

St. Nicholas Orthodox Christian Church

30 Cross Street - Auburn, New York, 13021 (www.stnicholasauburn.com)

Very Reverend Michael Speck – Parish Priest (315) 246-6051

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Office Hours 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM Thursday or any time by appointment

Reverend Deacon David Donch Reverend Deacon Michael W. Speck Reader
Nathaniel Donch

Sr. Warden - Greg Michaels Jr. Warden – Reverend Deacon David Donch
Secretary – Jane Kimak Treasurer – Glenn Peters

Sunday, August 25, 2024

Return of the Relics of the Apostle Bartholomew. Holy Apostle Titus of the Seventy, Ss. Barses and Eulogius, Bishops of Edessa, and St. Protogenes, Bishop of Carrhæ, St. Menas, Patriarch of Constantinople (536-552).



Saturday, August 24 - 5:00 PM – Great Vespers

Sunday, August 25 – 9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour

Wednesday, August 28 – No Divine Liturgy

Thursday, August 29 – 8:30 AM – Divine Liturgy Beheading of St. John the Baptist

**Saturday, August 31 – Parish Council Conference in Endicott
5:00 PM – Great Vespers**

**Sunday, September 1 – 9:30 AM - Divine Liturgy followed by
Coffee Hour**

Congratulations to DeAnna and Steve Baumes and all their family on the Baptism and Chrismation of their daughter Annalese Marie. May God Grant them all Many Happy and Blessed years!

We will be completing our collection for the Diocese of Alaska on Sunday, September 8. Please consider helping with a generous donation to assist our Alaskan Church in its continued care of the Orthodox faithful of our first diocese. God Bless You!

Our condolences to Dana, Rocco, Anthony, Aaron and Christian Lupo and all their family on the Falling Asleep in the Lord of their mother Diane yesterday. May Diane's Memory be Eternal

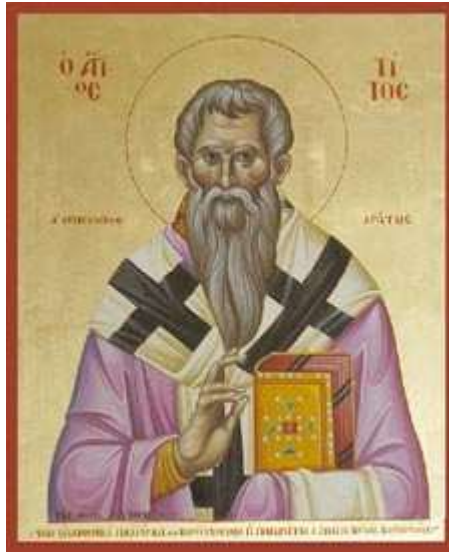
The Diocesan Parish Council Conference will be held on Saturday, August 31 at Ss. Peter and Paul Church in Endicott, NY. Please let Fr. Michael know if you will be attending. Thanks!

Donation

\$20 by Beverly and Jacquelyn Aversa in Memory of Nicholas Johnson for the Driveway fund.

Please support all of the local growers who sell their fresh produce and flowers at the Farmers Market that is held in the Curley's Restaurant parking lot every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday from 7:00 AM until 2:00 PM. Let's support our local farmers and help to keep the small farm agricultural heritage of Central New York alive and well!

Apostle Titus of the Seventy and Bishop of Crete



Commemorated on [August 25](#)

Saint Titus, Apostle of the Seventy was a native of the island of Crete, the son of an illustrious pagan. In his youth he studied Hellenistic philosophy and the ancient poets. Preoccupied by the sciences, Titus led a virtuous life, not devoting himself to the vices and passions characteristic of the majority of pagans. He preserved his virginity, as the Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer (December 20) testifies of him.

For such a manner of life the Lord did not leave him without His help. At age twenty Saint Titus heard a voice in a dream, suggesting that he abandon Hellenistic wisdom, which could not provide salvation for his soul, but rather to seek that which would save him. After this dream, Saint Titus waited yet another year, since it was not actually a command, but it did guide him to familiarize himself with the teachings of the prophets of God. The first that he happened to read was the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Having opened it to the 47th Chapter, he was struck by the words, speaking as it were about his own spiritual condition.

When news reached Crete about the appearance of a Great Prophet in Palestine, and about the great miracles He worked, the governor of the island of Crete (an uncle of Titus) sent him there. This Prophet was the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, incarnate of the Most Holy Virgin Mary Who came into the world for the redemption of the race of mankind from the oppression of ancestral sin.

