

St. Cyril Orthodox Church

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+ June 5, 2022 +

Holy Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council

Hieromartyr Dorotheus, Bishop of Tyre (+362)



NEXT SUNDAY: The Feast of Pentecost and of the Holy Trinity. Following Divine Liturgy, we will celebrate the **Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost**, followed by a **picnic lunch**. Gail has a signup sheet for the picnic so we can coordinate food being brought. Also, you may consider bringing along a lawn chair.

PENTECOST DECORATING: Help will be needed next Saturday morning with decorating the church for Pentecost. We will start about 10 am. Traditionally the church is decorated with summer greenery.

UPCOMING EVENTS: The Ladies Luncheon will be held on **Friday, June 17**, at noon at Thai Cottage, 3105 College Park Drive. RSVP to Tina Cates so appropriate reservations can be made. **The Men's Lunch** will be held the following day, **Saturday, June 18**, at Mel's Diner in Tomball.

GRADUATION SUNDAY – We hope to honor our graduates (from college and high school) this year on Sunday, June 19. If you have a child that fits this description, please let Fr. Benedict know.

HELP NEEDED! For five years Ken Nickolas has done a great job mowing the church yard, but he is asking for help. If you're interested in helping once or twice a month on Friday or Saturday, speak with Ken. The job takes about an hour and a half, and involves operating a riding lawn mower.

TREASURER UPDATE - For May, we received **\$13,260**, including a grant of \$1,333 from the OCA and \$1,900 from the Diocese of the South. Our expenses were **\$12,526**.

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Rules for a Pious Life

by Platon, Archbishop of Kostroma

Force yourself to get up early and on a set schedule. As soon as you wake up, turn your mind to God: make the Sign of the Cross, and thank Him for the night that has passed and for all His mercies towards you. Ask Him to guide all your thoughts, feelings and desires, so that everything you say or do will be pleasing to Him.

As you dress, recollect the presence of the Lord and of your Guardian Angel. Ask the Lord Jesus Christ to clothe you with the robe of salvation.

After washing yourself, get down to morning prayers. Pray kneeling, with concentration, and with reverence and meekness, as is proper before the eyes of the Almighty. Ask Him to give you faith, hope, and charity, as well as calm strength to accept all that the coming day may bring to you - its

hardships and troubles. Ask Him to bless your labors. Ask for help, whether to accomplish some particular task that you face, or to steer clear of some particular sin.

If you can, read something from the Bible, especially from the New Testament and the Psalms. Read with the intent of receiving some spiritual enlightenment, inclining your heart to compunction. Having read a little, pause and reflect on what you read, and then proceed further, listening to what the Lord suggests to your heart. Try to devote at least fifteen minutes to spiritually contemplate the teachings of the Faith and the profit to your soul in what you have read.

Always thank the Lord that He did not leave you to perish in your sins, but cares for you and in every possible way leads you to the Heavenly Kingdom. Start every morning as if you had just decided to become a Christian and to live according to God's commandments.

As you enter upon your duties, strive to do everything towards the glory of God. Start nothing without prayer, because whatever we do without prayer later turns out to be futile or harmful. The words of the Lord are true: "Without me, you can do nothing."

Imitate our Saviour, Who labored helping Joseph and His most pure Mother. While working, keep a good spirit, relying always on the Lord's help. It is a good thing to repeat unceasingly the prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, the sinner."

If your labors are successful, give thanks to the Lord; and if they are not, place yourself in His will, for He takes care of us and directs everything towards the better. Accept all hardships as a penance for your sins - in a spirit of obedience and humility.

Before every meal, pray that God will bless the food and drink; and after the meal give thanks to Him and ask Him not to deprive you of spiritual blessings. It is good to leave the table feeling a bit hungry. In everything, avoid excess. Following the example of Christians of old, fast on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Do not be greedy. Be content having food and clothing, imitating Christ Who became impoverished for our sake. Strive to please the Lord in everything, so that you will not be reproached by your own conscience. Remember God always sees you, and so be carefully vigilant concerning the feelings, thoughts and desires of your heart.

Avoid even the smallest sins, lest you fall into greater ones. Drive away from your heart each and every thought or design that moves you away from the Lord. Strive especially against unclean desire; drive it out of your heart like a burning spark fallen on your coat. If you do not want to be troubled by evil desires, meekly accept humiliation from others.

Do not say too much, remember that for every spoken word we will give account before God. It is better to listen than to talk: in much speaking, it is impossible to avoid sin. **Do not be curious to hear the news, which only entertains and distracts the spirit.** Condemn no one, but consider yourself to be worse than everyone else. The one who condemns another is taking another's sins onto himself; it is better to grieve about the sinner, and pray that God will correct him in His own way. If someone does not listen to your advice, do not dispute with him. However, if his deeds are a temptation to others, take appropriate measures, because their benefit, since they are many, must carry more weight than his benefit, since he is only one.

