



Church website: www.hrocby.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

Cell Phone: (937) 869-8037

Rectory Phone: (724) 929-9194

Email: stephangresh@gmail.com

Ordained Reader

& Choir Master: Peter Merella: (724) 787-2031

May 17, 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 11:19-26, 29-30)

Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only.

But some of them were men from Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they had come to Antioch, spoke to the Hellenists, preaching the Lord Jesus.

And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

Then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch.

When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.

For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord.

Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul.

And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch.

Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea.

This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul.

Gospel (*Resurrection*)

(John 4:5-42)

So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.

Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from *His* journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour.

A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give Me a drink."

For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.

Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.

Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water?"

"Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?"

Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

"but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw."

Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here."

The woman answered and said, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,'

"for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly."

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet.

“Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *Jews* say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.”

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews.

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

“God *is* Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

The woman said to Him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When He comes, He will tell us all things.”

Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am *He*.”

And at this *point* His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, “What do You seek?” or, “Why are You talking with her?”

The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men,

“Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?”

Then they went out of the city and came to Him.

In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, “Rabbi, eat.”

But He said to them, “I have food to eat of which you do not know.”

Therefore the disciples said to one another, “Has anyone brought Him *anything* to eat?”

Jesus said to them, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.

“Do you not say, ‘There are still four months and *then* comes the harvest’? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest!

“And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together.

“For in this the saying is true: ‘One sows and another reaps.’

“I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.”

And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, “He told me all that I *ever* did.”

So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days.

And many more believed because of His own word.

Then they said to the woman, “Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard *Him* and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

*Next Sunday’s scriptures readings:

Resurrection: ***Epistle:*** Acts 16:16-34

Gospel Reading: John 9:1-38

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 23 at 9 a.m.;

Sunday, May 24 at 10 a.m.; and

Monday, May 25 at 9 a.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

May 12, 2020

Streaming the Reality of Shadows: The Pros and Cons of Livestreaming our Services

by Father John Memorich

There once was a man who had a mouse in his house. He had a mousetrap, but no cheese to use as bait. As the man sat in his kitchen reading a magazine, he noticed an advertisement with a picture of cheese. Chuckling to himself, he cut out the cheese and placed it in the mousetrap under the sink hoping that the mouse might think it real. The next day the man got up, went into the kitchen, and checked the mousetrap. Low and behold he had caught something: a picture of a mouse!

These are certainly extraordinary times for Christians of all denominations, with everyone being forced to stay away from their churches because gathering together in the Name of Christ is such an important element to our Christian ethos: *“For where two or three are gathered in my Name, there I am also”* (Matt. 18:20). Yet churches have found a way to gather, albeit in a virtual realm.

Since this pandemic began, most churches scrambled to meet the needs of parishioners by livestreaming said services, even if only a mere handful could be in the church to perform them. Although this is in no way ideal, it was considered by many to be the best way maintain continuity, to keep in touch, share the faith, and at least seemingly worship together as a congregation.

The use of this technology does have positive merits, even outside this quarantine situation. It allows those unable to attend regularly to view the services, such as those who are in nursing homes, are shut-ins, or who are homebound because they no longer drive, etc. Thus, to them, the livestreaming of service is their only means of participating in corporate services.

For the most part, this effort has worked well under these extreme, extenuating circumstances. Yet somewhere deep inside, livestreaming our services is still somewhat unsettling to me. Not to the point of wanting this practice to cease (most parishioners are now asking that we continue streaming even after the fact, for the sake of those who are at home or sick), nor would I ever criticize any parish for doing it as part of their ministry. Heck, Archangel Michael is leading the OCA in streaming technology by having eight

cameras situated throughout the church! Even a friend of mine who works for NBC Sports wrote to thank us for all our efforts and the “fine quality of our production;” and you can’t get any greater praise than from someone who is in the business!

And as an interesting aside, since we have three cameras situated behind the altar, this has allowed everyone the opportunity to witness what before they could not, offering them a much greater appreciation and understanding of the liturgics of the liturgy by “seeing” what the priest does as the liturgy unfolds at the altar.

