

ST. NICHOLAS ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

كنيسة القديس نيقولاوس الانطاكية الأرثوذكسية

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REGULAR SCHEDULE OF WORSHIP:

Saturdays: Great Vespers 7:00pm-8:00pm

Confession 8:00pm-9:00pm (by Appointment only)

Sundays: 9:00am-12:00pm

(9:00am Orthros & 10:30am Divine Liturgy)

Agape Coffee Hour 12:00pm-2:00pm

(No official coffee hour during the summer)

BULLETIN: JUNE 26, 2016 A.D.

Closed Communion in the Orthodox Church?

By: Abbot Tryphon, All-Merciful Orthodox Monastery, Vashon Island - Washington

When a stranger approaches the Holy Gifts during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy it is the norm in the Orthodox Church for the priest to ask the person to "kiss the chalice". Not knowing if the person is Orthodox, or whether they are in good standing with the Church, the priest cannot give them communion. This "closed communion" is not meant as a way of separating ourselves from visitors as though we were better than them, but as our way of guarding the Holy Mysteries from being received by someone who is not part of the Church and who may hold to views concerning the Eucharist that are in opposition to the teachings of scripture and the dogmas of the Ancient Apostolic and Catholic Church. Priests are guardians of the Holy Mysteries and must make sure they are not defiled. The priest must also protect the person who may receive without proper preparation and belief. Every Orthodox Christian is expected to have prepared for communion by abstaining from all food and drink from midnight on, as well as having said the pre-communion prayers. A good confession is also an important part of proper preparation for Holy Communion. When a person believes that the things which we teach are true and has receive baptism in the Orthodox Church unto regeneration, and who is so living a life in Christ, the communion is not simply common bread or common wine we are receiving, but the very Body and Blood of the Saviour. The Logos (Word) Who took on our flesh for the salvation of the world, is received into our bodies through the action of the Holy Spirit and the prayer of His word (this is my body....this is my blood). At this moment our blood and flesh, by transmutation, are nourished with the flesh and blood of Jesus who was made flesh. Closed communion is the way the Church protects anyone who does not hold to these beliefs from receiving unworthily and therefore hurting their soul. As well, when the priest co-mingles the commemoration particles after the communion of the faithful, with the Body and Blood of Christ, he commemorates the union we have with each other as members of the Body of Christ, the Church. This union is not just with those who are communing with us in this Liturgy, but a union of both the Church Militant here on earth, and the Church Triumphant in heaven. Within the life of the Church there is no separation from each other at death. The Body of Christ is made up of both those who have gone on before us and those who are still alive, for we are all alive in Christ. In a very real way we are not only communing of Christ's true Body and Blood, but we are communing of each other as the Body of Christ, the Church!

THE HOLY EPISTLE (Hebrews 11:33-40; 12:1-2)

Brethren, all the saints through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated - of whom the world was not worthy - wandering over deserts and mountains and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith.

