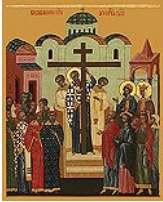


✠Bulletin✠

Week of June 14, 2026



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

V. Rev. Fr. Leonid Palceski
2365 South Olga Drive
Fort Myers, Florida 33905
www.HolyCrossFtMyers.org
Phone: 239-265-6562
Cell: 239-699-3119
HolyCrossFtMyers@gmail.com

2nd SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 1 All Saints of America (All Saints of Russia)

Glorification of St. John of Kronstadt (1990). Prophet Elisha (9th c. B.C.). St. Methodius the Confessor, Patriarch of Constantinople (847). St. Julitta (Julia) of Tabennisi in Egypt (4th c.). St. John (Mavropos), metropolitan of Euchaita (1100). St. Mstislav (George), Prince of Novgorod (1180). St. Sabbas, fool-for-Christ, of Vatopedi, Mt. Athos (1349). Ven. Methodius, founder of Peshnosa Monastery (1392), disciple of St. Sergius of Radonezh. Ven. Elisha of Sumsk (Solovétsky Monastery—15th-16th c.). Ven. Niphon (Mt. Athos—1411). New Hieromartyr Alexander Parusnikov, archpriest, of Troitsko-Ramenskoye (Moscow) (1938). Synaxis of the Saints of Diveyevo.

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday June 14th

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Weekly Schedule

Sunday June 14th

- Choir Practice
- Inquirers & Catechism classes

The Nature of Christian Righteousness

By Rev. Fr. George Timko

“For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt 5:20)

Righteousness, in its widest or most general sense, means conforming to what is good and right. It means living in accordance with what is correct and just. Usually, certain norms and standards are established and accepted as the test or criterion of what is right and good. And he who fulfills these designated laws or rules is considered righteous.

Judaism was a religion composed of many different laws and ritual observances. It advocated a strict adherence to the laws of the sabbath, fasting and tithing; it promoted a rigid observance of the rules of ritual, prayer and sacrifice. And righteousness was based solely on these different rules and practices and regulations.

The pharisees emphasized the literal interpretation and the strict observance of the letter of all laws. They considered conformity and observance the ultimate test of righteousness. This “Pharisaic righteousness” was very formal, external and ceremonial. Primarily, it consisted of fulfilling certain legal requirements. To simply do the law or to complete a prescribed rule and ritual was to be righteous.

Jesus Christ found such a notion of righteousness to be unacceptable and argued against it. Once, for example, the scribes and pharisees rebuked Jesus because his disciples failed to complete a ritual observance of purification and thereby defiled themselves. Our Lord rejected the idea and said: *“Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.” (Matt 15:18-20)*

In their conception of righteousness, the pharisees failed to consider the inner life and character of man. Just because a person refrains from committing an act of murder does not mean that he is righteous. For his heart may be filled with a consuming hatred. And such hatred is nothing less than spiritual and emotional murder. As the Word of God says: *“Whoever hates his brother is a murderer”*. (1 John 3:15)

A person is not necessarily pure just because he refrains from indulging in an unlawful sex act. Christ himself made this quite clear: *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* (Matt 5:27-28) The content of our inner being and consciousness - our thoughts, feelings, desires and attitudes - must be considered when we determine the moral quality of our life. The pharisees (as do many Christians) overlooked the fact that a wicked or corrupt person can fast from certain foods and abstain from working on the sabbath. They failed to see that a proud or selfish person can perform the necessary daily formulas of sacrifice and prayer. They did not have the insight to recognize the possibility that an evil heart can legally fulfill the outward requirements of ritual and law. And so, their conception of righteousness was extremely deficient and misleading. It was too external and superficial. This is why Christ condemned it.

Our Lord's concept of righteousness was much higher and more complete. Its requirements reached a more perfect ideal and penetrated the very fiber and center of man's being. For Christ, righteousness meant the spiritual and moral goodness of character and life. In relationship to God and man and nature. It involved the moral quality and spiritual disposition of the inner person. It embraced a person's total personality and behavior, not merely some external observances and actions and rituals.

