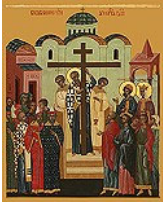


✠Bulletin✠

Week of July 20th to July 26th



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 5

Holy Glorious Prophet Elijah

(9th c. B.C.) Repose of Ven. Abramius of Galich (Chukhloma), disciple of Ven. Sergius of Rádonezh (1375). Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Afanásy (Athanasius), Abbot, of Brest-Litovsk (1350).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday July 20, 2025

9:10 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Saturday July 26th

5:30 pm – Vespers with Litya

Weekly Schedule

Sunday July 20, 2025

➤ Inquirers & Catechism classes following Divine Liturgy

“Dear God, I don’t want to sin again.”

Translated & Transcribed talks by Archimandrite Symeon Kragiopoulos

Today’s Gospel speaks about the healing of the Paralytic of Capernaum. The Lord is in Capernaum, His second homeland, and a paralytic is brought to Him there so that He would **heal** him.

As always, so here too, our Lord waits and desires to see in the man something He can bring to life. While the Lord gives freely that which He gives, the man needs to at least desire that which the Lord has to give and be predisposed appropriately toward it. With respect to this, the gospel passage mentions: “*When Jesus saw their faith*” (Matt 9:2).

“*When Jesus saw their faith*”, He immediately said, “*Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you.*” Christ, though, as if not seeing the man’s paralysis and that the paralytic is consumed with it, immediately says to him: “*Cheer up! Your sins are forgiven.*” **The heart of the matter for Christ is sin.**

Who among us has distress about the poisoning of his soul by sin, and desires to be delivered from it and be freed? The Fathers, the saints are constantly occupied with this and constantly refer to this: that Christ came *to heal* the soul of the sickness and wounds of sin. We need to pay attention to this.

The Christian spirit has so deteriorated today that people are ashamed to think that they have sins and that the problem is, what is to be done about this sin. Each one of us has learned to live outside of the **spirit of God**, learned to practice the deeds of the “*old man*”, and so we do not understand anything about the truth of God.

This should be the concern of all of us: to hear within us and to feel, all the more, this voice of Christ which **forgives** our **sins**. It is an important matter not only to believe, but for you to feel within yourself and to sense that God has forgiven you, that He accepts you. But in order for this to happen [for you to believe and feel], you need to arrive at the point of saying: “**Dear God, I don’t want to sin again.**” You need to hate and detest sin as the saints tell us.

When God sees that you have made a definitive and absolute decision not to sin, the blessed moment comes when you are clear that the Lord forgives you. He has found you, and you have found Him; you have loved Him, and He loves you. He heals you and you now travel along the road of salvation.

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.

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Dear Holy Cross Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is in our midst! I am writing to you on the way back from the 21st All American Council held in Phoenix, Arizona. I am both blessed and grateful that the church sponsored me to be the delegate representing our fruitful and growing parish of the OCA and South Florida deanery from our beautiful homeland of southwest Florida. The All-American Council is an unforgettable experience that allows for spiritual renewal, international, national, and diocesan networking, and building the future of our Church throughout the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

I estimate over 1,000 Orthodox Christians attended the Council this year from North America. In addition to the lay delegates and observers, there were well over 200 clergy, the entire synod of bishops, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, and most impressively, over 150 children who participated in the youth programs during the week. I encourage all to consider attending the All-American Council in Dallas in 2028 and making a family vacation out of this enlightening experience.

For me, the most poignant part of the week was the schedule of Divine Liturgies and evening services held daily in the ballroom, with the theme being the recent glorification of Saint Olga of Alaska. I would describe the ballroom as a “cathedral on wheels,” outfitted with an altar, iconostas, relics, and thousands of square feet to accommodate attendees. Even while in this enormous space, the pinnacle Thursday morning Hierarchical Liturgy was standing room only, with communion taking over half an hour with 5 chalices to distribute the Holy Gifts. Friends from Akron and I laughed; in the future we may outgrow hotel conference space and need to move Councils to convention centers to accommodate this growing population of the faithful body.

The Diocese of the South assembly and plenary sessions yielded no surprises. The Church continues to be healthy, while on a path of continuous improvement for governance and fiduciary requirements. As the pension board and plan have been “hot topics” during the last two councils, it seems there is light at the end of the tunnel for consensus. A controversial statues

amendment that added more bureaucracy to an already complicated pension plan was significantly voted down, but a resolution was approved that provides oversight from the Metropolitan Council, ensuring pension board members have fully vetted qualifications to be nominated to this board.

Our own church is recognized throughout the diocese and the OCA, and our situation is acknowledged as being a growing parish with respected yet aging clergy. I think there is potential for us to find a new priest and/or deacon in the next 2-3 years. Of note, I serendipitously met a priest from a remote parish in Alaska who is looking to transfer to the Diocese of the South in the next 6 months. While the joke was, “I met a priest at a bar,” (true story... we both were having dinner at the hotel bar as no tables were available), he had genuine interest in coming to our church after discussing us and the wonderful parish that we are. While he could not commit to a visit, as his family is not currently interested in moving permanently to south Florida, God provides in time.