يَا إِخْوَةَ، إِنَّ الْقَدِيسِينَ الَّذِينَ بِالْإِيمَانِ قَهَرُوا مَمَالِكَ، صَنَعُوا بِرًّا، نَالُوا مَوَاعِيدَ، سَدُّوا أَفْوَاهَ أَسْوَدٍ، أَطْفَأُوا قُوَّةَ النَّارِ، نَجَّوْا مِنْ حَدِّ السَّيْفِ، تَقَوُّوا مِنْ ضَعْفٍ، صَارُوا أَشِدَاءَ فِي الْحَرْبِ، هَزَمُوا جُيُوشَ غُرَبَاءَ، أَخَذَتْ نِسَاءٌ أَمْوَاتَهُنَّ بِقِيَامَةٍ. وَأَخْرُورُنْ عَذَّبُوا وَلَمْ يَقْبَلُوا النِّجَاةَ لِكَيِّ يَنَالُوا قِيَامَةً أَفْضَلَ. وَأَخْرُورُنْ تَجَرَّبُوا فِي هُزْءٍ وَجَلْدٍ، ثُمَّ فِي قِيُودٍ أَيْضًا وَحَبْسٍ. رُجِمُوا، نُشِرُوا، جُرِبُوا، مَاتُوا قَتْلًا بِالسَّيْفِ، طَافُوا فِي جُلُودٍ غَنَمٍ وَجُلُودٍ مِعْزَى، مُعْتَازِينَ مَكْرُوبِينَ مُذَلِّينَ، وَهُمْ لَمْ يَكُنِ الْعَالَمُ مُسْتَحِقًّا لَهُمْ. تَأْهِينَ فِي بَرَارِيٍّ وَجِبَالٍ وَمَغَايِرَ وَشُقُوقِ الْأَرْضِ. فَهَؤُلَاءِ كُلُّهُمْ، مَشْهُودًا لَهُمْ بِالْإِيمَانِ، لَمْ يَنَالُوا الْمَوْعِدَ، إِذْ سَبَقَ اللَّهُ فَنظَرَ لَنَا شَيْئًا أَفْضَلَ، لِكَيِّ لَا يُكْمَلُوا بِدُونِنَا. لِذَلِكَ نَحْنُ أَيْضًا إِذْ لَنَا سَحَابَةٌ مِنَ الشُّهُودِ مِقْدَارُ هَذِهِ مُحِيطَةٌ بِنَا، لِنَطْرَحَ كُلَّ ثَقَلٍ وَالْخَطِيئَةَ الْمُحِيطَةَ بِنَا بِسَهُولَةٍ، وَلِنَحَاضِرَ بِالصَّبْرِ فِي الْجِهَادِ الْمَوْضُوعِ أَمَامَنَا، نَاطِرِينَ إِلَى رَئِيسِ الْإِيمَانِ وَمُكْمَلِهِ يَسُوعَ.

THE HOLY GOSPEL (St. Matthew 10:32-33; 37-38; 19:27-30)

The Lord said to his disciples, "Every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny him before my Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me." Then Peter said in reply, "Lo, we have left everything and followed you. What then shall we have?" Jesus said to them, "Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of man shall sit on his glorious throne, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first."

قال الرب لتلاميذه كُلُّ مَنْ يَعْتَرِفُ بِي قُدَّامَ النَّاسِ أَعْتَرَفُ أَنَا أَيْضًا بِهِ قُدَّامَ أَبِي الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ ، وَلَكِنْ مَنْ يُنْكِرُنِي قُدَّامَ النَّاسِ أُنْكِرُهُ أَنَا أَيْضًا قُدَّامَ أَبِي الَّذِي فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ مِنْ أَحَبِّ أَبَا أَوْ أُمًّا أَكْثَرَ مِنِّي فَلَا يَسْتَحِقُّنِي ، وَمَنْ أَحَبَّ ابْنًا أَوْ ابْنَةً أَكْثَرَ مِنِّي فَلَا يَسْتَحِقُّنِي ، وَمَنْ لَا يَأْخُذُ صَلِيبَهُ وَيَتَّبِعُنِي فَلَا يَسْتَحِقُّنِي . فَاجَابَ بَطْرُسُ جِينِيذٍ وَقَالَ لَهُ : هَا نَحْنُ قَدْ تَرَكْنَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَتَبِعْنَاكَ . فَمَاذَا يَكُونُ لَنَا ؟ فَقَالَ لَهُمْ يَسُوعُ : الْحَقُّ أَقُولُ لَكُمْ : إِنَّكُمْ أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ تَبِعْتُمُونِي فِي التَّجْدِيدِ ، مَتَى جَلَسَ ابْنُ الْإِنْسَانِ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّ مَجْدِهِ ، تَجْلِسُونَ أَنْتُمْ أَيْضًا عَلَى اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ كُرْسِيًّا تَدِينُونَ أَسْبَاطَ إِسْرَائِيلَ الْإِثْنَيْ عَشَرَ . وَكُلُّ مَنْ تَرَكَ بَيْوتًا أَوْ إِخْوَةً أَوْ أَخَوَاتٍ أَوْ أَبَا أَوْ أُمًّا أَوْ امْرَأَةً أَوْ أَوْلَادًا أَوْ حُقُولًا مِنْ أَجْلِ اسْمِي ، يَأْخُذُ مِئَةَ ضِعْفٍ وَيَرِثُ الْحَيَاةَ الْبَدِيَّةَ . وَلَكِنْ كَثِيرُونَ أَوْلُونَ يَكُونُونَ آخِرِينَ ، وَآخِرُونَ أَوْلِينَ .

