



**SAINT NICHOLAS
ORTHODOX CHURCH**
P.O. Box 777
Barton, OH 43905-0777

*A Parish of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople*

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Very Rev. Father Michael C. Kabel *Pastor & Dean*

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- WEB SITE: www.stnicholasbarton.org
- PARISH FACEBOOK: <https://www.facebook.com/St.NicholasBarton>
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MYSTERY OF HOLY CONFESSION: Before & after Saturday evening Vespers. Other Sacraments by appointment.

GOING TO THE HOSPITAL? Please notify Father when you are admitted if you want him to visit. Kindly notify Father also when you are discharged.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 6, 2017 DIVINE LITURGY 10:00 AM
GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!
SLAVA ISUSU CHRISTU! SLAVA NA V'IKI!

THE NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Regular Sunday Antiphons and the Beatitudes. Propers for Tone 8 on pp. 102-104. "Zastupnice" from the hand-out sheets. There will be *Mirovanije* (festive anointing) in honor of the Feast of the *Holy Prophet Elias*.

EPISTLE: I Corinthians 3:9-17. GOSPEL: Matthew 14:22-34.

SCHEDULE OF DIVINE SERVICES
For the week of August 6:

- Sun., August 6:** (After Liturgy) Panachida in memory of +Peter & +Katherine Silon. Requested by the Reese's.
- Tues., August 8:** (6:30 PM) Moleben to the Most Holy Theotokos at the Prayer Garden.

Sat., August 12: NO VESPERS.

Sunday, August 13:
The 10th Sunday after Pentecost

9:30 AM: Preparation Prayers for Holy Communion.

10:00 AM: **Divine Liturgy** for the *Tenth Sunday after Pentecost*. Regular Sunday Antiphons and the Beatitudes. Propers for Tone 1 on pp. 81-83. “Zastupnice” from the hand-out sheets.

THE ETERNAL LAMP burns with prayers and best wishes for a *Happy Birthday* to **GG**. Requested by *Kaz*.

THE LEFT SIDE ALTAR LAMPS (Prothesis) burn with prayers for **Laney & Anna Ross**. Requested by *Laney & Cindi Ross*.

THE TETRAPOD LAMPS burn with prayers for *Special Intentions*. Requested by *Theresa Reese*.

SEASONAL COLOR CHANGE. Since we celebrated the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elias (Elijah) last Wednesday, the liturgical color has now changed from green to gold for a very brief period of time. Since much of August is devoted to preparing for the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, we have already changed the altar covers to the Church’s traditional Marian color — **BLUE**, by way of anticipation. The Dormition Fast begins on **Monday, August 14**.

THE BLESSING OF VEHICLES in honor of the Feast of the Holy Prophet Elias will take place *TODAY* after the Panachida. As the Prophet Elias was taken-up to heaven in a fiery chariot, may our travels by automobiles and other vehicles aid us in our journey to salvation. Please stay for the special blessing invoking God’s much-needed protection on our vehicles! We will process to the parking lot *after* the Panachida.

OUR BIBLE STUDY GROUP will meet *this coming Thursday, August 10* at 6:30 PM in the church basement.

GRADUATION PARTY. The Zitterich family cordially invites all of our parishioners to **Noah Zitterich’s Graduation Party**, which will be held *next Saturday, August 12* at the Zitterich residence. The party will take place from 1-9 PM.

OUR MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETING will be held *next Sunday, August 13*, after the Pot-Luck Coffee Hour.

DORMITION FLOWERS. We plan to adorn the Grave of Our Lady with **FLOWERS** on the Feast of her Holy Dormition on August 28. If you would like to donate a flower *in memory* of a departed loved one OR with prayers for the *health & salvation* of a living person, please use the *special offering envelopes* that are available on the table in the back of church. Cost is **\$9.00 per flower**. Please submit your envelope ASAP.

IOCC SCHOOL KITS. We are once again collecting school supplies to send to the IOCC. This year, we are asking families to sponsor an entire kit, instead of buying individual supplies. Please *sign-up* to sponsor one of these kits and to provide the necessary items. Once you have purchased your school supplies, please bring them to church and place them in one of the canvas bags in the back of the church. We are hoping to send **30 kits** this year. Thank you for all of your help!

CHURCH ATTENDANCE

Sunday Divine Liturgy (7/30) — 84
Saint Elias Vespers (8/1) — 8
Saint Elias Liturgy (8/2) — 9

WHY SHOULD WE FAST?