At Jerusalem, Saint Titus saw the Lord. He heard His preaching and believed in Him. He witnessed the suffering and death of the Savior on the Cross, His glorious

Resurrection and Ascension to Heaven. On the day of Pentecost the future apostle heard how the Twelve Apostles, after the descent of the Holy Spirit, spoke in various languages, among which was the Cretan language (Acts 2: 11).

Saint Titus accepted Baptism from the Apostle Paul and became his closest disciple. He accompanied Saint Paul on his missionary journeys, fulfilling the tasks entrusted to him. He was involved in establishing new churches, and was with Paul in Jerusalem.

Saint Titus was numbered among the Seventy Apostles and was made Bishop of Crete by the Apostle Paul. Around the year 65, not long before his second imprisonment, the Apostle Paul sent a pastoral epistle to his son in the Faith (Tit. 1: 4).

When the Apostle Paul was taken like a criminal to Rome to stand trial before Caesar, Saint Titus left his flock in Crete for a time and went to Rome to be of service to his spiritual Father. After Saint Paul's death by martyrdom, Titus returned to Gortyna, the chief city of Crete.

Saint Titus peacefully guided his flock and toiled at enlightening the pagans with the light of faith in Christ. He was granted the gift of wonderworking by the Lord. During one of the pagan feasts in honor of the goddess Diana, Titus preached to a crowd of pagans.

When he saw that they would not listen to him, he prayed to the Lord, so that the Lord Himself would show to the mistaken people the falseness of idols. By the prayer of Saint Titus, the idol of Diana fell down and shattered before the eyes of all. Another time Saint Titus prayed that the Lord would not permit the completion of a temple of Zeus, and it collapsed.

By such miracles Saint Titus brought many to faith in Christ. After bringing the light of faith to the surrounding regions, Saint Titus died peacefully at the age of 97. At the time of his death, his face shone like the sun.

On Faith in the Life of a Christian

St. Seraphim (Chichagov)

God's grace



St. Seraphim (Chichagov)

What is grace? According to the explanation of the Holy Hierarch Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, grace is a gift from the Good One, a good gift, a gift given solely out of goodness, without our rights, merits, or worthiness.

Grace is the saving power of God, which, communicated to us according to the merits of Jesus Christ for our sanctification and salvation, regenerates us into spiritual life. Without it, we can do nothing good. Without regeneration by the grace of the Spirit, man *cannot enter into the Kingdom of God* (Jn. 3:5).

The source and immediate origin of grace is God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Father gives it, Jesus Christ brings it, the Holy Spirit breathes it into the souls of the faithful, thereby animating them unto spiritual life, and strengthening and directing them to grace-filled and salvific activity.

The grace of God always directs our will in a good direction, but in such a way that it requires or expects corresponding efforts from us.

So as not to give its gifts to the careless, it awakens us from carelessness. So that this act might not appear gratuitous, it bestows gifts after our desire and labor. However, grace is always given freely and with immeasurable generosity.

Without grace, it's impossible to be virtuous, chaste, loving, honest, selfless, merciful, just, truthful, conscientious, or happy.

Without grace, it's impossible to be aware of your impurity, sinfulness, and guilt before God; it's impossible to have repentance and receive forgiveness of sins.

Without grace, there's no deliverance for the grieving, the sick, the suffering, and the needy; there's no good for anyone, because every good comes from the One God.

God's justice

God can't be partial in His decisions, for He is perfect. His mercy was extended unto infinity in giving His Only Begotten Son over for the sins of mankind, and lies in the ways of providence for the salvation of sinners.

The Lord continues to work miracles on earth to bring the lost to reason and call them to repentance—through sorrows, trials, visions, dreams, sicknesses, deprivations, and disasters. But whoever doesn't come to his senses, even at the final hour of his life, will be condemned, for the Lord is just and cannot be otherwise.

Faith

What is faith? The holy Apostle Paul writes: *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen* (Heb. 11:1); that is, the realization of what our eyes don't see, our hands don't touch, but our hearts and minds undoubtedly affirm that it must be so, and not otherwise.

We don't see God, but we know that He's our Creator, our Heavenly Father, and we feel His love, His mercy, His power, and His omnipresence.

We don't see our Savior Jesus Christ, but we know that He was willingly crucified for mankind on the Cross, ascended into Heaven, and at the same time, remains in unapproachable glory on the right hand of the Father and in His Christian Church, and that He told His disciples: *Yet a little while, and the world seeth Me no more; but ye see Me; because I live, ye shall live also* (Jn. 14:19).