Today's Memorial Service is offered for the departed servants of God:

- * Birdie Marcus (1st year). Offered by Solly & Helen.
- * Lise Gauvin (5th year); Stephane Lebeau (17th year). Offered by Michel Eid and Marie-Eve Letarte.
- * Roger Makarios (26th year); Laurence & Michael Makarios, Nora & Thomas Monfarge. Offered by Dorothy Makarios and Family.

The Priest is the Guardian of the Holy Chalice - A pastoral explanation by Fr. Mark

Once in a while you might see me politely instruct someone in the Communion line to kiss the Holy Chalice and take a piece of bread from the basket without having given him Holy Communion. You might also hear me remind the congregation right before Holy Communion that we must believe that this is the actual Body & Blood of Christ to receive it, and we must be spiritually prepared and in communion with the Orthodox Church to receive the Eucharist, lest we condemn ourselves by an unworthy partaking. And there are other times you might see me take the Holy Chalice back into the Holy Altar in order to kneel on the ground and lick Holy Communion off of the floor - that happens when there is an accident, usually with children or the elderly, when the Holy Communion falls out of the person's mouth onto the floor. - It is the Priest's responsibility to eat it off the floor and to not allow the person to pick it up or to have people step on it. This is all because the Priest is the guardian of the Holy Chalice. They are not strange ideas from my own head! I am expected to know my sheep, and I am instructed in our **Archdiocese Clergy Guide** to give these reminders and even I will even quote: "The bulletin should carry a notice at all times informing visitors that only Orthodox Christians may receive the Eucharist. — A visitor who is non-Orthodox who approaches the Chalice should be given a piece of the Antidoron Bread. — According to the guidance of one's father confessor and his advice, one may approach the Chalice. — The Priest must administer the Eucharist using only one spoon."

Among other directions, I am to make sure, to the best of my ability and discernment, that the person approaching the Holy Chalice is not going to harm himself and that no type of irreverence be brought to the Holy Eucharist, even if the irreverence is not intended by the person. **Now what do I mean by that?** For example: If someone approaches and I see him chewing gum, I am not going to instruct him to remove the gum from his mouth and then put it back in after receiving. I would be careless to do that, and I have seen it happen! Instead, that person needs to be spoken to by the Priest (afterwards) that we do not chew gum before or after receiving Holy Communion. It is irreverent and as gum is usually spit out, perhaps a small particle or drop of Holy Communion -absorbed by the gum- also gets spit out! **Another example:** if someone is feeling nauseous in the Communion line, he should not receive Holy Communion at that time because he might vomit everything out into the toilet or on the floor. We are also not supposed to smoke before/after receiving Holy Communion because it is harmful to the body, but also because it usually causes one to cough-up and spit out phlegm. What irreverence to see a man coughing & spitting on the Church lawn with a cigarette in his hand, after just receiving Holy Communion shortly before. All of these situations need special attention, not because they are rules to follow, but more importantly because we need to **develop a sense of reverence** when approaching Holy & spiritual matters!

On the note about spitting-up and vomiting: I have been questioned before as to why I would choose not to administer Holy Communion to someone in the hospital? There are **3 cases** where a Priest cannot and should not administer Holy Communion in the hospital setting. 1) The patient must not be in a coma, he must be awake and aware of what he is partaking. 2) The patient must be able to swallow, so when there are tubes going down his throat, it is impossible to swallow. And we do not simply wet one's lips with Holy Communion either, it must be consumed and swallowed. 3) The patient needs to swallow and keep the Holy Communion down. Like explained above, if the patient is coughing heavily and spitting up anything going into the mouth into a bundle of kleenex (very common), the Priest should not administer Holy Communion, because he knows quite well that it will end up in the kleenex and eventually into the garbage. **I have dealt with all 3 of these cases, and I found that relatives mostly get offended simply because they are not aware that we do not even practice "Last Rites" in the Orthodox Church!** Receiving Holy Communion is a life-long practice and not specifically reserved for the hospital visit or death-bed. If the person qualifies to receive Holy Communion while hospitalized, then so-be-it. But if their physical condition does not allow the Priest to administer Holy Communion, the patient is not at fault, nor is the Priest to be blamed, nor is the patient lost in limbo or damned if he dies before receiving Holy Communion in better health. Our Lord's Body & Blood should already be a part of our own flesh & blood by living a sacramentally-active Orthodox lifestyle, and that is why attending the Divine Liturgy EVERY Sunday is so important.

