



Church website: [www.hrocbv.org](http://www.hrocbv.org)

Church Social Hall: (724) 929-7448

## *Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church*

222 Mary Street, Rostraver Township, PA  
(Serving the faithful of Belle Vernon and surrounding areas)

Reverend Father Stephan Gresh

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**May 10, 2020**

### ***Christ is Risen!***

**Per the Holy Synod, the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh and His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek:  
The March 17, 2020 Directive is being updated as we self-quarantine.**

**More to come shortly!**

1. All parishes of this Archdiocese are to *continue to* cease all services, activities, social gatherings, etc. with the exception of 3 items below. (***This is a directive of the Bishop, NOT an option for the parishes.***)
  - a. Special services (i.e., funerals, baptisms, etc.) may only be held IF discussed with the Chancellor before scheduled – attendance is limited to immediate family ONLY. *This directive is still in place.*
  - b. Fr. Stephan will continue to have the Church open **Saturdays from 12:00 Noon until 3:00 p.m.** to offer parishioners time for private prayer and light candles. (High risk individuals such as senior citizens, people with ongoing health problems and people not feeling well currently should not consider this act.)
  - c. During the Paschal season, the Diocese has permitted parishes to have additional Liturgies throughout the week. All of the restrictions will still be in place. We are still limited to a total of 10. This includes the priest and the cantor. Father Stephan will use the parish directory to contact parishioners alphabetically. If you plan to attend one of the services you will be added to the list. If you are not listed in the directory, please contact Father Stephan.
2. Confession are still suspended, except for deathbed confessions.
3. Informal spiritual discussions are permitted via phone and e-mails with Fr. Stephan.
4. Fr. Stephan is available to his faithful in emergency situations, following personal safety protocols. However, he still is not able to visit his homebound during this health emergency period.
5. Please contact Fr. Stephan if any Parishioner is in need of assistance in obtaining the basic staples of life since they cannot visit the grocery stores. He has a group of volunteers ready and able to help!

Please note, much care was used in making these decisions by His Eminence after much prayer, dialogue with members of the Holy Synod, consultation with medical professionals and lengthy conversations with the Chancellor. These decisions were not made lightly! We must eliminate the spread of this virus NOW! His Eminence stated that out of “something bad, perhaps something good can come about” -- this period of limited interaction “opens the window of opportunity” to individually “plunge” into increased personal prayer, Bible study, and time with the myriad of “good” Orthodox material available through the Internet and our Orthodox bookstores.

**“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7)**

## Epistle (*Resurrection*)

(Acts 9:32-42)

Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all *parts of the country*, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda.

There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed.

And Peter said to him, "Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed." Then he arose immediately.

So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.

At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did.

But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid *her* in an upper room.

And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring *him* not to delay in coming to them.

Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought *him* to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them.

But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, "Tabitha, arise." And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up.

Then he gave her *his* hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive.

And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord.

## Gospel (*Resurrection*)

(John 5:1-15)

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep *Gate* a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches.

In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years.

When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been *in that condition* a long time, He said to him, “Do you want to be made well?”

The sick man answered Him, “Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.”

Jesus said to him, “Rise, take up your bed and walk.”

And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath.

The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, “It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.”

He answered them, “He who made me well said to me, ‘Take up your bed and walk.’”

Then they asked him, “Who is the Man who said to you, ‘Take up your bed and walk?’”

But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in *that* place.

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, “See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.”

The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well.

\*Next Sunday's scriptures readings:

***Resurrection: Epistle:*** Acts 11:19-26, 29-30

***Gospel Reading:*** John 4:5-42

## The Fourth Sunday of Pascha:

### Sunday of the Paralytic

By Very Rev. Fr. Lawrence Farley

The story of the healing of the paralytic is one of the series of stories in John's Gospel that center on water. Pascha is the baptismal festival par excellence, and the Paschal season thus features these baptismal gospel stories.