We don't see Jesus Christ, but we feel and are clearly aware that He is our sole hope, our only joy, our one salvation, and without Him we can only be unhappy, powerless, perishing, and deprived of truth, righteousness, justice, and goodness.

We don't see the Holy Spirit acting in all the Sacraments of the Church, beginning with Baptism, but we know that without Him the world wouldn't know the truth, wouldn't have Holy Scripture and Tradition. The Holy Apostles, as simple fishermen, wouldn't have been able to understand and remember Christ's teachings and pass them on to us, the ancient pagan world wouldn't have been reborn into a Christian world, and the followers of Christ wouldn't have been able to work miracles and withstand the struggle with Judaism and paganism. The human mind wouldn't have been enlightened; science and art wouldn't have flourished.

Finally, we feel that without the action of the grace of the Holy Spirit, we wouldn't have the saving Church; our sorrowful life wouldn't give us any satisfaction; we wouldn't feel any joy, love, or spiritual sweetness; we would remain in ignorance, deprived of all gifts, under the oppression of unrepented sins and under the authority of lies, deception, and the devil's malice.

Only faith gives us strength and freedom!

Not everyone's faith is the same... There's a "learning" faith, in other words, *by hearing* (Rom. 10:17), or a faith from knowing the faith, when it comes from *hearing the word of God*, or reading Sacred Scripture. Its seed develops and progresses when we begin to fulfill everything indicated by Christ, His commandments, and live piously. *He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him That sent me, says Christ, hath everlasting life* (Jn. 5:24).

There is faith from experience, from the heart, bestowed by Christ by grace, when a man, after all kinds of falls, trials, disasters and disappointments, comes to repentance and knowledge of the truth. It's obtained through the grace-filled Mysteries of the Church, and man begins to experience a bright feeling, to understand the presence of God's gifts within Himself, to understand the Gospel teaching, and after his heartfelt prayers, to feel God's help. This faith, given by the grace of the Holy Spirit, not only instructs but acts beyond human strength.

To know the faith means to contemplate the truths contained in the holy Orthodox faith, clearly, precisely, and definitely. The true faith isn't something insignificant,

some kind of excess, but a vital and essential need, like food, sleep, and breathing, and it's not hidden, not lost in such a way that everyone should seek it out and bring it to clarity, but is revealed to all.

A man must actively study his faith, but only when he humbly accepts everything that his faith includes; otherwise, what will happen: to have faith and not know it; to not know what you believe in? This is an insult to both the faith and yourself.

But what does it mean to know your faith? It means bringing yourself to a state where you can clearly, precisely, and definitively contemplate and express the truths contained in the holy Orthodox faith, and be able to give an answer to anyone. It doesn't mean being able to unravel all mysteries; no, mysteries will forever remain mysteries, but knowing your faith means humbly and unquestioningly accepting the teachings of the holy faith.

Faith in the life of a Christian

***If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth* (Mk. 9:23), says our Lord Jesus... "But what's possible?" those who don't have knowledge of faith wonder. *All things are possible*, says the Lord!**

Consequently, a believer can even receive what he doesn't even dare hope for, or moreover, what he's even afraid to think about—not only earthly things, which, according to the promise of the Son of God, *shall be added* (Mt. 6:33) if people seek first of all the Kingdom of God; but here there is also the Heavenly, grace-filled, the spiritual, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit—life-giving, enlightening, sanctifying, and regenerating, as well as forgiveness of sins and salvation in life eternal.

A believer can even work miracles, as Christ commanded His disciples, saying: *These signs shall follow them that believe; In My name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover* (Mk. 16:17-18).

A child can simply, with his blessed faith, ask for everything he needs, such as understanding in his studies, diligence, and gifts for life. A young man can, by the strength of his faith, overcome all difficulties in the arts and sciences, all temptations, flights of fancy, and the struggle against self-conceit and denials.

A young man who preserves truth and piety in the depths of his heart can ask for an indication of his path in life, for the manifestation of God's will in decisions, in the most serious and important questions of this age, such as employment and marriage.

Fathers and mothers can, by the power of faith, ask for a blessing for every work, especially for the upbringing and guidance of children, in view of their obedience and responsibility before God, and through their prayers, they can save their children from dangers and accidents that could lead to destruction.

Children can, by their faith and understanding of Christian duties, support their parents in their old age and prepare them for the upcoming transition to eternity with frequent communion of the Holy Mysteries and their union with Christ.