Don't delay your invitation to the Lord's Table! And don't blame the Priest, he is ordained to be the guardian of the Holy Chalice, and will be held accountable by God who bestowed him with the Holy Priesthood. **Don't delay!**

Take a vacation, but don't take a vacation from God!

A friendly summer reminder to parishioners by Fr. Mark

Schools are out and vacation time begins. Our Church attendance will naturally drop over the summer months while you enjoy your well-deserved family time and our long-awaited hot weather. I do want to remind you what was already recommended in the past by H.E. Metropolitan JOSEPH, that even on our vacation, we should still try to find an Orthodox Church wherever we are on Sunday, so we are not separated from our worship even while having fun, and our vacation can include a type of pilgrimage. I completely agree with that advice, and I also completely understand that in some places there simply are no Orthodox Churches. In that case, you can at least try to set aside some time for your spiritual life by making sure you recite your daily prayers and perhaps by reading from the Holy Gospel and a spiritual book. **Forgot to pack books? Recite the Jesus Prayer! (Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me).** Focus on the Lord who created Heaven and earth, and then get your tan while remembering Who lit up the sun, and Who covered the land with that nice 'blue' water you are enjoying. Take a vacation, but don't take a vacation from God! And for those who are taking vacation at home, and not travelling anywhere, but have the habit of avoiding Church services all summer long: You are not helping yourself by doing that. Does it make sense to eat healthy and exercise all year long, only to eat junk food and slack-off the entire summer? I do understand that sometimes summer plans conflict with your Sunday morning...but all summer long?? (and all year long, for some!!). We need to preserve our Orthodox practice of receiving Holy Communion regularly (with preparation) and keep it as something essential and important, and not just something I do when I go to Church, and if I ever visit the Church.

Even on our civil work calendar, Sunday is still the first day of the week during the summer (on the left side of the page, right before Monday) - it's the Lord's Day - and it is recorded in the Holy Gospel that on the first day of the week (Sunday), the Disciples met and received the Holy Eucharist (Holy Communion). They kept that day sacred because the Lord rose from the dead early on the first day of the week. So essentially, we are starting our week by going to Church and receiving the Lord's Holy Body & Blood, just like the Disciples did. Saturday remains the Sabbath, the day of rest, the 7th day. We commemorate our departed on that day and when our Lord descended into Hades. God rested on the Sabbath. That is the real weekend, but Sunday is in fact the start of our new week!

The Canons of the Church even warn that if a believer (Clergy included) skips Holy Communion for 3 consecutive Sundays, he is considered cut-off from the Church! Now, I don't know of any parish that actually enforces that rule today, but the model should still stay in our mind that Holy Communion is important. There are preparations for Holy Communion, and one should not just approach the Chalice out of routine, without care. However, one must also not leave himself in a state of never being prepared to receive Holy Communion, as if never putting the effort to approach the Holy Chalice, so always being in the state of unprepared just to canonically excuse myself - that is heretical and delusional! **God knows the heart, and these rules were made to help us get closer to Him, not to keep us apart!** He tells us that unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood, we have no life in us! Don't become a summer zombie, living, but not alive in Him - just wandering around eating & entertaining ourselves.

This summer, please enjoy yourself. Enjoy your family-time. Enjoy relaxing at home and catching up on your landscaping and gardening. But just remember that God does not take a vacation from you. There is always an Orthodox Church offering the Divine Liturgy on Sunday morning somewhere near you. The summer goes by so fast, don't let Sunday just be another day of the week. Don't let attending Church be the result of your cancelled rainy golf day or BBQ. Let attending the Divine Liturgy be a part of your summer vacation to the best of your ability. Perhaps during the year, families cannot attend Church together due to work/school - overtime & exams - let the summer months be the time to finally come to Church as a family, then go to lunch together.

**God is not the fun-police or a rainy cloud...and the Church is not programmed to ruin your vacation!
Take your vacation from secularism, but don't take a vacation from your spirituality!**