that the Bible alone is a sufficient guide to the Church in matters of doctrine and practice, since its teaching is clear enough to be understood by any Christian guided by the Holy Spirit. In the words of the late J. I. Packer (in his *“Fundamentalism” and the Word of God*), the Bible “contains the principles for its own interpretation with itself. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit...has been given to the Church...to enable them to interpret it rightly and understand its meaning”.**

**In practice this means that *individual believers* are able to interpret the Bible rightly on their own, for “the Bible does not need to be supplemented and interpreted by tradition” (pp. 47, 48).**

**The varied history of Protestantism provides its own refutation of this claim, for pious men of intelligence within Protestantism have produced wildly varied interpretations of the Bible, resulting in the existence of thousands of different Protestant denominations. This reveals that the Bible does *not* “contain the principles for its own interpretation”, but that something exterior to it is required as the interpretive key to its meaning.**

**The Orthodox answer to the question of how God guides the Church is quite different. It takes a corporate approach to divine guidance, rather than the individualistic approaches of Catholicism and Protestantism, focusing upon the**

**Church as a whole as the locus of divine guidance. God has not promised His guidance to any single individual—neither to individual believers nor to the Pope—but to the Church as a whole. After debate, argument, and discernment, the Church believes that the final conclusions reached by the majority will be reliable and true. This final result of course takes time and the path to consensus is usually messy. But when the Church finally makes up its mind, Orthodoxy believes that its conclusions will be sound and not subject to revision.**

**Part of the process of reaching an international consensus about matters of the faith involves the work of the Church's pastors—i.e. their bishops. This has been the Church's practice since the days of the apostles. When the Church was torn by its first real controversy (about whether or not to receive uncircumcised Gentiles into the Church as full members), it met in council in Jerusalem to debate the matter and reach a consensus (Acts 15). This consensus of the apostles and pastors of the mother church (presided over by James, the bishop of Jerusalem) was considered authoritative, reliable, and divinely guided, and so their decision was hailed as the work of the Holy Spirit as well as the work of the assembled leaders (Acts 15:28).**

**This first council in Jerusalem in about 49 A.D. set the pattern for the rest of the Church's earthly sojourn. From that day on, whenever a controversy arose that required resolution, the Church's leaders (the bishops) gathered together in council to debate and decide. The consensus they reached was regarded as a sign of the work of the Holy Spirit. This consensus was then offered to the churches represented by the bishops and to the wider church for their consideration. The agreement of the wider church (sometimes called their "reception" of the consensus) was regarded as decisive and authoritative.**

**Sometimes the reception of the work of the episcopal councils took time: the work of Nicea took a good generation before the Church at large regarded it as authoritative, and during this time other councils were held which produced differing conclusions. These latter conclusions were finally rejected by the Church in favour of Nicea. By then, everyone understood that God had guided the Church through the work of the Nicene Fathers.**

**This model of bishops meeting in council to reach a consensus on controversial matters (usually relating to Christology) and the subsequent reception of their work by the wider Church provided a model for the Church in its decision-making**

**ever after. This was how Christ guided His people: through the conciliar work of the church's pastors and the reception of their work by their flocks in the coming generations. This model took time to produce results and was very untidy. But it had this advantage: the results did not rely upon the wisdom of individuals present at the councils, but upon the collective wisdom of the Church throughout the world, and so the results were the more assured.**

**Hammering out all the details about Christ's nature and that of the Holy Spirit was the work of centuries. Councils were held at Nicea (325), Constantinople (381), Ephesus (431), Chalcedon (451), Constantinople (553 and 680), and again at Nicea (787). These councils defined the nature of Christ and the Holy Spirit in a definitive way, and came to be regarded as ecumenical—i.e. as containing truth which was accepted throughout the whole Roman world (or the whole *ecumene*). They are therefore sometimes referred to as “the seven ecumenical councils”.**

**That is how God guides His Church—not just by the decisions of the ecumenical councils (as if they were institutions set over the Church as superior authorities), but through the acceptance by the faithful throughout the world of such councils and of the consensus of the Fathers. That is, God guides His Church through the universal embrace of the laity. The bishops may *define* the Faith, but it is up to the laity as a whole to *accept and guard* it. The laity should not be discounted or minimized, as if they were the great unwashed possessing no role but that of passive listening. They are not the great unwashed, but the Great Washed, the baptized *plebs sancta Dei*—the holy common people of God—and ultimately God guides His Church through them.**

**Source: No Other Foundation**

**Archpriest Lawrence Farley | 07 May 2021**