Never argue or make excuses. Be gentle, quiet and humble; endure everything, according to the example of Jesus. He will not burden you with a cross that exceeds your strength. He will also help you carry the Cross that you have. **Ask the Lord to give you the grace to fulfill His holy commandments as well as you can, even if they seem too difficult to keep.** The Lord allows temptations and trials; He also gives the strength to overcome them.

Having done a good deed, do not expect gratitude, but temptation: for love towards God is tested by obstacles. Do not hope to acquire any virtues without suffering sorrows. In the midst of temptations do not despair, but address God with short prayers: "Lord, help me to Teach me to Do not leave me Protect me"

Ask God to take away from you everything that feeds your pride, even if it will be bitter. **Avoid being harsh, gloomy, nagging, mistrustful, suspicious or hypocritical, and avoid rivalry.** Be sincere and simple in your attitude. Humbly accept the admonitions of others, even if you are more wise and experienced.

What you do not want done to you, do not do to others. Rather, do for them what you wish to be done for you. If anyone visits you, be tender towards him, be modest, wise, and, sometimes, depending on the circumstances, be also blind and deaf.

When you feel slack, or a certain coolness, do not leave off the usual order of prayer and pious practices which you have established. Everything that you do in the name of the Lord Jesus, even the small and imperfect things, becomes an act of piety. If you desire to find peace, commit yourself completely onto God. You will find no peace until you calm down in God, loving Him alone.

From time to time go apart by yourself, following the example of Jesus, for prayer and contemplation of God. Contemplate the infinite love of our Lord Jesus Christ, His sufferings and death, His Resurrection, His Second Coming and the Last Judgment.

Visit the church as often as possible. Confess more often and receive the Holy Mysteries. Doing so you will abide in God, and this is the highest blessing. During Confession, repent and confess frankly and with contrition all your sins; for the unrepented sin leads to death.

Devote Sundays to works of charity and mercy; for example, visit someone who is sick, console someone who is in sorrow, save one who is lost. If anyone should help a lost person turn back to God, he will receive a great reward in this life and in the age to come. Encourage your friends to read Christian spiritual literature and to participate in discussing spiritual matters.

Let the Lord Jesus Christ be your teacher in everything. Constantly address Him by turning your mind to Him; ask yourself: What would He do in similar circumstances?

Before you go to sleep, pray frankly and with all your heart, look searchingly at your sins during the past day. You should always compel yourself to repent with a contrite heart, with suffering and tears, lest you repeat past sins. As you go to bed, make the Sign of the Cross, kiss the cross, and entrust yourself to the Lord God, who is your Good Shepherd. Consider that perhaps this night you will have to appear before Him.

Remember the Lord's love towards you and love Him with all your heart, your soul and your mind. Acting in this way, you will reach the blessed life in the Kingdom of Eternal Light.

Our Heart and Our Mind

*from Conversations with Children, by Sister Magdalen
of the Monastery of St. John the Baptist, Essex, England*

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind” (Luke 10:27).

Notice that Christ put the heart first in His commandment. The heart is the most personal component of a human being. Our brains and our minds reflect in their way the state of our heart; as the Lord said, thoughts proceed out of the heart (Matt. 15:19, Mark 7:21). Our ideas, our philosophical systems, our cosmologies, our world views, are nothing else but a history of our hearts.

As we develop spiritually, our intellect no longer remains separated, exiled in the brain. Mind and heart are united in a re-integrated person. The heart is cleansed and awakened by grace and by life according to the Gospel; that's why so many of our contemporaries are only aware of the heart's physical functions. Sometimes they acknowledge the emotional facet, although in the case of the emotions many consider the term “heart” to be symbolic or metaphorical.

Those who follow a Christian path will discover that the heart is the meeting place between the human person and the living God. The pure in heart see God there. Knowledge of Him originates there. The cultivation of the heart is a task beyond any secular educational system. Intellectual ability is now deemed the criterion of knowledge. Because we are spiritually frozen, we don't recognize a thought until it has taken a cerebral form. In reality, moral and spiritual judgments are decided in the heart.

A child once said to his spiritual father: “What shall I do about (a particular personal problem)? The spiritual father answered: “I think you should decide about that yourself.” The child answered, “But, Father, I can't decide.” Priest: “That's because you tried to decide here [pointing at the child's forehead] rather than here [pointing at his heart].”

Obviously this was a personal answer, for this particular person in this particular case. But the fact that it was given to a child is significant. It also shows us that in Christian life, deciding by the heart does not mean being guided by the emotions rather than by reason. Neither does it mean that feelings are superior to thinking. Nor do we deny the value of reasoning. Deciding by our heart means opening the core of one's being to God's enlightenment, and letting the effect of that prayer color our decision-making.

In the spiritual education of children, our first concern is not to train their wills, but to attract grace by our life and prayer to their environment, and to let each child's heart become attached to grace. Theological discussion with children is a very small proportion of Christian education. Prayer that God will touch them with grace is a permanent dimension of all our dealings with children, even when they are not with us.

