



St. Thomas the Apostle Newsletter
“Faith, Seeking Understanding”
May 29, 2020 (May Feria)

In last week’s newsletter I recommended the book For the Life of the World by Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. I’ve read it again myself and would like to share an interesting passage here...

“The early Christians realized that in order to become the temple of the Holy Spirit they must *ascend to heaven* where Christ has ascended. They realized also that his ascension was the very condition of their mission in the world, of their ministry to the world. For there –in heaven- they were immersed in the new life of the Kingdom; and when, after this “liturgy of ascension” they returned into the world their faces reflected the light, the “joy and peace” of that Kingdom and they were truly its witnesses. They brought no programs and no theories; but wherever they went, the seeds of the Kingdom sprouted, faith was kindled, life was transfigured, things impossible were made possible. They were witnesses, and when they were asked, ‘Whence shines this light, where is the source of this power?’ they knew what to answer and where to lead men.” (pg. 28)

Particularly now as we begin to come out of “Coronatide,” the Church needs to re-recognize and rediscover the celebration of the Eucharist as the source and summit of her life.

In mass when we “lift up our hearts” unto the Lord, we ascend to join with angels and archangels and with all the company of heaven to laud and magnify the glorious name of Jesus Christ! We are literally (in the spirit, which is literal, see Revelation 1:10, and 2 Corinthians 12:2-4) taken up into the heavenly realm to participate in the perpetual worship taking place there (Revelation 4).

There we present our bodily actions and our voices with the whole of the Church: Militant (those on earth), Expectant (those in Paradise) and Triumphant (those in Heaven) as an offering to Almighty God. To the eyes of faith we are truly in a different realm!

In that realm we hear God’s Word and declare His praises. More than this, we commune with our Lord and Savior. We “...eat the flesh of thy dear Son and drink His blood...” In doing so a transformation takes place: our sinful bodies are made clean by His body and our souls are washed with His most precious blood. When Moses came down from Sinai, he carried the two tablets of the Law with him. When we come down from the heavenly realm, we carry the living Presence of Jesus Christ within us!

The only power source we have as Christians is Christ. If we, as a parish, want to build St. Thomas the Apostle parish up to where it will continue to provide ourselves and our families the spiritual sustenance we need, and also be able to feed others too (St. Mark 6:34-44), we need to “ascend” up to our Lord Jesus Christ each Sunday and receive that which He so freely gives us: His very own Life!

Our parish is “open for business.” We have put wise and reasonable guidelines in place to help safeguard our health. If you are healthy and feel comfortable being in a public place, we hope to see you this Sunday. As Jesus states it in His parable in St. Luke 14 “Come, for all things are now ready.” (see St. Luke 14:15-24)

Fr. Paul

This past Tuesday, the carpets, pews and kneelers in all three church buildings were professionally cleaned. The covers of the Prayer Books and Hymnals have been wiped down with a disinfectant. Thank you to Dan Hall for arranging the cleaning and for remaining with the cleaners while the work was being completed.

At the May meeting, the Vestry decided to have a questionnaire sent out to the parish membership. It is the second attachment to the e-mail you received this newsletter in. The questionnaire covers worship, study and outreach preferences. **Please complete it and return it by June 9** so it can be reviewed at the June 10 Vestry meeting.

There is a vacancy on the Vestry. If you are willing to serve the parish in this office, please speak to Fr. Paul or a current Vestry member.

There will be a mass for the Feast of St. Barnabas on Thursday, June 11 at 6:30 p.m.
Looking ahead, there will be a mass for the Feast of St. Peter on Monday, June 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Morning Prayer is prayed in the church Monday, Thursday and Friday at 8:00 a.m., and Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday at 10:00 a.m. A mid-week mass is offered each Wednesday at Noon.

Wisdom from the Church Fathers:

“The Holy Ghost, then, always existed, and exists, and always will exist. He neither had a beginning, nor will He have an end; but He was everlastingly ranged with and numbered with the Father and the Son. For it was not ever fitting that either the Son should be wanting to the Father, or the Spirit to the Son. For then Deity would be shorn of Its Glory in its greatest respect, for It would seem to have arrived at the consummation of perfection as if by an afterthought. Therefore He was ever being partaken, but not partaking; perfecting, not being perfected; sanctifying, not being sanctified; deifying, not being deified; Himself ever the same with Himself, and with Those with Whom He is ranged; invisible, eternal, incomprehensible, unchangeable, without quality, without quantity, without form, impalpable, self-moving, eternally moving, with free-will, self-powerful, All-powerful (even though all that is of the Spirit is referable to the First Cause, just as is all that is of the Only-begotten); Life and Lifegiver; Light and Lightgiver; absolute Good, and Spring of Goodness; the Right, the Princely Spirit; the Lord, the Sender, the Separator; Builder of His own Temple; leading, working as He wills; distributing His own Gifts; the Spirit of Adoption, of Truth, of Wisdom, of Understanding, of Knowledge, of Godliness, of Counsel, of Fear (which are ascribed to Him) by Whom the Father is known and the Son is glorified; and by Whom *alone* He is known; one class, one service, worship, power, perfection, sanctification. Why make a long discourse of it? All that the Father has the Son has also, except the being Unbegotten; and all that the Son has the Spirit has also, except the Generation. And these two matters do not divide the Substance, as I understand it, but rather are divisions within the Substance.” - St. Gregory Nazianzen (4th century) Archbishop of Constantinople and Doctor of the Church. Oration 41 on Pentecost

Fr. Paul can be reached by phone or text at 540-588-2766 or email frbeutell@gmail.com