In this story, a man long languishing in lameness waited by the pool of water near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, beneath five porticoes, for it was thought that when an angel stirred the water, the first one into the pool would find healing from any affliction. His attention was all on that pool, so that when Jesus found him and asked him if he really wanted to be healed, all he could think to ask was that He might help him into the pool the next time the angel stirred the waters.

In John's Gospel, the water here is an image of the Law (given by angels, having five books to parallel the five porticoes). The man is an image of the Jews, depending on the Law for their salvation. Christ redirects the man's attention to Himself and His word. He tells the man he doesn't need the pool anymore. Let him arise, take up his pallet, and walk home. And the man does -- showing that healing and salvation come only from Christ. We also, whose souls are paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts, can find the same salvation. We also can sing to Him, "Glory to Your majesty, O bountiful Christ!"

# Happy Mother's Day

## Announcements from Fr. Stephan:

1. The Church will continue to be open from **12:00 until 3:00 on Saturdays**.
2. With regard a new guidance from the Archdiocese, **during the Paschal season we are permitted to have additional Liturgies throughout the week**. All of the restrictions will still be in place.

a. **Upcoming Scheduled Liturgies:**

Saturday, May 16 at 9 a.m.;

Sunday, May 17 at 10a.m.; and

Monday, May 18 at 9a.m.

We are still limited to a total of 10. This includes the priest and the cantor. Father Stephan will use the parish directory to contact parishioners alphabetically. If you plan to attend one of the services you will be added to the list. If you are not listed in the directory, please contact Father Stephan.

Last week's Divine Liturgies have been very well attended and have gone smoothly.

3. Graduation season is upon us. Please let us know so that we can congratulate our graduates! We know of two so far: Ashley Salaske from Monessen High School and Bekkah Simkovich from Ohio University.

4. Don't forget to keep in touch with our home bounds! Now, more than ever, please brighten their day with a card or note. Nothing fills a person's soul with hope more than being remembered. One little action can bring so much joy! Below is a listing of our home-bounds. Keeping with privacy standards during this pandemic, please contact Father Stephan for their addresses.

HOME-BOUND ADDRESSES:

Below is a list of those of our Parish Family who would especially appreciate a card during the Paschal Season:

Mary Brassart

Katherine Dupay

Rose Janus

Brighten their day with a card:

Charlene Butcher

Jack and Jean Fayak

Dorothy Karbowsky

Anne Matty

*Larry Morozek*

Sylvia Stephan

John and Sandy Timko

Charles and Julia Urdenis

Chuck Yetsconish

Claudette Yuschak

Parish Friends Separated by Miles:

*Sophia Krill*

Sonia Walsen

**Prayers Said / Candles Lit**  
**May 2, 3 & 4, 2020**

**Health of:**

Michael Donald by Mom & Dad

Michael, Rebecca, Justin & Jacob by Mom & Dad

James Warren by Jim & Beth Saul

All Our Church Family by Jim & Beth Saul

Zeli Family by Carol

Bertram Family by Carol

Luke, Megan & Lovett Family by Evelyn & Myron

Katherine Dupay by Dave & JoAnn

Meghan Dupay by Dave & JoAnn

Meghan Lovett by Dave & JoAnn

Larry Morozek by Dave & JoAnn

Martha Zeli by Dave & JoAnn

Dee Ohler by Dave & JoAnn

Dudzinski Family

Konick Family

Backo Family

**Memory of:**

Nick Dzyiak by Mary

John & Sophia Perun by Mary

Mel Jenion by Mary

Paul Mica by Jim & Beth Saul

Chrisia Johnston by Jim & Beth Saul

Soroka Family by Carol

Lesliann by Evelyn & Myron

John by Dave & JoAnn

Jereme by Mom & Dad

Sophie & Ben Dudzinski by John & Marie

Helen Koslosky by John & Marie

George Konick by John & Marie

Mike Backo by John & Marie

**Thanksgiving & God's Blessings:**

Marie & John

**Health, God's Blessings & Guidance:**

Jacob & Elissa by Mom & Dad

**Health & Safety at Work of:**

Camie Ann by Mom & Dad

**Health & Safety of:**

All Parishioner Families of Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church by Dudzinski Family