The elderly can, by their faith, gain respect, influence on those around them, love, friendship, trust, and entreat the Lord for the gift of mentorship, leadership, and finally, prayerfully entreat for themselves a painless and peaceful end. Those who established themselves and are perfected in faith can, in fiery prayer before the crucified Christ and His Most Pure and Most Blessed Mother of God, ask forgiveness for the erring, the hardened, the perishing, and give God's blessing to the powerless, to those who are tortured by sorrows and trials, who are mad with grief or the loss of a loved one.

They can propitiate the Lord in disasters, shocks, and illnesses that were justly sent down upon the people and the country; entreat a spirit of love, patience, humility and understanding; comfort all those who mourn, turn another away from a fall into sin, return an ailing child to his parents healthy, destroy evil intentions, reveal the true path to happiness to men and be inspired by self-sacrifice, and offer themselves as a sacrifice for the love of Christ, for the sake of truth and the enlightenment of the people.

A believer can always gladden his parents, comfort his neighbor, labor for the glory of his homeland, and bring happiness and joy into the lives of others.

Faith and delusion

It's rare to find people who deny the power of faith, but ask them who or what they believe in.

People of learning often attribute the word “faith” to either imagination or irrationality; yet even the most godless person admits that in many treatments, only faith helps!

In the mouths of some people, faith has a very particular and unacceptable meaning, as, for example, among people who don’t confess God, who are convinced that the world was created chemically, by the will of nature, which is nothing but natural science, well-known to all atheists. These people take the word “faith” from the verb “to believe,”¹ for example, the word of a professor, a scientific conclusion, the word of a friend, and thus it takes on the meaning of trust.

Others, secular people, who are ready to fast and pray from time to time but who pray more, so to speak, with their nerves and the impressionability of their imagination than with their soul, which constantly craves for earthly goods, mention faith at every step, attaching a spiritual meaning to it, yet the meaning of the word is unclear in their hearts. They believe everything and everyone equally: God, the doctor, books, newspapers, celestial phenomena, sorcerers, fortune-tellers, healers, and so on. They’re even convinced that their faith is exactly the same as that which is preached in the Gospel.

“I believe in my own way,” many also say. The sad result of unbelief!

Isn’t it amazing that everyone is taught grammar so no one writes in his own way, but according to the rules? They try to teach everyone correct pronunciation so no one speaks in his own way. The government makes laws so everyone would live by the rules, not in their own way. We all calculate time and count the hours according to the rules, not in our own way. It’s not permitted to build houses without following the rules of construction, so they won’t collapse in their own way; but when it comes to belief, everyone can do that in their own way, and this is considered permissible and practically a law! Probably no authority is capable of forbidding every man from being deluded in his own way!

Faith and confession

Confessing Christ *before men* (Mt. 10:32) is a necessary and saving work for a true disciple of Christ. He who only believes in his heart and conceals his faith isn’t pleasing to the Lord. Why, some may wonder, doesn’t God recognize faith alone, without words, without testimony before men?

The holy Apostle Paul gives a direct and clear answer to this question. Explaining the relationship between faith and confession of it, he says: *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation* (Rom. 10:10); that is, sincere faith leads to righteousness, and oral confession leads to salvation. Righteousness requires heartfelt faith, while salvation, which is greater than righteousness, requires confession with the mouth.

Faith and confession are, of course, two sides of the same coin, for faith hidden in the depths of the heart and revealed outwardly before all men in both word and deed is called confession; faith and confession are inseparable. What kind of faith is it if it doesn't manifest itself? And what kind of confession is it when it's in words but doesn't reside in the heart and isn't justified by deeds?

Faith without confession is a feigned, hidden, and imperfect faith.

Faith and love

There are two foundations for knowing the will of God: You need faith in God, your Creator, Benefactor, and righteous Judge, and you need sincere devotion and love for your Savior and Redeemer. If faith and love are necessary in everyday affairs and human relations, then all the more so in matters of being, perfection, eternal life, and the Divine law.

Faith and obedience

He who has true faith is obligated to submit to it completely. This faith, the Holy Fathers say, comes from God; it's His royal decree to us subjects, announced with the intention and desire for us to receive it and be saved by it. Therefore, those who don't submit to faith resist God, sin mortally, and blaspheme the Holy Spirit.

Faith in Christ the Savior taught mankind obedience to God by faith, and then, when faith in the Son of God returned man his lost blessedness and unity with God, then true obedience to God out of love was restored to mankind.

You must understand the word "obedience" as the renunciation of your own will, as committing yourself entirely to the will of the Almighty Creator Himself.