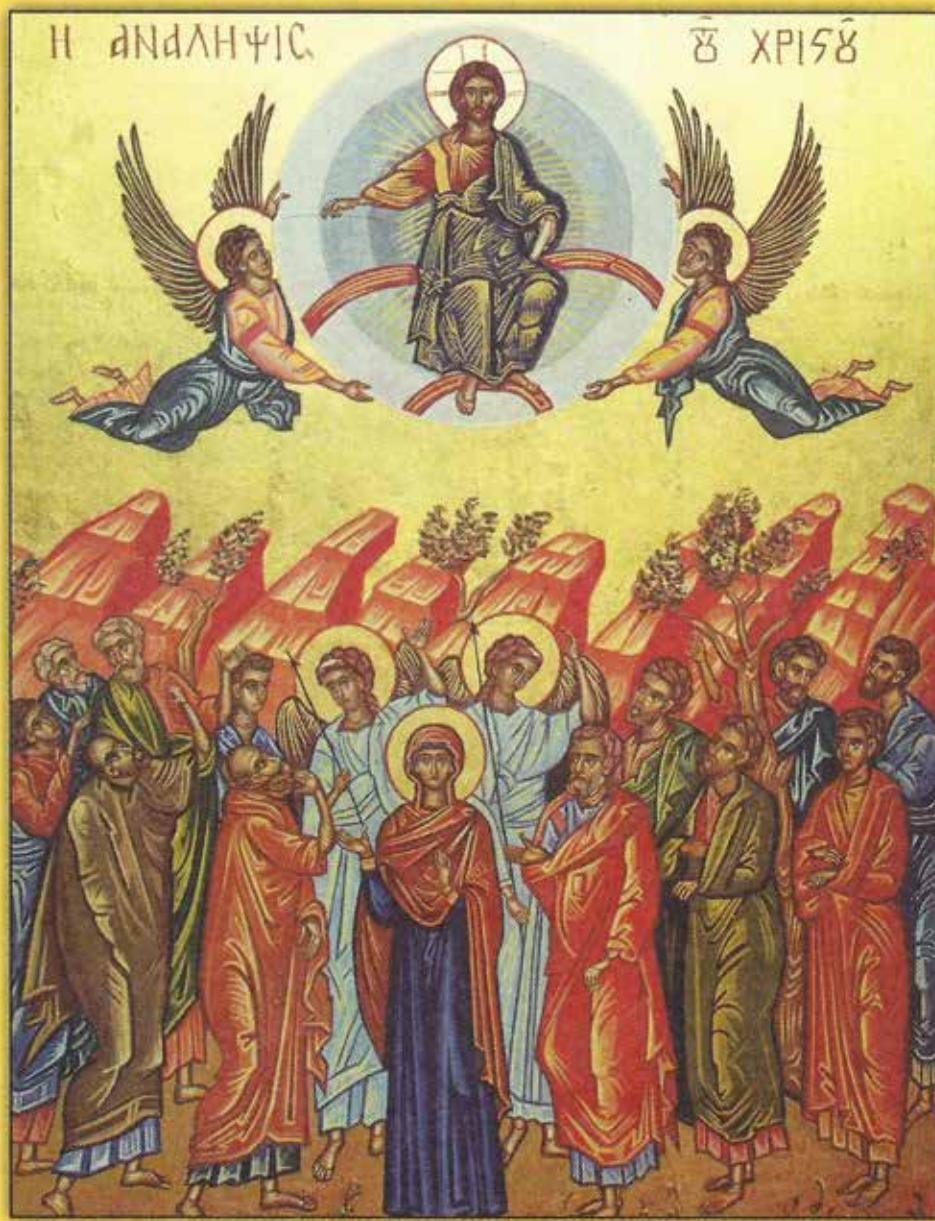


SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND



Icon of the Ascension of Our Lord -- May 21st

May 17, 2020: Sunday of the Man Born Blind		
Epistle: Acts 16: 16-34		Gospel: Jn. 9: 1-38
Mon., May 18	9:00	+ George & Marie Chmil (Paul & Rosemary Mizerak)
Tues., May 19	9:00	+ Evelyn Cheplick (Peter & Mary Beth Chludzinsky)
Wed., May 20	9:00	+ Jeffrey Marcinko (M/M Jayme Morano)
Thurs. May 21	Ascension Thursday	
	9:00	+ Patrick Marcinko (Holy Transfiguration Choir)
Fri., May 22	9:00	+ Anna & Michael Zinsky (Evelyn Trently)
Sat., May 23	No Divine Liturgies Today	
Sun., May 24	9:00	For Our Parishioners