Ava & Nathan by Baba & PapPap

Jonathan, Jennifer, Jacob & Elissa by Mom & Dad

May 6, 2020

# Facing our (Worst) Fears

*“For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 8:38-39)*

I cannot find the exact citation at the moment, but I recall that St. John Chrysostom once said/wrote that, as human beings, we have three major fears: 1) poverty; 2) illness; and 3) death. And what we fear we do our utmost to avoid. We are surrounded by this fearful triad in such a way that we cannot ignore, try as we might, the dangers to our well-being that they persistently threaten us with. Poverty and illness can be thoroughly debilitating, but both can be overcome. Yet the finality of death is inescapable, and for this reason it remains the greatest of our fears, with only its postponement as our most realistic goal. For this reason, we all maximize our capabilities and strategies so as to hold these three fears at bay. Now, as a Christian pastor, preacher and theologian, St. John went on to say that through our faith in Christ, we need to always remember that none of these three fears - or perhaps we should say “realities” - can keep us from God. The poor person can still believe in and trust God. The one who is ill can turn to God with patience and prayer. Even death itself is not a barrier between ourselves and God because the death and resurrection of Christ have removed the “sting of death,” and transformed death into a passage to God. All this leads St. John to the conclusion that there is only one thing to actually fear - and that would be sin! And for this reason: it is sin that creates the barrier that keeps us away from God. If, therefore, you come to the realization that the supreme good in life is closeness with God, then you realize that there is nothing in this world that can undermine that relationship but sin itself, that “missing of the mark” that frustrates our relationship with God. Poverty, illness and death itself cannot keep us from God, but sin can and will. Ultimately, a profoundly encouraging insight by a deep Christian thinker and pastor.

I should add that in no way did St. John brush aside the terrible effects upon living human beings of poverty, illness and the fear of death. He tirelessly preached to his flock about its responsibility to alleviate the crushing burden of poverty that others are suffering from; or to deeply sympathize and assist those who are struggling with any kind of illness or physical defect. He knew firsthand about the harsh environment of a sprawling cosmopolitan setting and how the well-to-do and healthy members of that society can coldly ignore the sufferings of others - even among his Christian flock. He knew the grip that the fear of death terrorized his same flock with. Poverty, illness and death were daily realities that he contended with when both a presbyter and then bishop in the cities of Antioch and Constantinople. All the more so, then, as a preacher would he exhort and seek to keep the image of Christ

alive and burning within the minds and hearts of his flock. For St. John, only faith in Christ could dispel, or at least weaken, those fears.

As to our fears today, the same is true for us as there is “nothing new under the sun.” What *is* different in our immediate present is just how these three fears have been so forcefully - if not brutally - brought to our attention with the spread of the coronavirus. This global pandemic has brought these three realities to the surface in a way that most people have probably not experienced in their lives before today. Life goes on in our homes and families, but our conversations, the news that we hear, and our very thoughts are fixated on the things we are contending with - poverty, illness and death. These fears that we can more-or-less hide from within the quotidian events of “normal life” have been thrust before our troubled and anxious gaze. Unexpected unemployment is afflicting a huge segment of our society, to the point that it is being compared to some of the great recessions of the past. This raises the specter of poverty, even with the social programs and government assistance that are meant to alleviate the pressures of that possibility. We know further of how unemployment undermines self-confidence and self-worth leading to depression over the uncertainty of the future. Hence, the eagerness to re-establish normalcy so as to “get back to work.” As over a million Americans have been infected with the coronavirus, and as we hear some of the horrific stories of people who have been ill, we then all the more fear our own exposure so that now our “neighbor” is the very person that must be avoided and kept at a distance. We can no longer invite other persons into our “space.” And with over sixty thousand American deaths as of this writing, the reality of death is no longer a remote inevitability postponed for a far-distance future; but something brought to our attention on a daily basis. Thus, as St. John Chrysostom taught centuries ago, we are indeed facing our worst fears today.

