



Sts. Peter & Paul Boulder

Weekly Bulletin Week of May 28th, 2017



Contact Info

**Sts. Peter & Paul
Greek Orthodox Church**
5640 Jay Rd.
Boulder, CO 80301
Office: 303-581-1434
www.stspeterandpaulboulder.org
Rev. Fr. Jordan Brown

Service Schedule & Parish Activities

Recurring Services

Orthros
Sunday @ 8:30 am
Divine Liturgy
Sunday @ 9:30 am
Great Vespers
Saturday @ 5 pm
Confession by appt.

Welcome to Our Parish!

The mission of Sts. Peter & Paul is to be a beacon of Orthodox Christian spirituality in the greater Boulder area. We strive together to live our Orthodox Christian Faith by having a devoted prayer life, through fasting and almsgiving, and through regular participation in the services and sacraments of the Holy Orthodox Church.

Have an Announcement?

Please contact Aaron Wall:
awall609@yahoo.com;
(720) 400-6579
Deadline is every Wed. before Divine Liturgy.

Hosts & Volunteers

Ushers	Steve & Ashley Dzilvelis
Myrrhbearers	Elizabeth, Alexandra, Sophie
Choir	Demetra G., Georgia
Epistle Reader	Xander

Wednesday May 31	9:30 am 10 am 6 pm 7:30 pm	Morning Prayers Bible Study Paraclesis Service Adult Education: 'Ascension of Jesus Christ'
Saturday, June 3	9 am	Family Hike
Saturday, June 3	5 pm	Great Vespers
Sunday, June 4	8:15 am 9:30 am 12:30 pm	Holy Pentecost Orthros Divine Liturgy Kneeling Service (at the end of Liturgy) Youth Ministry Lunch

The Ascension of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ

By Protopresbyter George Dion Dragas

"And while he was blessing them, he departed and started to ascend to heaven" (Luke 24:51).

The Ascension as the pinnacle of the Feasts of the Lord: How bright and wonderful is this Feast! It is the pinnacle of all the Feasts of the Lord, because with it the sacred and saving purpose of the Divine Incarnation of the Word of God is completed. For what purpose did the Son and Word of God become man, and underwent the passion, the death, the resurrection...and the ascension? All these events took place so that the human nature might not remain below on the earth, but be raised to heaven, become deified and glorified according to the Creator's original design. This, then, was the purpose for which the Son of God condescended to assume within his super-godly person (hypostasis) our human nature, which had fallen from its original condition, in order to renew it with his Crucifixion and Resurrection and to raise it to the heavenly heights with his glorious Ascension, presenting it to God the Father as the super-brilliant trophy of his victory.

The Ascension as the triumph of the human nature: At the Ascension of Christ God the Father accepted the first-fruits of our humanity, and was well pleased not only for the worthiness of Him who offered it, but also for the purity of the offering. This, then, is the perfect victory against sin. This is the triumph of the human nature. The human nature could not have descended to a lower point than that at which it arrived after the fall of Adam, but neither could ascend to a higher point than that at which the New (or Last) Adam raised it with his Ascension!

The Ascension as the final benefit offered by God to man: What mind could grasp the real dimensions of this event? The forsaken and feeble human nature, the nature which run away from God and was exiled from paradise, the low, miserable, condemned and captured nature of human beings becomes today more glorious than that of the angels, is made to sit with Christ at the bosom of the Father and is worshiped by every visible and invisible creation! What language could praise the magnitude of this celebration, or to present worthily the enormity of the beneficence of God to human beings? Today the entry into the longed for paradise, the heavenly Jerusalem, is opened to Adam's exiled descendants. Today, the restoration of the new Israel in the Promised Land is accomplished.

The Ascension as the final victory of Christ for man: Today, on the Mount of Olives Heaven and earth kiss each other and angels and human beings are united. Here the chorus of the Apostles greets their sweet Teacher with joy on his departure from them, and the Orders of the Angels salute the King of the Heavens with ineffable elation and joy. Here the captivity, which the victor of death captivated with his ascension to the heights, i.e. the souls of the just who have been redeemed, have their eyes on their Redeemer with feelings of exhilaration and joy. Here also, His Mother, the most pure Virgin, greets and sends off her beloved Son who is ascending into Heaven, where God the Father welcomes his Only-begotten Son and makes him sit on his right. Here too, at the prestigious Mount of Olives, we are called to ascend with our minds and become eye-witnesses to the great and wondrous events which take place, having as our guide Luke the theologian, who alone among the Evangelists narrates with brevity but also with priestly and solemn fashion the glorious Ascension of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

Why did the Ascension take place 40 days after and not immediately after the Resurrection? The leader of life, who loosened the bonds of death by his Resurrection, met with his disciples for 40 days and confirmed his Resurrection to them by means of several proofs. He did not ascend into heaven on the day he rose again, because such an event would have raised doubts and questions. Had he done that, many of the unbelievers would be in a position to project the argument that the Resurrection was one more dream of pious aspirations which easily emerge and more easily disappear. For this reason, then, Christ remained for 40 days on the earth, and appeared to his disciples repeatedly, showing them the marks of his wounds, explaining to them the prophesies which he fulfilled in his life and sufferings as man, and even eating with them.

