



St. Elizabeth's Orthodox Mission

2265 E. Cherokee Dr. Woodstock, GA
A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople

Reverend Father Matthew Dutko, Pastor

Phone: 607-206-0384 Email: FatherDutko@gmail.com

Sunday June 28th 2015 4th Sunday After Pentecost

Epistle: Romans 6:18-23 Gospel: Matthew 8:5-13

The Nativity of St. John the Baptist



4th Sunday After Pentecost

Tropar Tone 3– Blue Book pg.87 Red Book pg. 102

Tropar and Kondak– For the Nativity of St. John the Baptist from June 24th- Blue Book pg. 160, Red Book pg. 180

Kondak Tone 3 - Blue Book pg.87 Red Book pg. 103

Weekly Schedule:

Monday 6/29 8:30AM– Divine Liturgy– feast Day of Sts. Peter and Paul

Saturday 6/27 5 PM– Great Vespers

Sunday 6/28 10AM– Divine Liturgy

Prayer List

Evelyn Melnikoff, Fr. John and Pani Betty Jean Baranek, Fr. James Gleason, The Paccio Family, Johanna, James, Herbert and Mary Schlein- ing , Patricia James, Anna, Basil, David, Dianna, Denise, Alex, Jason, Athanasia, Ethel, Kathy, Lester, Sally, Jack, Angela , Tyler, Maria, Bez- erra Family, Phillip, Jeff, Lesley, Page Family, Stephen (Blessed Repose), The Blanar Family, Anna (Blessed Repose), Louise, Emma Rae

Announcements

- **5th of July Parish Picnic**– The Parish Picnic is next Sunday! Kids (and kids at heart) please bring a change of cloths, there is a chance you may get wet!
- **Jr. ACRY**– An organizational meeting for all of the parish youth ages 8-18 immediately after Church in the new youth roo!
- **Atlanta Braves**– It looks like our best bet for the most participation would be to postpone this event until September. There are two Friday evening dates available, the 11th and the 19th. Sign ups will begin now so that we can get a group rate discount!
- **Thank You!**- To all those who worked so hard in and around the Church this week! God Bless you all!
- **Testimonials**– I would like for everyone who is interested to write a brief essay about St. Elizabeth's and the Orthodox Faith. You can take this wherever you want, but some things to talk about are what the Church means to you, and how the communi- ty at St. Elizabeth's has deepened your Faith. Things like that. The idea is to post these essays to our website. That way, poten- tial members of our community can get a sense for what St. Elizabeth's is all about before they ever walk in the door. **I strongly encourage everyone** to participate. That means you! Everyone has a different view and something to offer to this project. That means kids too!!! Don't worry about grammar, or not being a strong writer, I can edit your finished product. Just ask the Holy Spirit for His guidance and write with your heart!

IS THE END AT HAND?

For many years now I have heard people say “the end is near!” This comes not just from the societal outcast who holds a handmade sign on a busy street corner, but from the people we encounter every day. Many people will look at the world and say that everything is falling apart, “the end must be near.” Some of us might talk about this in coffee shop on Sundays, or with our friends getting lunch, sometimes we can even hear “the end is near” said by pundits on twenty-four hour nationally broadcast news stations.

We find ourselves today on an Orthodox island in the ever-expanding sea of *Postmodern American Secularism*. Since the rise of Christianity throughout the world, the *Christian Ethic* has been the guiding light, the moral compass, for societies and governments throughout the world. For western civilization, the *Christian Ethic* has been replaced. The fastest growing “belief system” in the United States is the “nonés” or those with no religious affiliation or belief whatsoever. The fastest growing segment of society is a group who doesn’t even bother to think about God.

If as a society we are filled with an ever-growing segment of the population who believes in nothing, what ethical principals will we, as a society, be guided by? Is it the *American Ethic*? Although a system of ethics based solely on the *Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the American Dream* would be full of pitfalls, it would still be better than the sad state of *Ethics* that we are left with today.

With *Christian Ethics* tossed aside by western civilization as an outdated, ancient, and unsophisticated belief system, what is its replacement? The sad excuse for a replacement can be known as *Postmodern Ethics*; or the belief that **all truths are equal**. Whether you believe it or not, our society teaches that no matter what you believe it is truth; that truth is in the eye of the beholder.

In a world where this is what we are taught from a young age, it is no wonder that men like Bruce Jenner are touted as heroes. Bruce Jenner feels that he is a women, this is his truth. Since his truth is equally valid as any other truth, he must actually be a woman. Not only as a society are we told to respect this truth, but we are told to glorify him as hero for following the *Postmodern Ethic*.

In Orthodoxy we know that there is only one truth. We know that Jesus Christ is ‘The Way, The Truth, and The Life’. We sing every Sunday that we found the **True Faith**. There can be only one truth, and that truth is found in Jesus Christ, and in His Bride, the Orthodox Church.

This week, the judges of the highest court in our land ruled that gay marriage is the law, the right of every citizen of our great nation. If all truths are equal, how could it be any other way? Many will call this an attack on marriage and scream out that “the end is near!” Does this mean we, as Orthodox Christians should be afraid? How will this effect marriage in our own Church?

The truth is that marriage has been under attack for some time now. As people decide to co-habitat before marriage and even start families; and as the divorce rates skyrocket – it is evident that marriage has been under attack for some time now.

So what does all this mean for us? Is the end truly near? It was Christ Himself who told us that “*of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*” So the truth is that no one knows! What we do know is that throughout history the Church as often been persecuted. The Church as often stood out opposed to the beliefs of the rest of the world. We do know that the Church has always and will always prevail whether in this world, or in the world to come.

What we all need to do is be defenders of the truth that the Orthodox Church safeguards. We do this not through hate, bigotry, or fear mongering; but through learning the truths contained in the *Theology of the Orthodox Faith*. How can we defend Orthodoxy and the *Orthodox Christian Ethic* if we don’t know about the theology of Creation? If we don’t understand that our bodies are not our own, but temples for which the Holy Spirit dwells? How can we defend marriage if we don’t understand the Sacramental nature of the union of man and wife?

It is time for all of us to learn more about the richness of the Orthodox Church. For Her teachings and Theology are our safeguards from the societal downfall created by *Postmodern Ethics*. There is only one Truth, and that Truth is Jesus Christ. If the world does not already hate us for this, it will. Yet we must always remember the words Christ gave to us in the Gospel of John, “*you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, 'A slave is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you*”.

We must all learn more about our faith so that we can proclaim it to the world in the face of those who look at us as ancient and close-minded individuals. In the world Bruce Jenner is a hero. In the Church we know that he is no hero. We know that the Saints are our real heroes. The men and women of faith who served Christ despite persecution and even death. They are our heroes. They knew their faith and they became *like Christ*.

We live in a fallen world. A world that confuses us. A world where a hate-filled demonic person murders men and women in a small South Carolina Church. A world where ISIS kills men and women who profess the belief in Jesus Christ. A world where Bruce Jenner is a hero. Yet we have nothing to fear. Christ is Risen, and He is among us! We need to follow Him and practice His teachings. We need to love and hate. To hope and not fear. We need to pray for the Salvation of the world.

So don’t worry about the princes and judges of this world. We have one prince, The Prince of Peace, and one Judge – Christ who sits on His fearful and awesome Judgment Seat. Is the end truly near? I do not know, only God the Father knows that. What I do know is that the world has endured terrible world wars, mass murders, and the threat of nuclear inhalation, and the end has not yet come. What I do know is that with the time we do have, we must learn all we can about our faith so that we can properly defend it. So that we can proclaim with conviction that there is only one truth, and that Truth is Jesus Christ.