There may exist a misplaced piety among Christians that claims that any fear in the face of any danger is somehow indicative of a lack of faith. The person who believes in Christ should be fearless, according to this approach. And there is support for such a position found in the Scriptures: “that through death he (i.e. Christ) might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage” (*Heb. 2:14-15*). A firm belief in Christ’s victory over death is our path to freedom for its fearful grip. And yet, in that same Epistle to the Hebrews, we hear of Christ’s agony - and fear - in the Garden of Gethsemane in deeply moving terms: “In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard for his godly fear” (*Heb. 5:7*). Even the Son of God agonized over his messianic ministry of passing through “the valley of the shadow of death.” There is apparently an inevitable tension between a stance of fearlessness before the reality of death; but also of a genuine fear of death while “in the flesh.” I would think that most Christians live within that tension. Christians believe that Christ has “trampled down death by death.” This is the faith that we live by and which we proclaim in our liturgical assemblies, especially when receiving the Eucharist. But we will face our own “agony” and fear when faced with the prospect of death. Perhaps we all share that poignant cry from the Gospel: “I

believe, help my unbelief!" (Mk. 9:24). Those Christians who attempt to intimidate "weaker" Christians into "proving" that they have faith even when fearful, are clearly lacking in charity.

St. John Chrysostom was right: we fear 1) poverty; 2) illness; and 3) death. We can call this (fallen) human nature or the human condition. Any such terms are applicable. If our anxieties and fears have been heightened to a greater or lesser degree during this coronavirus pandemic, it need not cause us further anxiety concerning our faith, or a debilitating discouragement that we are not being faithful enough. To see our weaknesses is not meant to discourage us. In fact, it should encourage us to be honest about ourselves, so as to face and wrestle with our fears. Perhaps like the patriarch Jacob in that mysterious event when he wrestled with an angel, that is how we can overcome them. We know our weaknesses, now we need to avail ourselves of those "tools" from within the Church which, when humbly turned to, can build up our faith - prayer, the Scriptures, Repentance, Confession and the Eucharist (when available again!). Otherwise, our social isolation will only create spiritual fatigue and emptiness. We cannot afford to wait until life returns to normal to then resume our "religious lives" in church. On the contrary, St. Paul exhorts us: "*Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation*" (II Cor. 6:2). And elsewhere: "*I can do all things in Christ Who strengthens me*" (Phil. 4:13). I believe being brought face-to-face with our fears is a painful lesson in humility. The French Orthodox theologian, Jean-Claude Larchet says this with great insight: "Illness is an opportunity for each person to experience his ontological fragility, his dependence, and to turn to God as the one who can help overcome it: if not physically (for there do occur, in response to prayer, miraculous healings), then at least spiritually, and give it a meaning by which one builds oneself up, and without which one only allows oneself to be destroyed." To be humbled is not to be discouraged. To put that another way: I do not believe that God works through discouragement. But I do believe that strengthened by the grace of God, we can work through discouragement in any form that it may assail us. Realizing our dependence on Christ - "*For apart from Me you can do nothing*" (Jn. 15:5) - teaches us to be humble. We therefore cannot judge anyone else - including all of those "unbelievers" who live in our midst.

There is something to learn about ourselves, the world around us, and "life" itself, as we face a multitude of fears during this coronavirus crisis in which we are immersed. The process may be painful, but the results are positive. We are learning to care for and to love each other, to more fully appreciate the "little things" in life, to take nothing for granted - including tomorrow - and to deeply sympathize with the sufferings of others. On the pastoral level I am hoping that this includes a deeper awareness of our dependence on God. St. John Chrysostom knew our fears, but he also knew how liberating it is to believe in Christ. We may realize this today never before: "*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and for ever.*" (Heb. 13:8).