Why did the Risen Christ eat broiled fish and honey? The Gospel for today's Feast tells us that the Risen Christ asked for and ate "a piece of broiled fish and from honey of a honeycomb" (Luke 24:42). Why is this detail mentioned? According to the church tradition this detail has a very important allegorical meaning. As regards the fish, we know that although it lives in the salty sea, it is not salty, but sweet. In the same manner Christ, who lived in the 'salty sea of sin' of this world, "he did not commit any sin, and no guile was found in his mouth" (Is. 53:9). Also, Christ remained even more voiceless

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than the fish when he endured his saving passion and received unheard-of torture and unmentionable insult. As regards the honey and the beeswax, we know that the honey is sweet and the beeswax is illuminative, and for this reason they are considered to be symbols of the spiritual pleasure and illumination which the Risen Christ transmits to the faithful. Also, honey and beeswax symbolize, the former, the cure of the great bitterness of sin which is symbolized by the gall that was offered to the Lord at his passion and, the latter, the diluteness of the dense darkness of sin which was symbolized by the darkness which took place at the Lord's crucifixion.

Why did the Ascension take place on the Mount of Olives? Once Christ had confirmed his Resurrection from the dead to his disciples through his mellifluous teaching, and enlightened their minds and warmed their hearts by his presence, he led them on the 40th day after the Resurrection to the Mount of Olives which lies east of Jerusalem. The Ascension ought to take place from this Mount, because according to an ancient tradition, it is here that the Lord will return bodily and with glory on the last Day when he will judge the world. It is here that the righteous will receive the great mercy and here also that the sinners will grieve with an inconsolable lamentation. These two opposite conditions of humanity are denoted by the name of this Mount, because its peaks are called Mount of Olives and its foot Valley of Wailing. This is also what was pre-signified by the oracle of the prophet Zachariah which explicitly states:

Why the Apostles and the Theotokos had to be present at that time? The Lord led his disciples on this Mount and the Theotokos who gave birth to him as man, so that they could see with their own eyes his glorious Ascension. His Mother after the flesh had to be present at that great glorification of her Son, so that she who had been gravely wounded in her soul for his passion above all others, might commensurably rejoice by seeing her Son ascending into heaven with glory, being worshiped as God by the Angels and being seated on the throne of the Most High above all principalities and authorities. The divine Apostles had to be there also, that might become eye-witnesses of the Lord's Ascension, be informed that their Divine Teacher who is now ascending into heaven, had initially come down from there and that he will wait for them there as the true Son of God and Savior of the world.

How did this utterly unfamiliar and unique event of the Ascension of Christ occur? They had already arrived at the middle peak of the Mount. The city of Jerusalem stretched in front of them. The hole where the Cross had stood was still open. So was also the entrance to the Grave of the Savior, since the great stone that had been used to seal it was still lying on the ground. And then, the Savior turns his back to the ungrateful city of Jerusalem and his glance looks to the East, as David joyfully sings in one of his psalms: "Sing to the Lord who is going up to the heaven of the heaven towards the East" (Psalm 67:34). And as he takes leave of his Disciples he raises his immaculate hands and blesses them for the last time – those hands with which he recreated the man whom he created at the beginning, and which he stretched on the cross out of love for humanity and united those that had been severed, i.e. those which had been diversified. Just as the eyes of the disciples could not be satisfied enough in seeing the divine and mellifluent face of their Lord, suddenly he began to ascend into heaven. Their glance remained nailed, as it were, on that paradoxical and inexplicable display of the bodily Ascension of the Lord, until he was concealed by the luminous cloud.