However, I do feel that there is a downside to this tact; a darkness, like the back corner behind stoves where demons lurk in Russian Fairy Tales. Obviously, live-streaming our services is perhaps the best we can do under the circumstances – and it is certainly being done with the purest of intentions, but I wonder how this is and/or will affect our sense of worship...if we’re not catching a “picture” of worship instead of the real thing.

Since I cannot visit anyone in person, I am being forced to make pastoral visitations with parishioners over the phone. Almost all of them who have the technology and wherewithal are viewing our services. Yet it is in “how” they are viewing them that concerns me. Everyone is certainly happy to see the church, watch the service, listen to sermon, and be “soothed and comforted” by my voice; but when asked what they are doing during the service, I receive answers which literally run the gamut of conduct.

Some families dress up for the live-streaming, others stay in pajamas or sweat-clothes. Some light candles and incense by their television and surround it with icons, others do not. Some families fast, others watch with a cup of coffee in their hand. Some families stand and try to “participate” as they would in church, others simply sit on the couch and watch; a few even admitting they just view services while in bed!

Perhaps the worst element to come out of this situation is what I have coined as, “*Services Surfing.*” For in talking with parishioners throughout Great Lent and Bright Week, many admit to watching some of our service, then click on to so and so’s services, and then over to another parish’s service, and so on. Upon first hearing this I was immediately taken aback and realized those parishioners, although good-minded, were viewing Sunday and Holy Week services as if they were watching the Browns play the Steelers; and then wanted to check on the Vikings-Green Bay game, before switching to see how the Bears were doing against the Lions!

This is where the livestreaming of worship starts to merge into the shadows of darkness. This is where I realized that people were NOT experiencing virtual Liturgical Worship as real worship; for even by that very definition there needs to be a physical synaxis (gathering) of the people; a “one-mindedness,” if you will. Thus, we are back to Plato’s Cave, watching the shadows of divine reality rather than experiencing the reality of the Divine!

I have no real answers to this unique [problem] as it came upon us so suddenly, nor do I have any hard, fast rules. As stated, we are all just trying to do the best we can do under forced circumstances. Still, I would like to see our hierarchy discuss this important issue and offer their own sage council and advice. However, in the meantime, I would like to make the following pastoral suggestions to my own flock entrusted to my care:

1. That although we are forced to be at home and merely watch services remotely, we should still treat this time as “God’s time” by preparing adequately and participating properly.
2. That persons should dress for the occasion as if they were normally attending church. Perhaps one need not go to extremes to dress formally, put on make-up, worry about jewelry, matching handbags and shoes, yet there is something to be said about “setting apart” that time of worship from the rest of the week and giving God your best – even in how you dress and act.
3. That you follow the guidelines of posture during services just as you would in church: standing, sitting, bowing your head, blessing yourself, etc. This promotes continuity to you and especially your children, as well as reminding us of the important times and components that make up our liturgical worship.
4. I feel utter sorrow and pain in my inability to minister to my flock fully and physically, and to spiritually feed them from the chalice. However, during this time I think it advisable for parishioners to try and fast as you normally would prior to services. Even if you cannot receive the Eucharist, your fasting becomes a *podvig* – a kind of ascetical effort and sacrifice during these trying times of separation from the church. Obviously, there are exceptions due to age, illness, and medications, but one should follow the routine set between them and their Father Confessor.
5. Please note that there is a vast, precarious cavern between “worship and entertainment;” one that can unknowingly become a great temptation. Therefore, everyone watching the live-streaming of liturgies, etc., should watch ONE service at a time and participate fully in THAT service (and hopefully it is your own home parish you are watching if they have that ability). ***Service Surfing*** and/or trying to catch three or four sermons while missing out on the rest of the liturgy utterly defeats the purpose of these extreme efforts. Give all your attention to that one service and then, afterwards, you may virtually visit, watch, and participate in as many services as you wish.