

Christ The Saviour Orthodox Church
American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate

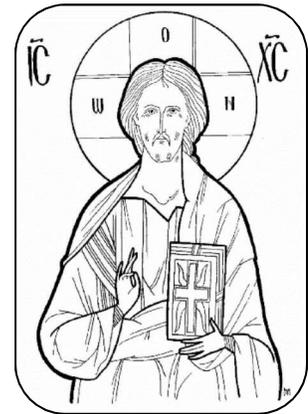
10000 State Road
North Royalton, OH 44133

Parish Website: www.christsaviour.weebly.com

Diocesan Website: www.acrod.org

Church Phone: (440) 237-9196

Church Email: christsaviour@live.com



Schedule of Services:

Sunday November 25th: Obednitsa Service at 10 am & Council Mtg

Sunday December 2nd: Obednitsa Service at 10 am & Parish Meeting

Sunday December 9th: Obednitsa Service at 10 am

Sunday December 16th: Obednitsa Service at 10 am

For more dates of services check out the parish website's calendar.

If you wish to have someone added or removed from the Prayer list, please contact a member of the Royko family or send an email to:

- christsaviour@live.com

Prayer List:

Living		
Theodore (Bunevich)	Theresa (Popovich)	Frank (Popovich)
Penney (Royko)	Sally (Hubiak)	Ethel (Rusyniak)
Eileen (Bunevich)	Virginia (Shymske)	Rosalie (Strachan)
Kathryn (Royko)	Thomas (Royko)	James (Strachan)
Tiana (Hosta)	Thomas (Sirilla)	Jane
Marsha (Will)	Emerson (Sirilla)	Fr. Andrew (Harmon)
Dolores (Royko)	Pani Donna (Smoley)	

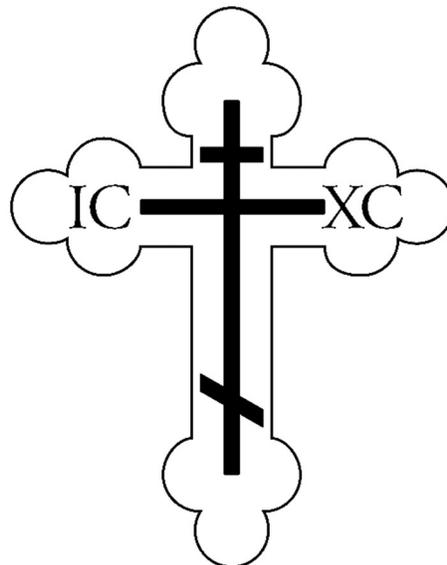
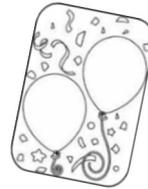
Departed		
Matushka Catherine (Jula)	Very Reverend Father Doctor Stephen (Jula)	Joey (Jarvis)
Logan (Gatchell)	Doris (Gatchell)	

“If God is slow in answering your request, or if you ask but do not promptly receive anything, do not be upset, for you are not wiser than God.” +St. Isaac of Syria

Birthdays & Anniversaries:

Paul Zabala- November 28

Virginia Shymske- November 29



Epistle Reading: Ephesians 5:9-19

For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth, finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.

Gospel Reading: Luke 13:10-17

At that time, Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

Saints and Feasts

Apodosis of the Presentation of the Theotokos into the Temple; Catherine the Great Martyr of Alexandria; Mercurius the Great Martyr of Caesarea in Cappadocia

Sermon on Getting Your Face Out of Your Phone

One of the advantages of working downtown during the week is that you get to see all of the lovely sights, as we had Light-up Night this week and you can see all of the beautiful decorations and the buildings and see all of the restaurants. One of my favorite places to go is down to Market Square. There's a lot of nice things going on there. They have concerts when the weather is warm. The restaurants are wonderful.

But what's amazing is, if you tend to go and walk downtown, walk in a crowded place these days, whether it's at the mall or wherever, you can't help but to bump into 10, 15, 20 people that aren't even looking where they're going. And you know what they're doing, right? Where are their faces? Their faces are down, looking at their phones, while they're walking. I have to say, I'm probably guilty of that sometimes myself, and the problem here is that we're not aware of our surroundings when we have our face buried in our phone. I know some people do it during church, too; might even do it during the sermon: who knows? I hope not. The problem is, when our face is buried in that phone, we can't see, we can't be part of what's happening around us, and we certainly can't—like this woman today in the gospel reading—we can't look up to see the creation, to see the magnificent world that God has created for us. We only see this world, this virtual world that we've entered into in the palm of our hand.

I might be showing my age when I say this, but one of my favorite movies—and I think it's a kind of profound statement on this world; I think it's even theologically profound—is *The Matrix*. If you've seen that movie before, it's basically about this. It's about being loosened from the view of the world as someone else wants us to see it, and being free to see the world for what it is. Unfortunately, in that movie, the blinders are taken off, and you're seeing this world as kind of a horrific statement. In a way, that's true, but in the end of the movie, there's kind of a redeemer that frees the world from all of its enslavement to technology.

