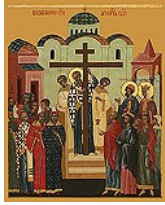


✠Bulletin✠

Week of July 19, 2026



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 6

Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Seraphim of Sarov (1903). Fathers of the 1st Six Ecumenical Councils. St. Theodore of Edessa, Mesopotamia (848). Ven. Macrina, sister of St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory of Nyssa (380). Ven. Dius, Abbot, of Antioch (ca. 430). Blessed Romanus, Prince of Riazan' (1270). St. Paisius of the Kiev Caves (14th c.). Blessed Stephen (1427), King of Serbia, and his mother, St. Milita (1405). Right-believing Princess Jelena (Balsic) Lazareva of Serbia (1443). Sts. Demetrius, metropolitan of Rostov (1709), and Mitrophan (1703) and Tikhon (1783), bishops of Voronezh. St. Sophronius, archimandrite, of Svyatogorsk Monastery (1921). Synaxis of the Saints of Kursk. (Gr. Cal.: Abba Diocles of the Thebaid.) Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "Umileniye" ("Of Tender Feeling") of Diveyevo, before which St. Seraphim reposed.

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday July 19th

9:15 am Hours

9:30 am Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday July 19th

- Choir Practice
- Inquirers & Catechism classes

"Prayer without Ceasing" Is Necessary For All Christians

By St. Gregory Palamas

Let no one think, my brother Christians, that it is the duty only of priests and monks to pray without ceasing, and not of laymen.

No, no; it is the duty of all of us Christians to remain always in prayer.

For look what the most holy Patriarch of Constantinople, Philotheus, writes in his life of St. Gregory of Thessalonica. This saint had a beloved friend by the name of Job, a very simple but most virtuous man. Once, while conversing with him, His Eminence said of prayer that every Christian in general should strive to pray always, and to pray without ceasing, as Apostle Paul commands all Christians, "*Pray without ceasing*" (I Thessalonians 5:17), and as the prophet David says of himself, although he was a king and had to concern himself with his whole kingdom: "*I foresaw the Lord always before my face*" (Psalms 15:8), that is, in my prayer I always mentally see the Lord before me. Gregory the Theologian also teaches all Christians to say God's name in prayer more often than to breathe.

So, my Christian brethren, I too implore you, together also with St. Chrysostom, for the sake of saving your souls, do not neglect the practice of this prayer. Imitate those I have mentioned and follow in their footsteps as far as you can.

It Only Appears to Be Difficult at First

At first, it may appear very difficult to you, but be assured, as it were from Almighty God, that this very name of our Lord Jesus Christ, constantly invoked by you, will help you to overcome all difficulties, and in the course of time you will become used to this practice and will taste how sweet is the name of the Lord. Then you will learn by experience that this practice is not impossible and not difficult, but both possible and easy. This is why St. Paul, who knew better than we the great good which such prayer would bring, commanded us to pray without ceasing. He would not have imposed this obligation upon us if it were extremely difficult and impossible, for he knew beforehand that in such case, having no possibility of fulfilling it, we would inevitably prove to be disobedient and would transgress his commandment, thus incurring blame and condemnation. The Apostle could have had no such intention.

Moreover, bear in mind the method of prayer – how it is possible to pray without ceasing, namely by praying in the mind. And this we can always do if we so wish. For when we sit down to work with our hands, when we walk, when we eat, when we drink we can always pray mentally and practice this mental prayer – the true prayer pleasing to God. Let us work with the body and pray with the soul. Let our outer man perform his bodily tasks and let the inner man be entirely dedicated to the service of God, never abandoning this spiritual practice of mental prayer, as Jesus, God and Man, commanded us, saying: *"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret"* (Matthew 6:6).

