



THE BASIL LEAF

St. Basil The Great Antiochian Orthodox Church

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Parish Happenings:

The Stewardship commitment cards are still being collected. Please fill them out and return them to the office. Also, we were just notified by Sts. Constantine and Helen Greek Orthodox Church in Newport News, VA, that they will once again invite our volunteers to help out at their Greekfest May 30 through June 2. In the last several years, we have had tremendous participation from our parish and again they have agreed to donate \$2000 to our parish for and on behalf of our volunteer force. (Continued on p. 2)

Tradition

Fr. James Purdie

We've got to share the Good News! Christ calls us to proclaim the Gospel. He tells us to go out into all the world, to preach the Gospel to all the nations, to baptize and teach everything He has commanded. Of course, in doing so we inevitably run into objections. Objections that we need to be ready to answer.

Whoever loves true prayer and yet becomes angry or resentful is his own enemy. He is like a man who wants to see clearly and yet inflicts damage on his own eyes.
-Abba Evagrius the Solitary

The place of Mary and the saints for example is often challenged by the people we encounter in American protestant society. Before we can even talk about Mary, the saints, the liturgy, or practically anything else about our faith we need to address Tradition.

Tradition is often placed in competition with scripture. If you've never talked to a protestant Christian about the tradition vs scripture dichotomy, do so. Hear them out. Understand where they are coming from. In many cases, you'll see they are concerned that tradition contradicts scripture, or that tradition obscure the of genuine, authentic, and original Christian faith. We have to address these concerns.

First and foremost, let me say this: Tradition is genuine, authentic, and has always been part of Christianity. For the early Church, there was no dichotomy between tradition and scripture. As a matter of fact, scripture (the New Testament, and agreed upon canonical Old Testament) didn't exist for the early Church. Yes, scripture quickly came into formation, but even then, different books were used by different local churches, some of which did not make it into the present New and Old Testaments, throughout the first few centuries. Scripture was no doubt authoritative, but look at the early Christian writers, even in the New Testament, and you'll see that scripture was by no means elevated to the statutes of sola scriptura (scripture alone).

Let's get into it. What is Tradition? And how do we talk about it? I'll try my best to keep it simple so you can effectively communicate it to people.

- 1) Tradition could be defined as the Holy Spirit's work with the Church. The Holy Spirit working in the Church. This is the same Holy Spirit of whom Christ said would lead us into all Truth. Read John 16:12-15. In that passage, Christ says that He still has many things to say to His disciples, but that they can't bear them now. Christ says that the Spirit when He comes will lead them into all truth. We Orthodox believe that. Christ said it, the Spirit came, and the Spirit has been guiding us into all truth ever since.
- 2) Tradition has sometimes been defined as giving your ancestors a vote. It is arrogant to think that our place and time are so special as to give us the license to redefine the faith. (Continued on p. 4)

Parish Happenings (continued from p.1)

Please keep in mind these dates as we will have sign-up sheets for these volunteers in the weeks leading up to the Greekfest. Thank you in advance for your participation.



Pictured here are all of the children processing with their icons last Sunday, March 17th, celebrating the Triumph of Orthodoxy.

St. Basil Youth: Students have been working on different projects for upcoming Sacred Arts Festival. We are excited to see them find beauty in images and written word within our faith.

The theme for the 2019 Creative Arts Festival is “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13) Students have been working on different projects for the upcoming Creative Arts Festival. We are excited to see them find beauty in images and written word within our faith. The artwork and creative writing will be on display at the Parish Life Conference at the Antiochian Village this June. (Continued on page 3)



Sunday of Orthodoxy, March 17



Parish Happenings: (continued from p. 2)

Dear Church Family,

Hello, this is Isaac Butts. As you might know I am a senior in high school and will be graduating this June. It has been a dream of mine ever since I was young to go on a missions trip to serve others. In saying that, this coming summer, July 15th-29th I will be going on a missions trip through OCMC to Kenya. OCMC stands for Orthodox Christian Mission Center. OCMC has "supported the work of the Orthodox Church in Kenya for over 30 years and continues to provide support for theological and catechetical training, and works with church leaders to address issues of self-sufficiency for the church." Our team will help build a laboratory and a library for the St. Athanasius Secondary School in Mugeni, Kenya. While there, we will also run a camp for the students who attend the school. I am very blessed to have this opportunity. I am asking for your prayers and support as I embark on this trip. Please pray for my team as we travel to the country and for our safety and ministry while we are there.

If you would like to support this missions trip financially please consider giving through the link below. You will need to checkmark my name on the team list to assure that your donation goes to support my expenses. Thank you for your prayers and support!

- Isaac Butts

https://www.ocmc.org/donate/donate.aspx?DonationType=MissionTeam&FundId=117&TeamMemberFund=Butts%2C+Isaac+%28Kenya-Construction%29&fbclid=IwAR3GtCT641zvddQwGw6VFQ2RMqdulz8upxoIRL_oCrvDHn4fGymTTXuMBNI

More information about this team can be found on the link below. They are still looking for more team members if you would like to join us!

https://www.ocmc.org/about/view_team.aspx?TeamId=104

Dioceses of Charleston/Oakland & New York/Washington D.C.

JUNE 26-30, 2019

2019 PLC @AV

Hosted by St. John Chrysostom, York, PA

FAMILY ACTIVITIES ATMOSPHERE FUN!

Keynote Address: "Lay Ministry in the Church"

Fr. Nicholas Belcher

Antiochian Village Conference & Retreat Center • Ligonier, PA

LODGING: [registration.antiochianvillage.org/2019PLC](https://www.registration.antiochianvillage.org/2019PLC)

EVENT REGISTRATION: [antiochianevents.com](https://www.antiochianevents.com)

Tradition (continued from p. 1)

Our situation is not so privileged as to warrant our bending the faith it in a manner contrary to how we received it. Granted, we must live out the faith and apply it to our context, but such an idea is part of the Tradition, and such application cannot be an excuse to chuck what was taught to us.