How utterly unfamiliar and unique was the majesty of this Ascension! Elijah had also ascended into heaven, as Scripture relates; but this ascension took place by means of a fiery chariot and fiery horses, because Elijah was a mere man and needed help in order to ascend above the earth. Christ, however, was a God-man and ascended by himself, by virtue of his own omnipotence. As regards that cloud, it had to do with the Holy Spirit, just as it happened with the transfiguration of Christ. Just as his descend and becoming man were wrought "through the Holy Spirit, according to the message of Archangel Gabriel" ("The Spirit of the Lord will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you," Luke 1:35), so now he "co-ascends" with him (the Holy Spirit) because He follows him and coexists with him, being coessential ("homousion") with him and being worship and glorified with him.

Why were those two white-dressed Angels sent? While the holy Apostles were gazing with astonishment at the heavenly sight, two men appeared to them dressed in white garments. These two men were angels, who had assumed a human form in order to avoid scaring the disciples. They were dressed in white so that their chastity might be manifest, as well as the enlightening and joyous message which they were sent to deliver. They were sent by Christ on his Ascension, in order to console them at the moment of their sorrow for his departure, but also to enlighten them that their Lord who is now invisible is seating at the right side of God the Father and that he will descend on the earth once again in order to judge all human beings, the living and the dead.

What is the message of the Angels dressed in white? "Men of Galilee," they told them, "why do you stand with your

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gaze ailed on the sky?” This Jesus, whom you see today being taken up, will return to judge the world and his return will be the same with his Ascension.” In other words, he will come from heaven wearing the same immaculate Body, which he assumed from the bloods of the pure Virgin, and which will bear upon it the marks from the wounds which he received at his passion. Right now it is only you who see him ascending to heaven, but when he returns, all the races of the earth will see him descending from there with glory upon the clouds. His glorious condescension will become the cause of blessedness and joy for those who lived righteously. For the sinners, however, it will be the cause of sorrow and calamity.

What was the impact of the Ascension for the Apostles and the small flock of the first Church? Having heard this message, the Apostles worshiped the Savior on his Ascension and, then, joyfully returned to Jerusalem. Their joy was great, because they had definitely learned that their divine Teacher was true God who ascended into heaven, not because he abandoned the earth, but in order to unite it with heaven. Their joy was also great because they received the blessing of their Savior on his Ascension. It was with this blessing that the numerically small Church of the disciples greatly increased its numbers in a relatively short space of time and, having received the grace of the Spirit, was established as the great Church throughout the earth.

What was the impact of the Ascension on the orders of the Angels in heaven? While these things occurred on the earth because of the Ascension, the Angels mounted a great celebration in heaven. The Angels which served the Savior on the earth and now accompanied him on his ascension called out the orders above to open the heavenly gates for the King of Glory to enter in. As David sings, “Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of Glory may come in” (Ps. 23:7). Since through his saving passion Christ the Savior became more glorious and highly exalted – as the Apostle Paul actually puts it, “Having humbled himself and having become obedient unto death, indeed a death by crucifixion, God exalted him highly and granted him the name which is above all” (Phil. 2:9) – for this reason the gates of heaven ask to become higher in order to welcome him more fittingly. Also, because the glory of the victor of Hades and death, which could not be contained by the small space of the earth, but filled the heavens, the Angels ask that they too be expanded on his appearance! At the same time, the heavenly hierarchies of the Angels, seeing the human body to be transferred above them, were seized by dazzle and amazement; because, just as a human being is seized by amazement of fear on seeing an angel on the earth, so the bodiless Angels, seeing a body to be raised on a cloud, seek with amazement to learn about this paradoxical display, and to be twice assured about the identity of this King of Glory. Hearing, then, that he is the Lord, who is powerful in battles, who fought the devil and defeated him and who is now ascending into heaven, they wonder how this superbly luminous body is dressed in royal purple and ask, “Who is this that comes from Edom, in crimsoned garments from Bosor, who is glorious in his apparel” (Is. 63:1)? In other words, who is this earthly person, who comes wearing a flesh which is like a superbly bright, royal purple dress? Because, Edom means earthly and Bosor means flesh, and the point of reference here is the glorified Body of Christ the King which appeared to be red in his Ascension into heaven due to the marks of the wounds on his immaculate side, his hands and his feet.