The closet of the soul is the body; our doors are the five bodily senses. The soul enters its closet when the mind does not wander hither and thither, roaming among things and affairs of the world, but stays within, in our heart. Our senses become closed and remain closed when we do not let them be attached to external sensory things, and in this way our mind remains free from every worldly attachment, and by secret mental prayer unites with God its Father. "And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly," adds the Lord. God who knows all secret things sees mental prayer and rewards it openly with great gifts. For that prayer is true and perfect which fills the soul with Divine grace and spiritual gifts. As chrism perfumes the jar the more strongly the tighter it is closed, so prayer, the more fast it is imprisoned in the heart, abounds the more in Divine grace.

Blessed are those who acquire the habit of this heavenly practice, for by it they overcome every temptation of the evil demons, as David overcame the proud Goliath. It extinguishes the unruly lusts of the flesh, as the three men extinguished the flames of the furnace. This practice of inner prayer tames passions as Daniel tamed the wild beasts. By it the dew of the Holy Spirit is brought down upon the heart, as Elijah brought down rain on Mount Carmel. This mental prayer reaches to the very throne of God and is preserved in golden vials, sending forth their odors before the Lord, as John the Divine saw in the Revelation, *"Four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints"* (Revelation 5:8).

This mental prayer is the light which illumines man's soul and inflames his heart with the fire of love of God. It is the chain linking God with man and man with God. Oh, the incomparable blessing of mental prayer! It allows a man constantly to converse with God. Oh, truly wonderful and more than wonderful – to be with one's body among men while in one's mind conversing

with God. Angels have no physical voice, but mentally never cease to sing glory to God. This is their sole occupation, and all their life is dedicated to this.

So, brother, when you enter your closet and close your door, that is, when your mind is not darting hither and thither but enters within your heart, and your senses are confined and barred against things of this world, and when you pray thus always, you too are then like the holy angels, and your Father, Who sees your prayer in secret, which you bring Him in the hidden depths of your heart, will reward you openly by great spiritual gifts.

But what other and greater rewards can you wish from this when, as I said, you are mentally always before the face of God and are constantly conversing with Him – conversing with God, without Whom no man can ever be blessed either here or in another life?

Finally, my brother, whoever you may be, when you take up this book and, having read it, wish to test in practice the profit which mental prayer brings to the soul, I beg you, when you begin to pray thus, pray God with one invocation, "Lord have mercy," for the soul of him who has worked on compiling this book and of him who helped to give it to the public. For they have great need of your prayer to receive God's mercy for their soul, as you for yours. May it be so! May it be so!

St Gregory Palamas, from "Early Fathers From the Philokalia," translated from the Russian text, "Dobrotolubiye," by E. Kadloubovsky and G.E.H. Palmer, eighth edition, (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1981), pp. 412 - 415

Diocese of the South (DOS) Assembly

The 48th Diocesan Assembly will be held this week in St. Augustine from Tuesday, July 21, through Friday, July 24, 2026. Anthony (Theophan) Gordon, our delegate, along with Fr. Leonid and Matushka Irene, will be attending.

This is an especially important week in the life of our Church. With the official retirement of Archbishop Alexander, the Diocese of the South delegates will gather for a Moleben and Special Nominating Assembly at St. Justin the Martyr Orthodox Church in Jacksonville to elect the next Bishop of the Diocese of the South. Bishop Gerasim has been nominated for election to this office.

Please keep this assembly in your prayers.

Schedule of Services

Saturday August 1st

Dormition Fast Begins

4:00 pm – Church cleaning & changing colors to **blue**

5:30 pm - Great Vespers & Confessions

Wednesday August 5th

5:30 pm – Great Vespers for the

Feast of Transfiguration

Confessions

Thursday August 6th

8:45 am – Hours

9:00 am - Divine Liturgy for the

Feast of Transfiguration

Blessing of Fruit to follow

Friday August 14th

5:30 pm - Divine Liturgy for the

Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

Blessing of Flowers & Seeds to follow

Sunday August 16th

Following Divine Liturgy

Back to School Backpack Blessing

(All students bring your backpacks
or a school material, ex. Laptop, book, pencils)

Saturday August 22nd

5:30 pm - Great Vespers & Confessions

Friday August 28th

(Strict Fast)

5:30 pm - Divine Liturgy

Beheading of St. John the Baptist

Prayer Requests

Agape Brill

Walter Kallaur – brother of the Constantine & Arlene Kallaur

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

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.

