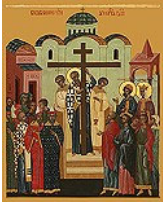


✠Bulletin✠

Week of August 3rd to August 9th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 7

Ven. Isaac, Dalmatios, and Faustus, Ascetics of the Dalmatian Monastery at Constantinople (4th-5th c.). Ven. Anthony the Roman, Abbot, of Novgorod (1147). Martyr Razhden of Persia (Georgian—457). Venerable Theodora and her daughter Theopiste (9th c.).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday August 3, 2025

9:10 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Wednesday August 6th

The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy

Blessing of Fruit to follow Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday August 3, 2025

- Choir Practice for Sept 14th
- Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy

The feeding of five loaves & two fishes to more than five thousand people

By St. Luke, Archbishop of Simferopol and All Crimea

(Delivered on July 23, 1950)

You have heard in the current Gospel reading about one of the greatest miracles of Christ - about the feeding of five loaves and two fishes to more than five thousand people.

Why did the Lord create this miracle? What is its significance for us? Why did the Lord perform His miracles at all?

We find the answer to this question in the Evangelist Matthew, who says this: "Jesus departed from there in a boat to a deserted place alone; and the people, when they heard about it, followed Him out of the city on foot."

And the people, having learned about this, followed Him in crowds, walking along the shore of the lake. "And going out, Jesus saw a multitude of people; and had compassion on them and healed their sick" (Matt. 14:13, 14).

He took pity on them - that's where the answer is. Love for the unfortunate human race, love, which is the essence of the Divine nature of the Savior, guided Him first of all in all His actions, and in the creation of His miracles. But not only love, there were other extremely important, deep reasons for the Lord to work His wondrous miracles: **He taught us with miracles.**

When, at His command, the apostle Peter threw the net into the sea after working in vain all night, and pulled out a full net of fish, he fell at the feet of the Savior, and the Lord said to him: "Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men" (Luke 5:10).

You see, in this miracle there was a prototype of what the holy Apostle Peter would become, a prototype of what he would be - a fisher of human souls.

When the Lord raised Lazarus from the dead after four days, who had already been lying in the tomb, there was reflected in this not only His love, love that even tears flowed from His eyes, but this was also done in order to show the whole world that the Lord has power over death and even over decay.

One could say the same about other miracles of Christ, but let us dwell on the miraculous nourishment of the people and delve into the depth of the significance of this miracle. What is this depth?

The answer is found in the words of Jesus Himself.

When, after the healing of the demon-possessed Gadarene, the Lord Jesus Christ got into the boat and crossed to the other side of the lake, and the people ran along the shore of the lake and met Him with delight. Then He said: "Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled."

For them, the most important thing was the saturation of bread. They knew how to appreciate a miracle in itself, and the Lord accustomed their thoughts to the fact that they would know the great goal of this wondrous miracle. He told them: "Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him" (John 6:26-33) .

Strive not for perishable food, not only for bread. Remember that "man will not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4) .

Take care, therefore, not about temporal, not about earthly food, but about food that endures to eternal life, about spiritual food.

For it is not only our body that needs food; our immortal soul longs for truth, longs for eternal life. Our soul also needs food, much more than the body needs bodily food.

It is impossible, [I say again], it is impossible to live without food for the soul, it is impossible to leave our soul to starve, as happens with many, countless people.

Our soul, as Tertullian, one of the Fathers of the second century, said, is by nature a Christian.

And if so, if she is a Christian by nature, then how can she live without Christ, without the word of Christ, without communion with God the Father and the Holy Spirit in prayers and mysteries?

It cannot. It cannot: it will starve, sometimes it will die of hunger.

You Christians know with your heart, you know this thirst for spiritual food, this hunger of the soul. You know how you need spiritual food, how you

suffer, how your soul is starving when you don't hear the word of God, how you long to hear at least a little from the word of God.

And those who are far from Christ, who live only the life of the earth, appreciating only the blessings of the earth, are they not starving?

They are starving, they are very hungry, but they do not realize it. Their souls do not know how to explicitly demand the food of the word of God, but the hunger of their souls manifests itself in an unaccountable, painful anguish.

Among all pleasures, among the satisfaction of lusts and passions, in a whirlwind of joy, wealth and luxury, they are often attacked by a deep, painful longing. Often they all suddenly become unloving, empty.

