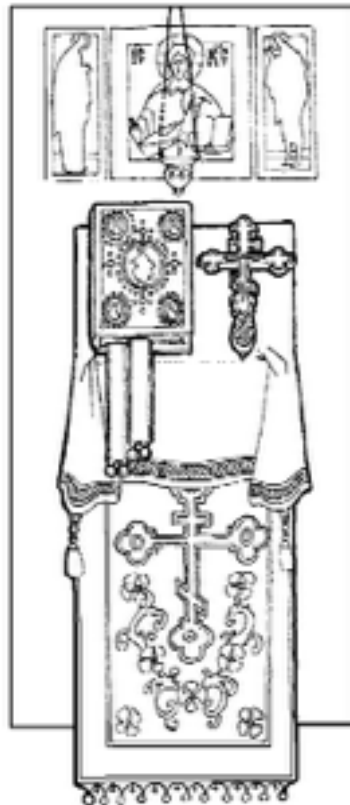


This is the position of the priest. He is called by Christ to be before the person, the sinner, a witness to the fact that he, the sinner, is loved, that Christ is there, that He has no other desire or intention but the salvation and the joy eternal of the one who has come today. And the priest comes also in the name of the sinner saying: Christ, my God, our Lord, this person has sinned, yes, but look, he trusts in You, he believes in You, we all love him with the same love as You possess. We are prepared to give our lives for him to be reconciled and find peace and joy and be at one with You, our Lord, our God, our Saviour, our Lover.

When you come to Confession next time, think of these things. Think of the way you come: not with fear of punishment or of rejection but with open heart to pour out everything evil or doubtful there is in this heart. And Christ will receive you. Your confession may be to Him a new crucifixion but He accepts it. He doesn't reject it. He does not reject you. Come, open your heart, speak in all truth to Him, knowing that you are loved beyond judgement, to the point of sacrifice and death: His death, and your life - life in time and life eternal. Amen.



St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Christian Church

108 East Main Street

PO Box 134

Clinton, CT 06413

860-664-9434

www.stalexischurch.org



Rev. Steven Hosking, attached • frschosk@me.com • 860-866-5802

Bulletin for Sunday, December 8, 2013

Twenty-third Sunday of Pentecost • Tone 7

Ephesians 2:14-22, Luke 17:12-19

Commemorations: Ven. Patapius of Thebes (8th c.). Ven. Kirill, Abbot of Chelmogorsk (1378). Holy Apostles of the Seventy: Sosthenes, Apollos, Cephas, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, Cæsar, and Onesiphorus (1st c.). Holy 362 Martyrs of Africa, martyred by the Arians (477). Martyr Anthusa, at Rome (5th c.).

Welcome to Our Visitors

We welcome all visitors to our Divine Liturgy and services. While Holy Communion may only be received by prepared Orthodox Christians, our non-Orthodox guests are welcome to participate in our prayers and hymns and to join us in venerating the Cross and receiving blessed bread at the conclusion of the Liturgy. Feel free to ask questions before or after the services. Literature about the Orthodox faith and this parish can be found at the candle desk. Please sign our guest book and join us for refreshments and fellowships downstairs after Liturgy.

Please pray for: Olga, Vera, Richard, Sarah, Alla, June, Nina, Joan, Luke, Alex, Nadia, Glenn, Kathryn.

Many Years! to Dori Kuziak of the occasion of her birthday.

Upcoming Events and Services

Wednesday, December 11th
"Open Doors" beginning at 4:30p
Choir Rehearsal at 6:30p

Thursday, December 12th
Great Vespers with Litya at 6:30p
St. Herman of Alaska

Friday, December 13th
Akathist for St Herman at 9a

Saturday, December 14th
Great Vespers at 5:30p

Sunday, December 15th
Divine Liturgy at 9:30a - Church School and
Choir Rehearsal to follow

Wednesday, December 18th
"Open Doors" beginning at 4:30p

Thursday, December 19th
Book Talk beginning at 7p

Saturday, December 21st
Great Vespers at 5:30p

Sunday, December 22nd
Divine Liturgy at 9:30a
Church School to follow

Tuesday, December 24th
Royal Hours at 8a
Holy Supper at 5p
Vigil for the Nativity at 6pm

Wednesday, December 25th
Nativity of Our Lord According to the Flesh
Divine Liturgy at 9a

A sign-up sheet will be made available at the candle desk for the Holy Supper.

Metropolitan Anthony Sourozh
On Confession - 2nd sermon
26th September 1999

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I have been asked to give a couple of sermons on Confession. This is my second sermon on the subject.

When we come to Confession we come to meet a friend face to face. We are not coming to be judged and condemned. We do not come in terror of what will happen. We come to the One who, being God, beyond suffering, beyond death, has chosen, for the love of us, to become Man, to take upon Himself all our human destiny and to give His life for us. His life, His death are to us evidence that we are so loved of God that we can come up to Him whether we are good or bad with hope that He will receive us with open arms; that if anyone is to cry over our unworthiness and our sins it is Him, for compassion, for pity, for love - with a readiness, as He said in a vision to one of the saints, that if there was only one sinner in the world He would again become Man and again die for him, because He cannot endure the thought of anyone perishing.

This is the God, the Christ, to Whom we come when we come to Confession - to the One who is open to us with all His life and death; One who waits for us to come to be healed, to be consoled, to be supported - not to be condemned, not to be judged.

And then, what is the role of the priest? In the prayer which is read before Confession we are told, 'I am but a witness'. What does it mean? A witness to what? To the fact that you have come? That would not be enough. But if you think of what witnesses are: there are accidental, occasional witnesses. You are present in the street when an accident takes place. You are asked: what did happen? You are neither in favour of the ones or the others. You are just telling what your eyes have seen. It's for others to judge and to know.

There are other forms of witness. At times a friend of ours is brought to judgement. And we come to defend him, to testify for him, to save him. That's another kind of witness.

And then there is the witness which the Holy Gospel mentions speaking of St. John the Baptist: as the friend of the Bridegroom, the one who comes to the wedding, invited both by the bride and the bridegroom, because he is the nearest, the closest, to them both. And he is there to share their joy, the miracle of their encounter, the miracle of a blessing that will come upon them and out of two make one, unite them so that they are inseparable for ever in the mystery of eternal love, of divine love shared with them.

continued...