Why were the marks from the wounds retained on the Risen Body of Christ? How was it that the wounds on that incorruptible body were visible? This was a matter of economy, and its purpose was to manifest the ineffable and excelling love for man of the God-man. He consented not only to receive these wounds, but also to retain them after his Resurrection on his incorruptible body in a paradoxical manner and to show them on his Ascension to the world of the Angels as the symbols of his passion and as the indelible proofs of his love for us human beings. In addition, he retained the wounds of his incorruptible body, in order to persuade us that we should never forget his passion, but keep it always before us, so that our heart might overflow with gratitude and sacred feelings towards him. Nothing else, says St. John Chrysostom, can beget inside us these saving results as seeing God carrying the traces of the Cross as far as the throne of his Majesty. According to St. Augustine, the God-man preserved his wounds in heaven in order to show that he will not forget us even in the condition of his glory – which, in any case, is also affirmed by the head-prophet: “Behold on my hands I inscribed your walls, so that they remain in front of me for ever” (Is. 49:16). In other words, he will never forsake us, because he has written our names on his hands and will intercede for us before God the Father. He may have also retained his wounds in order to teach us that only through sufferings and sorrows will be able to enter the kingdom of heaven. If the God-man was exalted through suffering crucifixion, and if he was glorified by an ignominious death, then, how can we enter into this glory without walking on the narrow path of virtue, and without enduring sorrows and temptations in fighting the good fight? This is quite impossible.

The Ascension as a universal joy embracing heaven and earth. We see, then, that in today’s Feast of the Ascension of Christ, the joy is universal because it extends to both heaven and earth. The Angels rejoice in heaven, because they welcome their King. Human beings also jubilate on the earth, because their entry into the heavenly Jerusalem is now allowed.

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“All nations clap your hands, shout with a loud voice of elation unto God” (Ps. 46:2). Let us rejoice today, on the day of universal joy, seeing our Lord ascending where he was not before and opening once for all the gates of the heavens so that our human nature, which he bought with his most precious blood, may enter in with him. What a great comfort this is in our hearts, seeing Him who became for us life and light, faithful friend and powerful protector, who truly loved us and shed his Blood for us, and sat at the throne of the Godhead, and gave us the assurance that he will come again sometime in the future in order to take us there too! He himself gave us with his Ascension the confirmation of this truth and the living hope that we too will ascend there and we will never again be separated from him. Our union with him will be like that of the members of a body with its head, since we are the members of his body and he is the Head of us all. If he was resurrected bodily, we too will be resurrected bodily if we so wish. If he was glorified which being in the flesh, we too will be glorified with the flesh and will walk there, where our Lord is, provided that we behave prudently.

The implications of the Ascension of Christ for the Christians:

Christians ought to be united with Christ, loving him and keeping his commandments. Since the joy for the gifts of Christ granted to us is true, and the hope that we too will enter into that dwelling place of light and live the blessed life is also assured, we ought to be united with him already in this life, knowing that he is the source of light and life. There is no other way for us to achieve this, except to love him with all our soul, and to keep his saving commandments. When we do this we become God’s dwelling place and begin to experience the true joy of life, recognizing the benefits of his grace and realizing that our joy will be completed when we too participate in his ascension and the glory of his presence and co-reign with him for ever. And this is not all, because we will also sit on the throne of his divine Majesty, as this was explicitly revealed by the truthful mouth of our Savior, which said: “To him who wins, I will grant him to sit with me at my throne, just I won and sat with my Father at his throne” (Rev. 3:21). This is the glory that we will receive if we conquer the passions. We will rise and arrive where the Savior led today his nature, which is related to us, namely, his human bodily existence.

Christians ought to live on earth as citizens of heaven. Who, then, would deny, that even if we had a thousand souls and lives, and had to suffer a thousand deaths, would should accept these with absolute eagerness, in order to enjoy even one day of that ineffable glory? Which earthly benefit could constrain our hearts on this earth, which our Savior left, since our citizenship is in heaven and since the ineffable glory awaits us there? Our Lord ascended into heaven, and we here can follow him, remaining united with him through faith and virtue. Certainly, much labor is required of us if we are to ascend to that great height. We are encouraged, however, by the fact that our Lord who ascended there supplies us with strength so that we can succeed. The only thing that he expects of us is to have a willing disposition, and he admonishes us to turn a deaf ear to anything earthly, so that we can be more transportable in our journey above. This means that we are called to leave earthly things on the earth, and to take off our coats of skin, which we put on account of our sin. As the Prophet Elijah threw off his woolskin when the time came for him to ascend to heaven, so should we shake off every agonizing, material endeavor and be detached from a servile attachment to the earth, so that we can easily ascend to the heavenly places. How can we worthily prepare ourselves to rise to the clouds and to go out to meet with our Lord, when he comes with all his royal glory? On that great and celebrated Day, all human beings will be resurrected. Not all of them will be snatched by clouds to go out to meet the Lord in the air. This will happen only to those who kept the commandments of Christ and loved him with all their heart (I Thess. 4:16-17); because only these Christians will be deemed worthy to enjoy such a glory, and only to them will be granted to enjoy that eternal and ineffable blessedness.