“We are taught to fast regularly as part of our Christian discipline. Why should we fast? How do we serve God by going hungry? Surely we need adequate food each day in order to work hard in God’s service. Jesus criticized most vehemently those who drew attention to their fasting, urging us to fast in secret; so clearly fasting is not a

matter for personal pride. There are two reasons to fast. The first is to break our attachment to material things, of which food is the most central, and so compel us to depend on spiritual things. When we are eating regularly, food not only sustains our bodies, but provides pleasure and satisfaction. In itself there is nothing wrong with such pleasure. But when we do without food, we are reminded that the only true and lasting source of joy is spiritual. The second is to express solidarity with those whose poverty forces them to go hungry. We may fast from time to time as a discipline; but many people fast continually because they have not money to buy food. If we are truly to show compassion to the poor, we must experience within our own bodies the consequences of poverty. Fasting is thus an incentive toward generosity. And the money saved during a fast can readily be given to relieve the enforced hunger of others.”

(St. John Chrysostom, *On Living Simply*, p. 78)

HIGHWAY TO HELL

“The safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”

~ C. S. Lewis

UPCOMING EVENTS IN 2017

Please mark your calendars now!

Monday, August 14 - Sunday, August 27 - Dormition Fast.

Saturday, August 19 - Holy Day - Transfiguration of Our Lord (Blessing of Fruits).

Monday, August 28 - Holy Day - Dormition of the Mother of God (Blessing of Flowers & Herbs).

Friday, September 1 to Monday, September 4 — National A.C.R.Y. Conventions.

Saturday, September 16 — Camp Nazareth 40th Anniversary Celebration.

Friday, September 22 to Saturday, September 24 — Diocesan Stewardship Retreat.

Friday, November 10 to Sunday, November 12 — A.C.R.Y. Fall Encounter.

“CHRISTMAS IN JULY” REFLECTION

It is not living on earth which separates us from God – it is our own freely chosen sins which separate God from us. Christ in the Incarnation shows divinity is united to our humanity. We are capable of bearing God in our selves, our bodies, our lives! We are not separated from God by space or distance, but only by our wills. God stands at the door of our hearts and knocks, waiting for each of us to invite Him into our lives, our hearts and our homes.

Concerning the 60%

By Fr. Steven C. Salaris, MDiv, PhD

Last year, I attended a clergy gathering where we had several “workshops” discussing the importance of Orthodox Christian Fellowship (OCF), ministry to college students, and what I call “The 60%.” This term derives from a recent study revealing that 60% of college students never return to church after college. This sad data applies to Orthodox Christians, too. When discussing this with others, my scientific brain (I’m a former biology professor) wanted data to back up the claim. I wanted to identify the reasons why our youth leave. Bad idea! I felt like a McCain supporter at an Obama rally! No one wanted to discuss the issues. It was easier to lament about the symptoms than to address the cause(s) head on. There was also a lot of finger-pointing at those workshops; however, when you point a finger at someone, three fingers point back at you!

So why do 60% of our college youth leave Orthodoxy? This is a difficult question to answer. It requires some serious scientific investigation. In the discussion that follows, I have implemented the scientific method of which I am so familiar. After spending time making observations and asking some tough questions, I have come up with several hypotheses. Some will apply specifically to our Orthodox Church, others will apply to Christian churches in general. Most of the hypotheses are corollaries to the warning God gave in Exodus, “I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments” (20:5b-6). (We would do well preaching about that verse more!) Another hypothesis is related to how we educate our youth. Here are my hypotheses .

Hypothesis 1: Linguistic and cultural ghettos that masquerade as “Churches” are contributing to “The 60%”

Orthodoxy has been in America for over 200 years. Yet too often our parishes live with the notion that the Church’s primary function is to be an ethnic preservation society. Far too many people go to church not to encounter Christ, the Son of the living God, but to talk in or listen to foreign languages and eat ethnic foods. Why do we attempt to spiritually raise our children in an atmosphere of dead liturgical languages and the equally dead cultures from which they came? Gee, Toto, we’re not in Byzantium (or Tsarist Russia) anymore!

Be honest, we worship in dead liturgical languages that laity, chanters, priests, and bishops do not understand. Our insistence on using these languages is like keeping a body alive on a ventilator long after brain death has occurred. Nonetheless, we continue to offer incense to the idol of “spiritual language” while not gaining a substantive understanding from what we hear. Sure, sending our children to Arabic/Greek/Russian school might make grandma happy, but they will still be unable to understand the liturgical languages they hear in Church.

Even when we do use English, many Orthodox Churches speak in what I call “liturgical ebonics” – an old variant of Shakespearian English that uses “Thee, Thy, Thou, Thine” pronouns and archaic verb tenses. Imagine the relief our youth feel attending a non-Orthodox church service that uses proper modern English. Dost thou not get it that this silly talk edifieth not our children! Sts. Cyril and Methodius understood using the language of the people! The evangelists to the Alaskan Native American people understood it. Why don’t we?