According to Christ, the true nature of Christian righteousness must include the character of a person's mind and heart and soul. The inner being, the thoughts, the attitudes, the feelings, the desires, the motives, the affections must be taken into account. Righteousness is determined by the essential quality of one's being. The fruit is determined by the nature of the tree. As Christ said: *"Every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit."* (Matt 7:17-18) ... *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."* (Matt 12:35).

Christian righteousness consists of what a "person is" in addition to what "he does". So that the righteous person not only does certain good things, but he is also good in his essential nature. He not only strives to live an obedient and upright life, but he possesses a virtuous soul and character. He is faithful and devout not only in outward behavior but also in his inward disposition and spirit; such righteousness is an attribute that permeates man's inner being

and life. Such righteousness is embodied in the depths of the soul and the substance of the spiritual self, and is not limited to some simple, external acts of piety.

Righteousness, which merely consists of some outward observances, and which is determined by legalistic methods or ritualistic rules is not sufficient to enable our attainment of God's heavenly kingdom. What is needed is that righteousness which results in the transformation of our whole life and being, both the inner and the outer. We must achieve the quality of being good and right and true. *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled."* (Matt 5:6)

Synaxis of the "Axion Estin" Icon of the Mother of God Commemorated on June 11th

According to Tradition, during the iconoclast persecution of Leo III the Isaurian (717-741), an Icon of the Theotokos was slashed by the sword of one of the Emperor's soldiers. Blood flowed from the Icon into the sea. Shaken by this sign, the repentant sinner fled to Mount Athos. One day he saw the Icon, which had floated from Constantinople, lying on the shore, it was still bleeding and dyeing the water red. He ran toward it and, with fear and trembling, he carried it to the Protaton church. There the Icon stopped bleeding, indicating that the Panagia had forgiven him for desecrating her holy Icon.

Many years later, a certain Elder and his disciple were living in a cave near Karyes. On a Saturday night in 982, the Elder went to attend the All-Night Vigil at Karyes, leaving his disciple behind to read the service in their cell. When it was dark, an unknown monk came to the cell. He said that his name was Gabriel, and the disciple invited him to come in.

Since it was time for the Vigil, the two monks began to pray before the Icon of the Mother of God. When they finished the eighth Ode of the Canon, the disciple began to chant: "My soul magnifies the Lord..." and then he sang the Irmos of Saint Cosmas the Hymnographer (Oct. 14): "More honorable than the Cherubim..." The visitor then chanted the next verse: "For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden; for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." Then, instead of singing "More honorable..." the visitor prefaced it with: "It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God." Then he continued with "More honorable."

During the singing of this hymn, the Icon was illumined with a heavenly light, and the disciple was moved to tears. He asked his guest to write down the new words, but there was no paper. The stranger took a roofing tile and wrote the entire hymn upon it with his finger, as though it were made of wax. The disciple then realized that this was no ordinary monk, but the Archangel Gabriel. The heavenly visitor told him, "Sing the hymn this way, and all of the Orthodox as well." Then, he disappeared. The light continued to shine forth from the Icon for a long time.

The Icon takes its name from the hymn we sing after the epiklesis during the Divine Liturgy. The cell where the miracle took place is known today by the name "Axion Estin." The miracle occurred on June 11, 982 on a Sunday. The miraculous tile on which was the hymn was transcribed and transferred to the Patriarchate of Constantinople and was displayed for veneration by the faithful in the imperial palace Church of Saint Stephen. From that time on, the expanded hymn Axion Estin became part of the Divine Liturgy and other services of the Church.

Schedule of Services

Saturday June 27th

5:30 pm – Vespers

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.