The true celebration of the Feast of the Ascension of Christ. Today’s happy Feast of the Ascension of our Lord invites us all who wish to celebrate it truly to do what the holy Apostles did after the Ascension. They worshiped their Teacher on his ascension and returned to Jerusalem (Luke 24:52), i.e. to the house of peace (because this is the meaning of the name Jerusalem). Likewise, we too should return to our homes and make peace with all. The Apostles were in the temple glorifying God and waiting for the descent of the Holy Spirit (verse 53). We should thank our Savior because he gave us the opportunity to celebrate his Ascension and to beseech him from the depths of our heart to make us worthy to celebrate the holy Pentecost as well and be renewed with the grace of the Holy Spirit. It is with this grace that we shall be able to continue the struggle for virtue and to do works which are worthy of our heavenly calling and finally to enter into the great joy of the coming of our Lord.

Events & Announcements



Adult Education: Orthodox Spirituality

May & June series:

The Meaning of the Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost
and Feast Day of Saints Peter and Paul

Classes will be offered in the morning and evening on the following dates:

May 31, 10 am (morning prayers 9:30 am) & 7 pm (Paraclesis 6 pm)

June 7, 10 am (morning prayers 9:30 am) & 7 pm (Paraclesis 6 pm)

June 21, 10 am (morning prayers 9:30 am) & 7 pm (Paraclesis 6 pm)

Do you have questions about the Orthodox Christian Faith? What is the meaning of the Lord's Resurrection, and how does the Resurrection relate to the life of a Christian? This series will allow us to study and reflect on the deeper meaning of the Lord's Resurrection, His Ascension and the Birth of the Church, which is Pentecost. The last class offered on June 21 will be devoted to our Patron Feast Day, June 29, Celebrating Sts Peter and Paul.

If you have any questions regarding the Orthodox Faith, please feel free to contact our priest, Father Jordan at frjordanbrown@gmail.com or (303) 581-1434. Refreshments are offered at the morning Bible Study, and a lenten meal will be offered during the 7 pm Evening Class.

Parish Family Hike

Our first parish family hike of the summer will take place on Saturday, June 3. Last summer's family hikes were a big hit. Everyone is welcome! We will be meeting at Moe's Broadway Bagel (3267 28th Street) at 9 am. We will carpool to the Mt Sanitas Trail (4th & Mapleton). Bring water and comfortable walking shoes.

June 3, Saturday, TRIATHALON RACE on Jay Road

We recommend avoiding Jay Road on the morning of June 3rd. A major bicycle race is scheduled that day beginning in the morning (7:30 am). The race will be over in the late morning and will not affect Saturday Vespers and Pentecost Sunday, June 4.

Youth Ministry Lunch: June 4th

Dear Parents and children (elementary, middle and high school), please join on Sunday, June 4, for a lunch event at the home of Fr Jordan and Presbytera Marika. We will be discussing the summer youth events.

Monastery Pilgrimage Meeting

Father Jordan will be leading a trip to the St John Greek Orthodox Women's Monastery, located in Goldendale, Washington, August 9-11, 2017. A few of our parishioners have had the blessing of visiting this beautiful monastery. There will be a meeting on Saturday, June 3, 5:45 pm (after Vespers) to discuss the pilgrimage. If you have any questions regarding the trip, please contact Father Jordan at frjordanbrown@gmail.com or 303-581-1434. The estimated cost for the trip is \$400 dollars (includes travel, meals & lodging).

Pew Donation

The pews have arrived. The Annunciation Greek Orthodox Cathedral generously donated pews for Sts Peter Paul. The pews are in excellent condition. It is estimated that the cost for new pews would be around \$75,000 - \$100,000. The pews are an unexpected and incredible gift for Sts Peter Paul. The donated pews need to be slightly modified in order to properly fit in the church. The cost to modify one row will be \$300-500. Please prayerfully consider donating one row. Please visit with one of our Parish Council Members or Father Jordan with any questions. Thank you



**JOIN PAN-ORTHODOX
TEENS AT HOLY
TRANSFIGURATION FOR.....**

BASEBALL AND COOKOUT!

TUESDAY JUNE 6 - AGES 12-18

**4:30PM - MEET AT HOLY TRANSFIGURATION (349 E 47TH
AVE, DENVER, CO 80216) FOR BURGERS AND HOTDOGS**

**6:15 PM - CARPOOL TO COORS FIELD FOR 6:40 PM GAME AGAINST
AL CHAMPION CLEVELAND INDIANS**

TICKETS \$7

RSVP: YOUTH@STCATHERINECHURCH.ORG

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