GUIDELINES FOR OPENING PARISH CHURCHES AND RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC SERVICES ON SUNDAYS, HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION AND WEEKDAYS

In anticipation of the resumption of public services in our Churches (for us, when Lackawanna County gets designated by our Governor as a yellow county), our Archbishop has issued the following guidelines:

1. The church should be cleaned/sanitized before the service when the public may be present, especially those areas and surfaces that are commonly used and touched (bathrooms, railings, doors, backs of pews, etc.);
2. In order to observe social distancing for laity, please consider 1/3 of total church capacity as the maximum number of persons that may be present

at any given Divine Liturgy or service (the total seating capacity of the church divided by three);

3. Social distancing of 6 feet must be maintained:
 - A. while sitting or standing in the pews-between nonfamily members
 - B. while standing or moving in the aisles in line for Communion and returning to the pews;
4. Wearing masks is **strongly encouraged** for the laity. Priests are obliged to wear masks while distributing Holy Communion;
5. Please refrain from any personal physical contact among persons;

6. Veneration of icons, crosses, etc. should be done without touching or kissing them. The Holy Water fountains must be emptied.
7. There should be no social gatherings after the services. People should leave the church promptly upon the completion of services;
8. Parishioners are reminded that if they are not feeling well that they should stay at home;
9. Parishioners are reminded that they are not bound by the Sunday obligation if they are ill, at high risk to contract the virus, or if for health reasons they are afraid to attend the services. Dispensation from the Sunday Liturgy obligation remains valid until further notice;
10. During the distribution of Holy Communion, those who choose to receive it are reminded to open their mouths wide not touch the spoon, and not cough or sneeze upon it. The spoon must be sanitized immediately after each communicant.
11. Celebrations of weddings, baptisms and funerals are allowed if all precautions listed above are observed. N.B. water is considered to be safe since the virus spreads from person to person via air droplets;
12. Collection baskets are to be left in designated places so that parishioners may leave their offerings without passing around baskets. Once collected, sanitized the envelopes before opening them or leave the basket in a secure place for a few days;
13. Live streaming of Divine Liturgies is still highly recommended;
14. The schedule of parish church services may be changed as deemed necessary;
15. Please keep the church well ventilated by opening windows or by turning on air conditioning;
16. Please consider other precautionary measures to ensure that our churches are safe and everyone's good health is maintained.

SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

Today the Church celebrates the Sunday of the Healing of the Blind Man. This man, who had been "born blind," encountered Jesus when the Lord was leaving the Temple in Jerusalem. The man was, apparently, begging for money or food at the gate of the Temple and when

Jesus spoke to him he listened and was obedient to the Lord's command. Unlike the other figures in the Gospel account, this man alone had never seen the miraculous works of Christ, and yet, trusted in his word. We too, who have "not seen and yet believe" trust in the word of the Lord and

follow in his ways. In this way, we, who were formerly blinded by sin, have begun to see through faith.

But, how do we trust in the Lord and follow in his ways? In the Epistle today, we are reminded on the conversion of Saul who, blinded by anger and his persecution of the Church, discovers that he is persecuting Christ himself and is called to join in the healing ministry of the Lord. We too, those who have been baptized into Christ and have received the vision of faith, are called to do “work[s] befitting

[our] repentance.”

And what are those works which we are called to do if not to follow in the ways of Christ and Saint Paul, to bring healing to those who are spiritually blind through ignorance of Christ? To help those to whom God has called us to minister “to open their eyes that they may turn from darkness to light, and from the dominion of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in me.”