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.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 6 Troparion (Resurrection)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb;
the guards became as dead men.

Mary stood by Thy grave,
seeking Thy most pure body.

Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it.

Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life.

O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, //
glory to Thee.

Tone 8 Troparion (Fathers)

Thou art most glorious, O Christ our God,
Who hast established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth.

Through them Thou hast guided us to the True Faith. //

O greatly compassionate One, glory to Thee!

Tone 6 Kontakion (Resurrection)

When Christ God, the Giver of Life,

raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand,
He bestowed resurrection on the human race. //

He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Tone 8 Kontakion *(Fathers)*

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one Faith for the Church.

Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology,//
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

Tone 6 *(Steadfast Protectress....)*

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 petition and to intercede for us,
O Theotokos, for you always protect those who honor you.

Tone 6 Prokeimenon *(Resurrection)*

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance! *(Ps. 27:9a)*

*V. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!
(Ps. 27:1a)*

Tone 4 Prokeimenon *(Song of the Three Holy Children)*

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and
glorified is Thy Name forever! *(Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3)*

Romans 15:1-7 (Epistle)

Brethren, we then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me." For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

Hebrews 13:7-16 (Epistle, Fathers)

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus

Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Tone 6

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

V. He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God. (Ps. 90:1)

V. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust." (Ps. 90:2)

Tone 1

V. The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. (Ps. 49:1)

Matthew 9:27-35 (Gospel)

When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!" But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

John 17:1-13 (Gospel, Fathers)

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

Matthew 9:27-35

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

27. When Jesus departed from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out and saying, "Son of David, have mercy on us!" The blind men addressed to God the words "Have mercy," but as to a man, "O Son of David." For it was well known among the Jews that the Messiah would come from the seed of David.

28. And when He had come into the house, the blind men came to Him. And Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to Him, "Yes, Lord." He led the blind men along even as far as the house, to show their steadfast faith, and thus to condemn the Jews. He asks them if they believe, showing that faith can accomplish all things.

29-30. Then He touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith let it be to you." And their eyes were opened. He healed within the house and in private, to show us how to avoid vainglory. In everything He did, He taught humility.

30-31. And Jesus sternly warned them, saying, "See that no one knows it." But when they had departed, they spread the news about Him in all that country. Do you see Christ's humility? They spread abroad His fame in thanksgiving, not out of disobedience. But if in another place Christ says, "Go and tell of the glory of God," there is nothing contradictory in this. For He wants them to say nothing about Himself, but to speak of the glory of God.

32-33. As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a man, mute and demon-possessed. And when the demon was cast out, the mute spoke. The disease was not a natural one, but from the demon. This is why others brought him forward. He himself was not able to call upon Jesus, as the demon had bound his tongue. Therefore, Jesus does not require faith of him but immediately heals him by casting out the demon which had prevented his speech. **And the multitudes marveled, saying, "It was never seen like this in Israel!"** The multitude marveled, placing Christ even above the prophets and the patriarchs. For He healed with authority, unlike those who first had to pray. But let us see what the Pharisees said.

34. But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the ruler of the demons." These words are the height of stupidity. For no demon casts out other demons. But let us suppose that He cast out demons as one who served the prince of demons, that is, as a magician. How then did He heal diseases, forgive sins, and preach the kingdom? For the demon does just the opposite: he brings on diseases and separates man from God.

35. Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people. As Lover of mankind, He did not wait for them to come to Him, but He Himself went all around. Therefore, they could not say as an excuse that "no one taught us." He draws them to Himself by word and deed, teaching and working wonders.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! (*Ps. 148:1*)
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! (*Ps. 32:1*)