The soul cries, the soul yearns, and they vaguely feel this longing of their Christian soul. The soul demands that its tears be wiped away. The soul asks for food immeasurably higher than those pleasures with which people who are far from spiritual life try to console it. The soul cries, the soul yearns, yet finds no place for itself anywhere.

This suggests that it is impossible to drown out the voice of the soul, the voice of one's conscience, with impunity.

This is what the Lord Jesus Christ said about spiritual food. They listened to Him and very poorly understood and told Him: "What shall we do to do the works of God?" Jesus answered and said to them: "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:28-29).

This is the first and most important of all things - to believe in God the Father and in the Son of God, whom the Father sent.

The people listened, and His words seemed strange to them: why should they believe in Him? "Therefore they said to Him, 'What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do?'" (John 6:30)

They needed a sign, they needed evidence, their hearts did not yet know the love of Christ.

"Our fathers ate manna in the wilderness, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat which was a real sign that Moses gave them bread from

heaven.” Jesus said to them: “Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven.” (John 6:31-32)

The manna was not the true bread of God, it was only a type of the True Bread that God would later give them. “For the bread of God is that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world” (John 6:33).

This is the kind of bread the Lord Jesus Christ spoke about, this is the incorruptible food. This is the inner meaning of the great miracle of feeding the five thousand.

By this miracle, the Lord prepared human hearts to understand that there is another, Divine, eternal food, food for the soul; prepared for the understanding that He Himself, the Son of God, is this food, He Himself is the Bread that came down from heaven, that He gave His Flesh for the life of the world.

Remember this. Remember more often this great gospel story about the Lord feeding a huge crowd of people.

Remember that it signified that heavenly food, without which the soul cannot live.

Remember that your souls are hungry, that it needs heavenly food, food of a completely different order than bodily food, and never leave your soul without this food, just as you do not leave your body without food.

Remember that “man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”

Always remember the word of God, learn from it; listen to it with deep attention; delve into it, penetrate it.

And ask for help from Christ Himself our God. Ask Him to help you understand the wondrous meaning of what you are reading, for in the Gospel you read the words of Christ, those words the likes of which the world has never heard and will never hear.

And this will be the most necessary food for your souls. Amen.

Why do Orthodox Bless Grapes and Fruit on the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ (August 6th)?

“The blessing of grapes, as well as other fruits and vegetables on this day is the most beautiful and adequate sign of the final transfiguration of all things in Christ. It signifies the ultimate flowering and fruitfulness of all creation in the paradise of God’s unending Kingdom of Life where all will be transformed by the glory of the Lord.”

Volume II – Worship, The Church Year, Transfiguration

Grapes are brought because they are directly related to the Eucharistic sacrament; that is why in the prayer for consecration of grapes the priest says, “Bless, Lord, this new fruit of vine which reached ripeness because Thou kindly provided good weather, drops of rain and stillness. Let eating this fruit of vine make us joyful. And give us the honor of offering this fruit to Thee, as the gift of purging of sins, altogether with the Holy Body of Thy Christ.”

Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

Holy Cross 50th Anniversary – September 14th

In preparation for the 50th Anniversary of Holy Cross and the visit of Bishop Gerasim, we have establish committees for this big event. Please see the following people to for more information & to help prepare for our big day!

John & Viktoria Graham - Lunch following Divine Liturgy

David Bartos – Exterior of the Church/Landscaping

Maria Flemmer & Svitlana Canko – Interior of the church/cleaning

tithe.ly.com

Another way to “donate”. This app can be downloaded to your phone and Holy Cross can be accessed via this app. Also, tithe.ly can be accessed through the church website www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org

God Grant You Many Years!

Birthdays

Elias Cordoves 8/10
Anatoli Grubii 8/12
John Pavlou 8/12

Anniversaries

Scott/Anne Peatross 8/01
Craig/Leslie Holland 8/03
John/Rose Gala 8/10
Seth/Lauren Jewett 8/12

2025 Monthly Donations for Church Votive Candles

The church uses 12-hour 51% Beeswax votives, which are a cleaner burning candle and protect the church walls from soot. The approximate monthly cost of these votives for weekend Vespers & Divine Liturgy is \$100.00 per month. If you would like to donate (as a memorial, thanksgiving, or just to donate), please see David Bartos. Thank you!