Diocese of the South (DOS) Assembly

The upcoming 48th Diocesan Assembly will be held at the Hyatt Place in St. Augustine/Vilano Beach from Tuesday, July 21st through Friday, July 24th, 2026. Per the annual parish meeting, the church council has voted for our council secretary, Anthony (Theophan) Gordon to represent Holy Cross as our delegate during this assembly. Fr. Leonid and Matushka Irene will be attending as well.

Observers are also welcome to attend. More information, including the itinerary and hotel arrangements, can be found at:

<https://dosoca.org/events/2026-diocesan-assembly/>

In addition, at the recent extraordinary session of the diocesan council of the DOS, they discussed the process for selecting a new ruling bishop following Archbishop Alexander's planned retirement. The following was voted on:

The Motion from Archpriest Marcus Burch, "I move that the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the South, acknowledging the anticipated vacancy in the See of Dallas and the South upon the effective retirement of His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, and acting in preparation for the formal canonical process to occur following the declaration of the vacancy and the appointment of the Locum Tenens, identify His Grace, Bishop Gerasim, Auxiliary Bishop and Administrator of the Diocese of the South, as the candidate to be presented for consideration at the anticipated Special Nominating Assembly, subject to the direction of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod of Bishops, and the formal action of the Diocesan Council after the vacancy is declared," was seconded by Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuck.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 1 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Thy Kingdom!//
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

Tone 8 Troparion *(All Saints of America)*

As the bountiful harvest of Thy sowing of salvation,
the lands of North America offer to Thee, O Lord, all the saints who have
shone in them.
By their prayers keep the Church and our land in abiding peace//
through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!

Tone 1 Kontakion *(Resurrection)*

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory,
raising the world with Thyself.
Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished.
Adam exults, O Master!
Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee://
“Thou art the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

Tone 3 Kontakion *(All Saints of America)*

Today the choir of Saints who were pleasing to God in the lands of North
America
now stands before us in the Church and invisibly prays to God for us.
With them the Angels glorify Him,
and all the Saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them;//
and together they all pray for us to the Pre-eternal God.

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 1 Prokeimenon *(Resurrection)*

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee!
(Ps. 32:22)

V. Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!
(Ps. 32:1)

Tone 7 Prokeimenon *(All Saints of America)*

Precious in the sight of the Lord / is the death of His saints.
(Ps. 115:6)

Romans 2:10-16 (Epistle)

but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Hebrews 11:33-12:2 (Epistle, All Saints of America)

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted,

tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

*V. God gives vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me.
(Ps. 17:48)*

V. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever. (Ps. 17:51)

Tone 1

V. Rejoice in the Lord and be glad, O you righteous! (Ps. 31:11a)

Matthew 4:18-23 (Gospel)

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Matthew 4:25-5:12 (Gospel, All Saints of America)

Great multitudes followed Him – from Galilee, and from Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and beyond the Jordan. And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him. Then He opened His mouth and taught them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Explanation of Today’s Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

18. And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, These two had been disciples of John, and while John was still living they had approached Christ. But when they saw John arrested, they returned again to their fishing, and so Christ comes, fishing for them, and says:

19-20. “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Behold obedient men, who followed Him immediately. From this it is clear that this is the second time that He called them. For they had been taught by Christ on a previous occasion, (John 1:35-42) then left Him, and when they saw Him again followed Him readily.

21. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father. It is the greatest of virtues to care for one’s father in his old age, and for the father to be supported by the just labors of his sons. **Mending their nets.** They were poor and as they were unable to buy new nets, they were stitching together their old ones.

22. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. It appears that Zebedee did not believe, and it is for this reason that they left him. Do you see when it becomes necessary to leave one’s father? When the father becomes an impediment to virtue and reverence for God. When James and John saw the first two follow Christ, they rightly followed Christ as well, imitating their good example.

23. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus enters the synagogues of the Hebrews to show that He is not opposed to the law. **And healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.** He begins with miracles, to give credibility to what He teaches. By “disease” is meant chronic illness, and by “infirmity”, a temporary bodily disorder.

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)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!