In this gospel reading today, you have this woman who is bent over, it says for 18 years. She's not able to appreciate the world for what it is. We have said that we ourselves can be like this. We can be enslaved to the things of the world. Last week we talked about how the advertisers are always kind of bringing us into a mentality where everything in our world is about something being consumed, that they want us to part with our money to be able to purchase their products. We have to be able to resist this onslaught of secularism, this onslaught of consumerism that's constantly pulling us into their way of thinking. By virtue of our baptism, by virtue of faith, we are called to a different way of life. In the epistle reading today, at the end of this letter to the Galatians, St. Paul says, "For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation." We have to see the world with new eyes. We have to see the world

with a renewed sense of understanding. We can even look at the creation itself to help free us from the enslavement of always looking down.

For instance, if we simply look up into the heavens, do you realize: in one galaxy, if we think about all the planets and all the stars, scientists tell us that in one galaxy there [are] somewhere between one hundred billion and one trillion planets and stars? In one galaxy. In the known universe, there are between one hundred billion and one trillion galaxies, which means, if you do the math, which is a number we can't even comprehend: in the known universe, there are something like... the number is one septillion planets and [stars]. Now they're saying there may be innumerable universes, not just one universe: innumerable universes.

What that means is when we look at the creation for what it is, when we have the blinders taken off, when we can see things for what they really are, we know there is a God. We know that the universe is not somehow a cosmic mistake. But unfortunately, there are constant forces, pulling us away from that, pulling us from being lifted up to always be looking down, to always be looking at something base, something earthly, something that keeps us not only from seeing the entire creation but from seeing one another, from having communion with one another.

So the first point is, as Orthodox Christians, we have to recognize this battle that's going on for our eyes, this battle that's going on for our minds, and know that Christ has loosed us, just like he loosed this woman. He's loosed us from the infirmity of the enslavement to sin, to the world, to the base things of this world, to the base ways of this world. And there's a constant battle going on, and the sad thing is that, even as Orthodox Christians, sometimes more as Orthodox Christians, we don't recognize that this battle is going on for our mind, for our eyes, and our heart. And we have to resist it, and we have the ability to resist it.

It's kind of like the theme in both the gospel and the epistle. The theme in the gospel and the epistle is this tension for the Jews between the Law, keeping the Law, and grace. In the gospel reading, after Jesus heals this woman, it says the leader of the synagogue comes up and says, "Don't heal her today. Today's the sabbath." And Jesus says, "Why not? You're nice to your animals on the sabbath. You feed them. You loose them. You let them out for a walk. You give them water. I can't be nice to this woman who's been enslaved by Satan to the world for 18 years? What is the sabbath for?"

So that's the second question we have to ask. The second question is: What is this day for but to bring us to the understanding of how we are to act, of how we're to behave in this world, of how we're to see everything, to see everything as, really, kind of redeemed. "A new creation," it says in the epistle reading. That we don't see circumcision or uncircumcision, because none of that avails anything. Following rules

and regulations doesn't do anything if it doesn't change your heart, if it doesn't change the way that you see the world. That's the point.

In this season, as we have Thanksgiving, think about it. In this culture, in this world, we've taken a perfectly beautiful holiday, which is about gathering the family together without the phones at a table to dine together and to appreciate and understand and verbally give thanks for everything that we have, for everything that we are. I want to say, if you are an Orthodox Christian, and you're holding Thanksgiving dinner and you don't pray, that would be a tragedy. If you don't pray and give thanks... Just say the Our Father. Say what comes to your mind, about what you're thankful for.

That's the final point. When we're bent over, we can't see the things that God wants us to see, and we can't be thankful for this creation, we can't be thankful for this life, for our family. All we're thankful for is, "Oh, WalMart's opening early this year... on Thanksgiving Day." Instead of: "Thank you, God, for my life, for my family, for my friends, for my church, for my faith, for my community, for my job—everything." The most important thing in our life, when St. Paul says we're new creations, we're renewed for a different purpose now, the most important thing is that we recognize who we are, that we recognize who our neighbor is, and we're thankful for it. There was a famous theologian in our country. Many of you have heard of him: Fr. Alexander Schmemmann. He said, "The vocation of man is to become" —and he used this term— "a doxological and eucharistic being." Those are just theological words that means someone who gives glory to God—doxological—and eucharistic means "thankful," to be thankful to God.

When we gather here on Sunday, we express our thanks to God for who we are. You might say it was the original sin, to not be thankful, to not recognize God for who he is, and our foremother and forefather, Adam and Eve, failed to recognize God for who he is. Instead, they listened to the devil; they listened to the world, the base things of this world. They wanted to know the knowledge of the tree of good and evil, and God says, "Just stay away from it. Don't know anything about it." In contemporary terms, they wanted to have their face buried in their phones. That's what they preferred, instead of to be straight and looking up and seeing other people and seeing God for who he really is. Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, like the woman in this gospel, we've been freed from that, but the world is always pulling us back down, pulling us back in. So what we're called to do is know that we have the ability by God's grace and by our strength, by the strength of our will, with the help of God, to be straight, to see the world, to see other people for who they really are: gifts of God, images of God, the beauty of this creation. Let's go into this week, into the season of Advent, into St. Nicholas' Day, into Christmas, being thankful to God, being doxological, glorifying God for all of the things that we have, all of the things we are, and for being members of one another.

+Fr. Thomas Soroka