HOW THE VIRGIN MARY PROTECTS HER FAITHFUL CHILDREN FROM ALL EVIL

The Virgin Mary is first of all a mother, and a very powerful spiritual mother! She is fully united with her Son in Heaven and seeks to use all of her power to protect her children, who are invited to turn to her in their time of need. St. Louis de Montfort, an 18th century priest who dedicated his whole life to leading souls to Jesus through Mary, wrote about the protection she offers in his book entitled True Devotion to Mary. He compares her to a hen who gathers her brood under her wings, saving them from outside enemies.

Mary, the beloved Mother of chosen souls, shelters them under her protecting wings as a hen does her chicks. She speaks to them, coming down to their level

and accommodating herself to all their weaknesses. To ensure their safety from the hawk and vulture, she becomes their escort, surrounding them as an army in battle array. This she does out of the pure love she has for us, especially those who are daily devoted to her. This simple truth has been confirmed by many throughout the years, especially exorcists.

Famed exorcist Fr. Gabriele Amorth discovered this reality in his dialogues with the devil, where the devil said to him, “I am more afraid when you say the Madonna’s name, because I am more humiliated by being beaten by a simple creature, than by Him.”

Pope Francis related similar words

in a homily at St. Mary Major, “Where the Madonna is at home the devil does not enter; where there is the Mother, disturbance does not prevail, fear does not win.”

Let us stay underneath the wings of the Blessed Mother and let her safely guide us to eternal life!

LEARNING TO WAIT DURING THIS PANDEMIC

Our daily life has suffered many major disruptions as a result of the covid-19 pandemic. You and I have been challenged to be patient and to wait. For most of us, it is hard to wait. It is hard to wait in traffic. It is hard to wait in line at a check-out counter. It is hard to wait for a vaccine to be developed. The longer we wait, the worse we tend to worry.

Recall that the Risen Christ asked the apostles to wait after His ascension. Jesus knew that the apostles could not fulfill their work alone. They needed the presence of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the work of the kingdom. The Holy Spirit would encourage, instruct, guide, and comfort them in their earthly ministry. They needed to wait. Why wait? There is a lesson for you and for me in what happened to them while they waited.

Perhaps the apostles needed to wait so that they could learn some obedience. They needed to learn to prepare themselves in listening to God’s plan for them.

The passage of time would also help to prepare the apostles’ hearts. They needed time to heal from their failures. They

needed time to draw together. There is a special fellowship that develops among those who wait.

Waiting increases anxiety. Jesus knows this and calls the apostles and us to move beyond anxiety to trust, to grow in faith. If things do not seem to work out the way we expected, perhaps it is an opportunity to find God’s plan in our life.

Waiting can be fruitful. If our lives belong to God, we do not become frustrated when our plans do not work out. If time belongs to God, we are not angered when things get rearranged in life. We come to realize that our ‘to-do’ list may not match God’s assignment list. God is more interested in obedience, in quiet hope, in a prepared soul, than He is in our accomplishments.

The apostles had to wait. Not for ten minutes. Not for ten hours. They will wait for ten days. They did not know how long they would have to wait. While they waited, they struggled with their desires to get started in their earthly ministry. They argued whether they heard Jesus accurately. They struggled to encourage

each other, to keep from quitting and returning home.

While waiting, the apostles learned to pray like they had never had to pray before. They learned to depend on one another. They learned to use their faith. In the absence of the physical presence of Jesus, they allowed their faith in his world

to grow.

They waited and they became the men that Jesus knew they could be. They became a Church.

Just wait! Imagine what can happen to you and to me beyond the challenge of this pandemic.

--by Archbishop Emeritus Stephen Soroka

THE QUARANTINE CONTINUES

Please note, the suspension of public services in our Church still continues. Once we have the date to reopen our Church for public services again, an announcement with more details will be posted on our Parish website <https://stcyrils.weconnect.com>. This date will be determined in consultation with and based on the recommendations of our

Archbishop and of the Public Health authorities. Lackawanna County is still a red County with strict social distancing requirements.

