

Rector's Letter for June, 2011

Dear brothers and sisters:

We are coming to the season of summer vacations and travel plans. Did you ever consider how much attention the Church gives to travel? Every service, we pray for “those who travel by land, by sea, and by air.” There are special prayers that can be said for anyone about to go on a journey. Much spiritual counsel has been written for those who are traveling. Perhaps this seems a little odd: we're just going for a little “R & R,” after all. What's the big deal?

Well, the Scriptures see travel as a really big deal. It's dangerous: think of the man attacked by thieves on the way to Jericho in the parable of the Good Samaritan. It's a time of temptation: think of the Israelites complaining for 40 years in the wilderness, “Are we there yet?” It can also be an opportunity to meet the Lord: think of how many people met Jesus Christ as he was traveling himself, and changed their lives.

The temptation is to leave behind not just our business and chores but our consciences, too: to “take a vacation from God,” or even to engage in pursuits we'd be ashamed of at home. And then we're surprised when we come back feeling worse than when we left! A true vacation is one that refreshes the soul — and who better than God himself to ask for that refreshment?

So it is worth preparing spiritually for our vacations, so that they may be a blessing and “lead us not into temptation.” Travel is still dangerous today: why not make a point of preparing for communion and asking for the special prayers before going on a journey? We also need to take the time to find the local church where we are going, and to let the local priest know we are coming.

Pack your prayer book along with your sunscreen, too. It's good to break out of our routines, but it makes it hard to keep the good habits of prayer. We actually need to make extra efforts to pray when we travel. Otherwise, we

lose our spiritual compass and can find ourselves in distress at a time when we imagined we would be at our best.

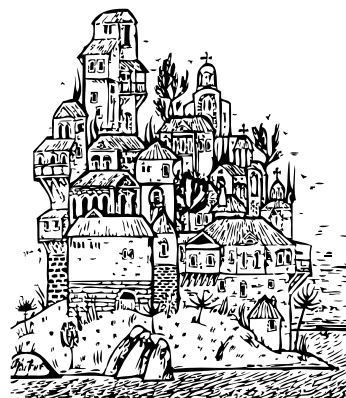
On the other hand, if we make the effort to meet the Lord even as we travel, he himself will give us rest and refreshment:

Now behold, two of [the disciples] were traveling that same day [of the Lord's resurrection] to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know him. ... Now it came to pass, as he sat at the table with them, that he took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew him; and he vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, “Did not our heart burn within us while he talked with us on the road, and while he opened the Scriptures to us?”
(Luke 24:13–16, 30–32)

Who might we meet while we are on the road? Unless we open the eyes of our spiritual lives, we may never know.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Julius S. Mosher



Around the Parish

Many years to the newborn **Jacob Michael Polony**, son of Robert and Henrieta and grandson of Daniela Polonyova. He was born on May 25, and is a healthy 8 pounds, 8 ounces.

The paschal season concludes with the **Ascension of Our Lord**, on June 2, when our Lord completed the instruction of his disciples and ascended bodily to heaven, promising the gift of the Holy Spirit. We will celebrate with Vespers and Liturgy on Wednesday, June 1, at 6:00 PM.

The Feast of Pentecost follows ten days later, on Sunday, June 12. On that day, we celebrate the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the disciples, when the apostles began their public preaching and the Church was revealed to all. Until that day, we honor our Lord's rising from the grave by remaining standing in prayer, but at Kneeling Vespers of Pentecost (celebrated immediately after the Divine Liturgy that Sunday), we kneel for the first time.

Eight days after the feast of Pentecost (June 20 this year), we begin the **Apostles' Fast**, a time to reflect on what has passed since Pascha, to seek the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and to prepare for the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul on June 29.

At 4 PM on Saturday, June 11, the eve of Pentecost, **Ernest Constantine Pandolfi** will be illumined through Holy Baptism. We will be using the Connecticut Deanery's adult font in the center of our church, so this will be a rare and powerful event—making clearer than ever how we are spiritually drowning “the old man” so that we may live with Christ. All are invited to witness as he is made a new member of the Body of Christ.

We are also looking forward to the baptism of **Charlotte Anne Lombardi**, daughter of Charles and Stacey and granddaughter of David and Irene Zavednak, on Saturday, July 9, at 11 AM.

Our patronal feast is a few weeks away, June 29. We will celebrate with Vespers and Liturgy, June 28, at 6 PM, conclude the feast with an **Akathist Service to SS. Peter & Paul on Wednesday, June 29**, at 6 PM, **followed by a picnic** for the whole neighborhood. Please mark your calendars and make every effort to attend this central day in the life of our parish.

We are getting ready to rent the apartment in our apartment house next door to the church. **Please make any referrals** to John Stoidis or any member of the parish council.

Youth Rally 2011 is set for August 8–13. Youth Rally is our annual diocesan summer camp for youth who have completed 5th grade and have not reached their 18th birthday. It takes place at the Campgrounds of the Greek Orthodox Saint Methodios Faith and Heritage Center, Contoocook, New Hampshire. We have had many enthusiastic participants in Youth Rally over the years, whether as kids or adult volunteers, and more are always welcome! For further information and to request registration materials, please call or email Fr. John Hopko, Youth Rally Director, at phone number (860) 582-3631, or email address saintcyril@snet.net. NOTE: The deadline for registration is July 11, 2011.

Youth Rally also needs volunteers over 18 years of age to serve on the staff. Adult Staff Members need to be active Orthodox Christian communicants of at least 18 years old who have the blessing of their parish priest (i.e. the priest who regularly hears their confession) to participate and who have been approved as staff by Fr. John Hopko, Rally Director, on behalf of the Diocese of New England.