Hypothesis 2: Enmity in our churches is contributing to “The 60%”

“Enmity” is a word that means “positive, active, and mutual hatred or ill will.” Churches are full of it! – including the Orthodox. It would be great if we hated evil, sin, and the devil; instead we hate each other. Jesus tells us that we are to love one another as he has loved us. Too often we fail. When we fail we are hypocrites. How can Johnny learn about Christian love when mom has not spoken to “that person” in the parish for fifteen years? Yes, mom says, Jesus teaches that we have to love our neighbor as ourselves and that we must forgive seventy times seven, but how dare “that person” change grandmother’s baklava recipe at the Church festival! Years ago, I stood in a food line at a Greek festival and watched two men of that parish cursing and yelling at each other while nearly coming to fisticuffs. Great witness for the Gospel, huh? Add to this parish splits, gossip, back-biting, the way personality disordered parishioners treat the priest, vituperative general assembly meetings, etc., is it any wonder that our youth flee once they are free?

Hypothesis 3: Lack of stewardship is contributing to “The 60%”

We don’t regard the Church as the pearl of great price or a treasure buried in a field. Instead we treat the Church like

a street beggar. In many of our parishes, clergy and stewardship committees hold out their hands hoping (and begging) that parish families will pay their “minimum dues.” Why must I hear of parishes with hundreds of families that by mid-year don’t have enough money to pay the electric bill or the priest’s salary? Why must I hear about priests and their families who are expected to live in substandard housing, send their children to substandard schools, drive junk cars, and depend on food stamps? This is scandalous! Even worse, this is oftentimes expected by parishioners who are quite generous to themselves. Why do churches depend on endless fundraisers and festivals for income? The answer to these questions is simple: Too many parishioners do not value the Church. Once the message that the Church is valueless is internalized by our youth (don’t be fooled, it is internalized), they will eventually turn their back on the Church. Our children will seek something of more enduring value as determined by family and society. Isn’t that frightening?! We must pass on to our children, by our example, the principle that the Church is worth the stewardship of our time and talents above all else.

Hypothesis 4: Failed models of Christian education are contributing to “The 60%”

With all due respect to those that have worked so hard in Christian education, it is time we admit that our Protestant-derived models of Christian education have failed. Like us, the Catholics and Protestants also have their own 60%. If the current model for Christian education doesn’t work for them, it will not work for us. Christian youth come out of years of Sunday school and still don’t know the basics of their own faith. I know of students educated in Catholic schools that think the Holy Trinity is Jesus, Mary, and Joseph! I know Orthodox Christians who think that the Holy Trinity is God, Jesus, and Mary. An organic living knowledge and internalization of the Orthodox Christian faith cannot happen in 45 minutes on a Sunday by cutting and coloring paper doll clergy and iconostases. There was no Sunday School in the early Church and yet families – parents and children – were martyred together bearing witness to the Christian faith (read the life of the early second-century martyrs Sophia and her three children...if you dare). Perhaps a radical re-thinking and new approach to Christian education needs to be developed by those who specialize in the field.

Hypothesis 5: The lack of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is contributing to “The 60%”

The Church is like a fig tree with lots of leaves. The leaves are things we get passionate and obsessive about – icons, facial hair (on men), chanting, vestments, ethnic nationalism, calendars, choirs, rants about ecumenists and liberal deconstructionists, spirituality, pseudo-spirituality, and all the rest of the fodder that one can find on “Orthodox” blog sites. However, if the tree doesn’t bear fruit then it is doomed to wither. I am going to be bold and identify the “first fruits” of the Church as a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Some people might think that sounds a bit “Protestant,” but in fact it is entirely Orthodox. Our relationship with Jesus Christ is so deep, intimate, and personal, that He feeds us with this very own Body and Blood in the Eucharist (beginning for many of us when we are babies). That “first fruit,” that intense personal relationship with Christ, should then yield the fruits of repentance and spiritual growth in the lives of every Orthodox Christian. If we are unable to bear these “first fruits,” our youth and our Churches will wither.

What is next? In the scientific method, after making observations, asking questions, and developing a hypothesis comes experimentation where the hypothesis is rigorously tested. In this short article, I have only gone as far as formulating some hypotheses concerning “the 60%.” To go any further will require specialists in the Church to do the experiments and analyze the data. When all this is done, the conclusions will either support or reject the hypotheses. If, however, the appropriate studies do support the hypotheses, how will the Church respond – with action or apathy? The Lord says, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Repentance starts with self-examination – I am calling for the Church to do just that here and now. If it is determined that something is wrong, then true repentance requires a change. If we respond with apathy, then the 60% phenomenon will continue and our sins will continue to be visited upon our children generation after generation until the Church is no more. If we respond with proper action and change based on love, prayer, grace, self-sacrifice, and joy, then Christ and His Church – the very kingdom of heaven – will be a seed planted in the good soil of our children’s hearts and souls that will grow and bear fruit one thousand-fold until “the 60%” is no more.

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