Thank you to all of our Parishioners who are making this great sacrifice and staying home for the benefit of one another. I look forward to praying with all of you soon!

MOLEBEN TO THE MOTHER OF GOD

During the month of May our Church honors Mary the Mother of God in a special Moleben Service. Every Wednesday during May, at 6:00 pm, we will celebrate

the Moleben Service and pray for Our Lady's continued protection of all those who face the effects of the coronavirus plague.

LITRUGICAL SERVICES ONLINE

Thank you for your prayerful presence to all Parishioners who are able to join us at our services online. The responses to our streaming services have been positive and continue to grow each week. I continue to pray and offer services for you every day. Please remember, that while we cannot be

filling our beautiful Church together, we can still worship together, by you joining our live-streaming services on Facebook or through a link on our website <https://stcyrils.weconnect.com> on YouTube.

To make your online worship experience an expression of our "Church of

the Home,” please consider the following:

- Watch the services in a special place, such as in your icon corner or the prayer space of your home.
- Prepare yourself as if you were going to Church, perhaps even dressing as you usually do for a

service at the Church.

- Turn off distractions such as other media and your phone.
- Most importantly, tune in spiritually as participants, not just observers. This is still your Church!

REMEMBER TO SUPPORT OUR PARISH

These days are challenging for us all on many levels, including financially. A heartfelt “**THANK YOU**” goes out to all who have continued to make donations to our parish either by mail, or by dropping envelopes off over the past few weeks. Any small way you can contribute is very

much appreciated. With your sacrificial giving we will be able to pay our bills. If sending multiple donations, one check is fine, and a note indicating what the donation is for. If you prefer to drop them off, there is a mail box outside the Rectory office door. Thanks for your generosity!

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

It has long been a Catholic understanding that when circumstances prevent one from receiving Holy Communion, it is possible to make an Act of Spiritual Communion which is a source of grace. Spiritual Communion means uniting one’s self in prayer with Christ’s sacrifice and worshipping Him in His Body and Blood. The most common reason for making an Act of Spiritual Communion is when a person cannot attend the Divine Liturgy. Acts of Spiritual Communion increase our desire to receive sacramental Communion and help us avoid the sins that would make us unable to receive

Holy Communion worthily. When unable to receive Holy Communion, pray the following prayer:

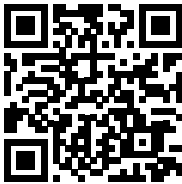
“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to you. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.”

Ss. Cyril & Methodius Ukrainian Catholic Church

135 River St., Olyphant, PA 18447-1435

Telephone: 570-291-4451 Fax: 570-489-6918

Web Site: stcyrils.weconnect.com



E-Mail: sscyrilandmethodius@comcast.net

Rev. Nestor Iwasiw, Pastor

Our True Home

Once there was a young man who became a Christian many years ago. His rich pagan father despised him for this. He argued with his son, beat him, and then finally threw him out of the house. The young man remained a devout Christian and won many others to Christ as well. Eventually, the young man was brought before the magistrate, and was accused of being a Christian.

The magistrate offered him a choice. First, he would release him if he would simply renounce Christ, come home and enjoy his father's wealth. Or, he could remain a Christian and be put to death. "Leaving my father's riches does not trouble me," said the young man, "for there is a far more beautiful home waiting for me with my Heavenly Father."

This Thursday, we will celebrate the feast of Our Lord's return to His Heavenly Father. On Ascension Thursday, forty days after His Resurrection, Our Lord took His disciples to the Mount of Olives near Bethany, blessed them and was lifted in a cloud which took Him from their sight. (Acts 1 :9)

The Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord reminds us of our final destination. Ultimately, we are all created to dwell with God in Heaven. While we journey on earth, however, God continues to share Himself with us by sending His Holy Spirit to us, to live within us and to work among us. Therefore, let us, on the Feast of the Ascension, anticipate the coming of the Holy Spirit into the world and into us in a renewed way.