And speaking of God provides: Juliana and I briefly spoke at the conclusion of the Council with His Grace, Bishop Gerasim, about visiting us for a Hierarchical Liturgy at Holy Cross in honor of our 50th anniversary during the Elevation of the Cross on September 14th. His Grace is keen to join us that weekend to honor our anniversary and to recognize Father Leonid’s birthday. I think this is the next endeavor for our beloved parish, and we should look forward to welcoming His Grace in September.

Thank you all for the opportunity to share my report of the All-American Council. Our future is bright, and our parish is strong. By the grace of God, we have much to look forward to!

In Christ,
Jason Marzuola

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

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 5 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word,
co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,
born for our salvation from the Virgin;
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
to endure death,
and to raise the dead//
by His glorious Resurrection.

Tone 4 Troparion (Prophet Elijah)

An angel in the flesh and the cornerstone of the Prophets,
the second forerunner of the coming of Christ,
glorious Elijah sent grace from on high to Elisha,
to dispel diseases and to cleanse lepers//
Therefore he pours forth healings on those who honor him.

Tone 5 Kontakion (Resurrection)

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior,
shattering its gates as Almighty,
resurrecting the dead as Creator,
and destroying the sting of death.
Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man,//
and we cry to Thee: "O Lord, save us!"

Tone 2 Kontakion (Prophet Elijah)

O Prophet Elijah of great renown,
seer of the mighty works of God,
by your command you held back the rain.//
Pray for us to the only Lover of man!

Tone 5 Prokeimenon (Resurrection)

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us / and preserve us from this generation
forever. (Ps. 11:7)

V. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!
(Ps. 11:1a)

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Prophet Elijah)

Thou art a priest forever / after the order of Melchizedek.
(Ps. 109:4c)

Romans 12:6-14 (Epistle)

Brethren, Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

James 5:10-20 (Epistle, Prophet Elijah)

My brethren, take the prophets, who spoke in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering and patience. Indeed we count them blessed who endure. You have heard of the perseverance of Job and seen the end intended by the Lord – that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful. But above all, my brethren, do not swear, either by heaven or by earth or with any other oath. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No," lest you fall into judgment. Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing psalms. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the

name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise him up. And if he has committed sins, he will be forgiven. Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. Elijah was a man with a nature like ours, and he prayed earnestly that it would not rain; and it did not rain on the land for three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth produced its fruit. Brethren, if anyone among you wanders from the truth, and someone turns him back, let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save a soul from death and cover a multitude of sins.

Tone 5

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

V. I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. (Ps. 88:1-2)

V. For Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever; Thy truth will be prepared in the heavens. (Ps. 88:3)

Tone 4

V. Moses and Aaron were among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His Name. (Ps. 99:6)

Matthew 9:1-8 (Gospel)

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Luke 4:22-30 (Gospel, Prophet Elijah)

So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" He said to them, "You will surely say this proverb to Me, 'Physician, heal yourself! Whatever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in Your country.'" Then He said, "Assuredly, I say to you, no prophet is accepted in his own

country. But I tell you truly, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a great famine throughout all the land; but to none of them was Elijah sent except to Zarephath, in the region of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." So all those in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, and rose up and thrust Him out of the city; and they led Him to the brow of the hill on which their city was built, that they might throw Him down over the cliff. Then passing through the midst of them, He went His way.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

1-2. So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. "His own city" means Capernaum, for it was there that He was living. He was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and lived for an extended length of time in Capernaum. This paralytic is not the same as the one mentioned in the Gospel of St. John, for that one was beside the Sheep's Pool in Jerusalem, while this one was in Capernaum. And that one had no one to help him, while this one was carried by four men, as St. Mark says, who lowered him through the roof, a fact which St. Matthew omits. **When Jesus saw their faith.** Either the faith of the men who brought the paralytic, for Jesus often worked a miracle on account of the faith of those who brought the one sick; or, of the paralytic himself. **He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven."** Jesus calls him "son", either as one of God's creatures, or because he believed. To show that the man's paralysis is a result of his sins, Jesus first forgives him his sins.

3-5. And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'?" By knowing their thoughts, Jesus shows that He is God. He rebukes them by saying, "You think that I am blaspheming by promising to forgive sins, which is a great thing, and that I resort to this because it is something which cannot be verified. But by healing the body, I shall guarantee that the soul has been healed well. By doing the lesser deed, though it appears to be more difficult, I shall also confirm the remission of sins, which is indeed something great even though it appears easier to you since it is not visible to the eye."

6-8. “But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins” – then He said to the paralytic, “Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house.” And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men. Jesus commanded him to carry his bed so that the event would not appear to have been imaginary, and also, so that the multitudes would see the miracle. For they thought that Jesus, Who is greater than all, was only a man.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance! He shall not fear evil tidings! *(Ps. 111:6)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!