3) Everything is Tradition. It is helpful to understand Tradition as an umbrella covering every aspect of Christian life.

4) The Bible didn't one day fall from the sky into the hands of scripture alone believers. The books of the Bible were written by faithful people in the Church. The same Church that the Holy Spirit has been guiding into all truth. Then those books were read and taught in and by the Church. Later, the Church, guided by the Holy Spirit, determined what would become the Bible. How was the Church able to do this? Simple. It was guided by Tradition. Tradition guided the writers. Tradition allowed the Church to determine which writings were inspired, and which were not. It was an organic process within the Church being guided by the Holy Spirit in the writings and councils that endorsed the scripture.

5) The practices of fasting didn't fall out of the sky. Check out the *Didache*, compiled around 150AD. It talks of fasting on Wednesday and Fridays. Of course, the Bible has Jesus talking about "when you fast..." (Matt. 6:16), and that when the disciples will fast when Christ is not with them (Matt. 9:15-17, Mk. 2:19-22, Lk. 33-39), or Jesus saying that certain demons only come out by pray and fasting, or Paul in I Cor. 7:5, or Acts 13:2. It may seem like I am making the case that fasting is Scriptural, and you'd be right. What I am also suggesting that it is these Scriptures came to be because they reflected and manifested the Tradition. The Church was already fasting, according to its Tradition, before it was written in Scripture. Scripture falls under the Tradition umbrella.

6) We can make the same argument for the offices of Bishop, Priest, and Deacon. All of which appear in the New Testament, but which are rooted and nestled in the Life of the Church, i.e. Tradition. The Apostles appointed Presbyters (priests) and Deacons. As the Apostles carried on their jobs they appointed successor and bishops (see the Greek words used in 1 Peter 2:25; 5:2 Acts 1:20 20: 28; Php 1: 1; 1 Tim 3: 1,2; Titus 1:7). Read the Letters of St. Ignatius of Antioch. These offices are part of the Tradition.

7) We can go on and on with these types of examples, but let's look at the world for some common traditions. What do we see? Military tradition, fraternity and sorority traditions, family tradition, wedding traditions, traditional foods, holiday traditions, a tradition of excellence, etc. All these traditions are important and matter. They bind people together, provide a sense of unity, a sense of self, purpose, meaning, and identity. We take them for granted. When it's broken we have a phrase "breaks with tradition." We defend it by saying, "It's tradition!"

8) Some traditions are better than others, and you'll encounter people who quote scriptures that warn of tradition. But those scriptures only warn of the "tradition of men." Mark 7:8, for example, criticizes the Pharisees for insisting on such traditions of men above the commandments of God. But read passages like II Thess 2:15 3:6, or I Cor. 11:1-2 and you'll see that Tradition is to be kept and followed.

9) Finally, you'll eventually end up in a discussion that seems to go around in circles. You'll come to a scriptural passage that we Orthodox interpret one way, but your friend and/or his church understands in a different way. That's because you both are approaching the passage from different...wait for it...Traditions! This just proves the point. Yes, everyone has a tradition. Many Christians have a Reformed tradition, a Lutheran tradition, a Roman Catholic tradition, an Evangelical tradition, a tradition of liberation theology, and so on. The question then really isn't whether to have and follow tradition. The question really is *which* tradition you are going to follow. As for me, I choose a Tradition that can be traced with integrity and historical backing down through the ages to the Apostles and Christ Himself.

Well, I hope that helps. Of course, remember there is a difference between "T"radition and "t"radition. But keep these ideas in mind and get out and share the faith.

Dates to Remember

**Great Vespers, Saturdays 6:30 PM. Matins, Sundays, 9:25 AM.
Divine Liturgy, Sundays, 10:30 AM.**

Sunday School & Adult Ed, Sundays following Liturgy.

April

- 1 Lenten Compline, 6:30pm
- 2 Bible Study, 11:30am
- 3 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, 6:30pm
- 4 Chapel of St Basil, 7:00pm
- 5 Homeschool, 9:00am, Akathist, 6:30pm
- 7 Parish Council, 12:45pm
- 8 Lenten Compline, 6:30pm
- 9 Bible Study, 11:30am
- 10 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, 6:30pm
- 11 Chapel of St. Basil, 7:00pm
- 12 Akathist, 6:30pm
- 15 Lenten Compline, 6:30pm
- 16 Bible Study, 11:30am
- 17 Pre-Sanctified Liturgy, 6:30pm
- 18 Canon of Repentance, 6:30pm
Chapel of St. Basil, 7:00pm
- 19 Homeschool, 9:00am
Canon of Lazarus, 6:30pm
- 20 Lazarus Saturday, Orthros, 9:25am, Liturgy, 10:30am
- 21 Palm Sunday, Bridegroom Matins, 6:30pm
- 22 Holy Week Begins, Bridegroom Services, 6:30pm
- 23 Bible Study, 11:30am, Bridegroom Services, 6:30pm
- 24 Holy Unction, 6:30pm
- 25 Vespers Divine Liturgy, 9:00am, Twelve Gospels, 6:30pm
Chapel of St. Basil, 7:00pm
- 26 Vespers of the Un-nailing, 4:00pm, Potluck Dinner, 5:30pm
Lamentations, 6:30pm
- 27 Vespers Divine Liturgy, 6:30pm
- 28 Midnight Office, Rush, Paschal
Orthros & Liturgy, 10:30pm-1:30am
- 29 Bright Week begins
- 30 Bible Study, 11:30am