August – Open
August Feast Days - Open
September - Open
October - Open
November – Open
December – Open
December Feast Days – Open

Prayer Requests

Carolyn – Robert & Debra's Forster's daughter
Anne and Scott Peatross
Robert (John) Forster
Robert Kozera
Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter
Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos
Dorothy – Samuel's mother

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,
Roman, Mykola
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy,
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that Thou art risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

Tone 4 Troparion (Venerable Ones)

O God of our Fathers,
always act with kindness towards us;
take not Thy mercy from us,
but guide our lives in peace//
through the prayers of Venerable Isaac, Dalmatus, and Faustus!

Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith;//
enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

Tone 2 Kontakion (Venerable Ones)

Through asceticism you shone like lights in the world,
and by your faith you overthrew heresies.
We praise you with hymns, Isaac, Dalmatus, and Faustus,//
as servants of Christ, who are praying for us all.

Tone 7 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

The Lord shall give strength to His people. / The Lord shall bless His people with peace. (Ps. 28:11)

V. Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord! (Ps. 28:1a)

1 Corinthians 1:10-18 (Epistle)

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

Tone 7

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

V. It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High. (Ps. 91:1)

V. To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night. (Ps. 91:2a)

Matthew 14:14-22 (Gospel)

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only

five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

13-14. And when the multitudes heard it, they followed Him on foot from the cities. And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. The multitude show their faith by running to Jesus even as He is departing, for which they receive healing as the reward of faith. Their following on foot and without any provisions are also signs of faith.

15-16. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." The disciples are compassionate and concerned about the multitude, not wanting them to go without food. What, then, does the Savior do? "Give them something to eat." He says, not in ignorance of the extreme poverty of the apostles-far from it. But so that when they had said, "We do not have," He might appear to proceed to work a miracle out of necessity and not from vainglory.

17-19. And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed. "Bring the loaves here to Me. Though it be evening, I, Who created the hours, am here. Though it be a deserted place, it is I Who giveth food to all flesh." We learn from this that we must spend in hospitality even the little that we have, just as the apostles gave to the crowds the little that they had. As that little was multiplied, so too will your little be multiplied. He bids the multitude to recline on the grass, teaching frugality,

so that you also, O reader, may not take your ease on expensive beds and couches. He looks up to heaven and blesses the loaves, as if both to confirm that He is not opposed to God but that He came from the Father and from heaven, and also to teach us to give thanks when we begin a meal and only then to eat.

19-21. And He broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. He gives the loaves to the disciples so that they might always retain the miracle in their memory and not have it fade from their minds, although they did in fact immediately forget. There was food left over lest you think that He performed the miracle only in appearance. There were twelve baskets so that Judas too might carry one and thus remembering the miracle, not rush headlong into betrayal. And He multiplies both the loaves and the fish to show that He is the Creator of earth and sea, and the Giver of what we eat every day, and it is multiplied by Him. He performed the miracle in a deserted place lest anyone think that He bought the loaves from a neighboring town and distributed them to the multitude, for it was deserted. This is the explanation of the literal account. But in its spiritual sense, learn that when Herod, who represents the fleshly and superficial mind of the Jews (for "Herod" means "fleshly" and "skin-like"), cut off the head of John who was the head and chief of the prophets, it showed that Herod rejected those who prophesied of Christ. Whereupon Jesus withdrew to a desert place, to the nations who were desolate without God, and He healed the sick in soul and then He fed them. For if He had not forgiven our sins and healed our sicknesses by baptism, He could not have nourished us by giving us the immaculate Mysteries, for no one partakes of Holy Communion who has not first been baptized. The five thousand are those who are sick in their five senses and who are healed by the five loaves. Since the five senses were diseased, there are as many wound dressings as there are wounds. The two fish are the words of the fishermen. The one fish is the Gospel and the other the Epistles. Some have understood the five loaves to signify the Pentateuch of Moses: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy. Twelve baskets were lifted and carried by the apostles; for whatever we, the multitude, are unable to eat, that is, to understand, the apostles carried and held, that is, they accepted and understood. "Besides women and children." This means, allegorically, that a Christian man, woman, or child, must not in any way be childish, womanly, or unmanly.

22. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. By saying "He made his disciples get into the boat", Matthew suggests how inseparable the disciples were from Jesus, for they wanted to be with Him at all times. He sends the multitudes away, not wishing to draw them after Him lest He appear to vaunt in His powers.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!