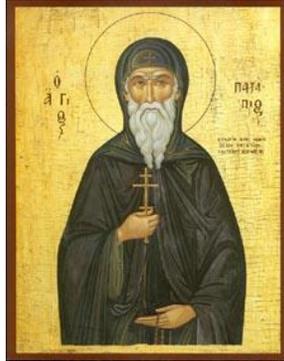


**St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance, as part of Orthodox Campus Fellowship
at the University of Mount Union, Dewald Chapel. Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)
December 8, 2013; 24th Sunday after Pentecost/ Venerable Patapius of Thebes**



Tone 7 Troparion (Resurrection)

By Your Cross You destroyed death. To the thief You opened Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers You changed weeping into joy.
And You commanded Your disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that You are risen,// granting the world great mercy.

Tone 8 Troparion (Venerable Patapius of Thebes)

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Father,
for you took up the Cross and followed Christ.
By so doing you taught us to disregard the flesh for it passes away
but to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal.
Therefore your spirit, venerable Patápius, rejoices with the Angels.

Tone 4 Troparion (St. Nikolai)

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence;
your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father Nikolai, entreat Christ our God that our
souls may be saved!

Tone 7 Kontakion (Resurrection)

The dominion of death can no longer hold mankind captive,
for Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers.
Hell is bound, while the Prophets rejoice and cry:
“The Savior has come to those in faith;//enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!”

Tone 3 Kontakion (Venerable Patapius of Thebes)

Your temple is found to be a source of healing, and the people flock to it eagerly, O saint.
They seek the healing of their diseases and the forgiveness of their sins,
for you are a protector for all those in need, ven'erable Patápius.

Epistle: Ephesians 2:14-22

Tone 7 Prokeimenon

The Lord shall give strength to His people. The Lord shall bless His people with peace.
v: *Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!*

Tone 7

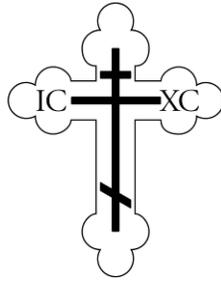
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: *It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Your Name, O Most High.
v: To declare Your mercy in the morning, and Your truth by night.*

Gospel: Luke 17:12-19

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



Saint Patapius of Thebes was born into a pious Christian family. Reaching the age of maturity, he scorned the vanities of the world and so went into the Egyptian desert where he became known for his ascetic deeds. Though he wished to dwell in silence, people began to come to him for advice. He went eventually to Constantinople, where he obtained a cell at the city wall, near the Blachernae church. But here, too, he quickly became known. The sick began to throng about, and he having been vouchsafed the gift of healing, began to help all the needy. After a life adorned with virtue and miracles, St Patapius fell asleep in the Lord and was buried in the church of St John the Baptist.

DECEMBER LITURGICAL SCHEDULE:

Saturday, December 14, 5 pm. Vespers/ Confessions heard following.

Sunday, December 15, 9 am. Liturgy. Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ. (*Special parish meeting after Liturgy for By-laws & finalize land purchase*).

Saturday, December 21, 5 pm. Vespers/ Confessions heard following.

Sunday, December 22, 9 am. Liturgy; Sunday before Nativity of Christ (Christmas).

Tuesday, December 24, 6 pm. Matins/Liturgy for the Nativity of Christ (**Christmas**). (*There are no services Christmas morning*).

Sunday, December 29, 9 am. Liturgy; Sunday after Nativity of Christ (Christmas)

Confessing in the Presence of a Priest: In the early Church, confession was public; that is, one confessed one's sins in the presence of the entire faith community. When this became impractical, it was the priest who "stood in" for the community, as its presiding officer and as its witness to the penitent's repentance. Further, while we can indeed confess directly to God—even a casual reading of the daily prayers reveals that we should do this—we often find that we need help and advice in overcoming the very things we have confessed.

Yes, one can confess directly to God—but refusing to confess in the presence of a priest implies that one can also be one's own spiritual physician. If this were so, then one wouldn't find that one is generally confessing the same sin, over and over again—which not only implies that one is not making progress in overcoming one's sin and also implies, perhaps, that one really doesn't want help in overcoming one's sins in the first place! [There are indeed those who commit certain sins, ask God's forgiveness, feel that the slate is "clean," and then plan the next occasion upon which the same sin can once again be committed. This is not "confession" in any sense, and this does not generate forgiveness, precisely because there is no desire to "repent" or "change."]

Also, be mindful that we do not confess "to" the priest; rather, we confess to God "in the presence of" the priest who, as the prayer before Confession clearly states, is God's "witness" and who, having witnessed our confession of sins offers pastoral advice on how we can better our lives and overcome the very things we can confess. Just as one would not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own physical ailments, so too one should not attempt to diagnose, much less cure, one's own spiritual ailments.

It is often the case that those who object to revealing their sins in the presence of a priest or to seek his advice have no qualms about revealing their sins to their neighbors, friends, co-workers, psychiatrists, even bar-tenders

and so on, usually with the intention of obtaining advice—advice that is not necessarily godly or spiritually profitable, or even just plain “good,” for that matter.

There are situations where individuals will even speak to a priest’s wife about a disturbing problem but are reluctant to confide in the priest because they’re afraid he will think ill of them. This is somewhat akin to a person who finds a lump on a private place of his or her body. They proceed to call the doctor’s office and ask the medical secretary for her opinion. No doubt the secretary would suggest that he or she make an appointment to have the doctor to look at it, only to find that the person with the lump replies, “But I’m too embarrassed!” So, we confess in the presence of the priest to acknowledge that our sins, whether we wish to accept it or not, affect the entire faith community on the one hand, and that we cannot “heal ourselves” on the other. The priest is there to help us overcome those things for which we seek forgiveness, to give advice that a friend or neighbor might not be in a position to give, and to bear witness on behalf of the faith community, of which he is the spiritual father, that we have indeed repented and been forgiven by God.

HOLIDAY GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:

Please see the additional page for opportunities to share in your blessings this holiday.

Last Sunday we collected \$300 towards purchasing food and gifts for the two families being “adopted” by our mission. Thank you for your generosity. There is still time if you are considering donating cash or gifts. Please contact Cathy Krupko before purchasing items to avoid duplication of gifts. Checks can be made out to St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance. If you are interested in helping to shop, please contact Cathy at 330-257-0984.

If you would like to contribute to Poinsettias to decorate the altar and icons for the Nativity Liturgy, checks can be made directly to the Mission. Those who contribute will be able to take Poinsettias home following the liturgy.

St. Nikolai of Zica
Orthodox Mission of Alliance
P.O. Box 193
Maximo, Ohio 44650