



St. Alexander Nevsky Orthodox Cathedral

3rd Sunday of Pascha. Holy Myrrhbearing Women.
Epistle: Acts 6:1-7
Gospel: St. Mark 15:43-16:8
Ven. John, disciple of Ven. Gregory of Decapolis

V. Rev. Paul Suda, Dean
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Sunday, April 18, 2010

Today's Announcements

- The Junior Choir will practice following today's Liturgy.
- The Parish Council will meet following today's Liturgy.
- "He Granted Life: Songs of Pascha" – Choral program presented by the Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh – 3 pm at the Byzantine Catholic Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, 210 Greentree Road in Munhall. Our choir will be participating.

Thursday-Friday – April 22-23

- Pierogi Workshop – Potato balls will be made Thursday at 5 pm, and the pierogi pinching will begin at 10 am Friday.

Saturday – April 24

- Vespers – 5:00 pm

Next Sunday – April 25 – Youth Sunday

- Church School – 9:00 am
- Divine Liturgy – 10:00 am

Coming Events – Mark Your Calendar!

- Konevets Quartet Concert – April 28 at 7 pm at St. Mark Church (next to St. Nicholas Church, McKees Rocks). Please see the monthly newsletter for further details.
- Basket Party – May 1
- Women's Association Tea Party – May 22
- Church School Summer Camp – July 26-30

Fundability Tip of the Week: Now that Spring is upon us, it's time to do some of those indoor and outdoor chores. Remember, whatever supplies you need, you can purchase them with gift cards from St. Alexander Fundability. For example, if you need to replace that hard-to-start lawnmower, use Fundability cards to buy one from Sears, Lowe's, Home Depot, Kmart, or Wal-Mart. And pick up a restaurant card to use when the job's done! Remember, Fundability is your way to support the building fund without paying a penny extra. Thanks for your ongoing support of this important fundraiser!

Today's Dynamis meditation is from the 10th Vigil Reading of Great and Holy Saturday

Truly Obedient Man: Genesis 22:1-18, SAAS especially vss.: "By Myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you did this thing, and for My sake did not spare your beloved son, I will certainly bless you...." Saint John Chrysostom draws attention to the Lord's words in these verses - easily overlooked, yet surprising. "Consider, I ask you, the Lord's loving kindness: '...for My sake you did not spare your beloved son...' and yet he takes him away alive.... You see, as far as intention is concerned, the patriarch stained his right hand in blood, plunging his sword into the child's throat and consummating the sacrifice." The act was not carried out, and still God responded to the offering of Isaac as if it actually occurred. What is the meaning of this? Plainly Abraham displayed true obedience to God.

A fundamental truth must be grasped to appreciate the depth of this mystery of obedience to God. What within Abraham made him truly obedient without contradiction? Saint Silouan the Athonite helps by pin-pointing the key: "The obedient man has surrendered himself to God's will." Saint John of the Ladder adds the second point, "...obedience is absolute renunciation of our own life, clearly expressed in our bodily actions." Here we have it: God spoke and Abraham acted as directed. A willingness to respond to God instantly and fully marked Abraham's character all through his life. From the start we have this account: "Now the Lord said to Abram, "Get out of your country, from your kindred and from your father's house, to a land I will show you.... Then Abram departed as the Lord said to him..." (Gen. 12:1, 4).

One might argue that God early revealed Himself to Abraham, but Abraham obeyed God even before the Lord openly showed Himself. Note the order: first, God sent him from his country; and he went "...to the place of Shechem" (Gen. 12:6). Then and there he "...built an altar...to the Lord," Who then "...appeared to him" (Gen. 12:7).

Do you recall the words of the prayer to God the Holy Spirit: that He is "...everywhere present and fillest all things?" Exactly that! The truly obedient man lives responsively before the presence of God, seen or unseen. Abraham did not need an apparition of God. He heard God and he obeyed, and not only at the beginning - at God's earliest command - but always, even when a strange Divine command came contrary to all reasonable expectation, concerning his son.

What saves us from delusion, from choosing and responding to the voices within or around us that we prefer and imagine to be from God? The Church provides us with pastors as guides. Listen to Saint John of the Ladder. "When motives of humility and real longing for salvation incite us to bend our neck and entrust ourselves to another in the Lord...we ought first to question and examine, and even, so to speak, test our helmsman, so as not to mistake the sailor for the pilot, a sick man for the doctor." Yes, our clergy are fallible, but God gives them within the Church to guide and help us in hearing His unmistakable voice without human confusion.

Unlike Abraham, we have a good, infallible mother in the Church, in her Holy Tradition including Holy Scripture and the tested, uninterrupted teachings of the Holy Fathers passed along in tangible consistent form. God gives us these gifts so that, like Abraham, we may voyage on the sea of great perils - this world - with our hearts constantly open above all to the Lord's voice.

If there is doubt, let us go to our pastors for help in being obedient to God. Mostly, they also strive to live openly before God and under the authority of their superiors. Thus, we have fair cause to trust and obey the voice of God as He speaks through them. But, foremost, must be our willingness to arise, depart, and go to the place of which God speaks, to obey Him (Gen. 22:3).

Lord, guide me in the way of Thy righteousness and make straight my way before Thee.