

**Holy Assumption Orthodox Church**  
*Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith*

110 EAST MAIN STREET,  
Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector

Rectory: (419) 798-4591

Father Peter's cell: (607) 206-5523

E-mail: [info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org](mailto:info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org)

Father Peter's email: [frpetertomas@yahoo.com](mailto:frpetertomas@yahoo.com)

website: [www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org](http://www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org)



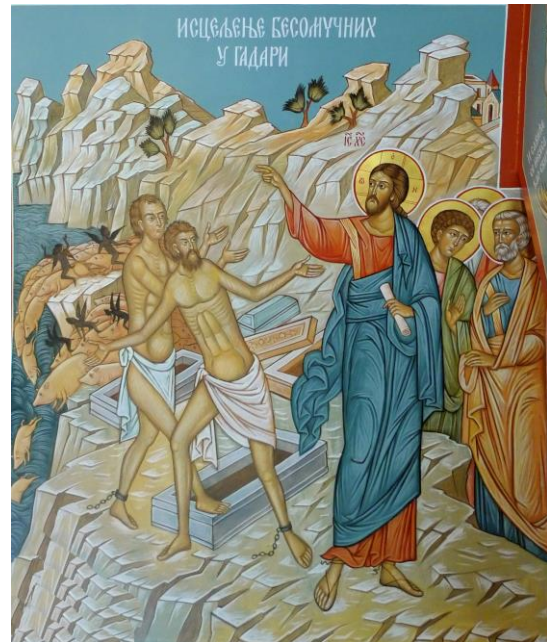
***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,  
Diocese of the Midwest***

**JULY 13, 2025**

**FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST  
FATHERS OF THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS**

**EPISTLE: Rom 10:1-10**

Brethren, my heart's desire, and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, "The man who does those things shall live by them." But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, 'Who will descend into the abyss?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth in your heart" (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.



**Jesus heals 2 demon possessed men**

**EPISTLE: Hebrews 13:7-16**

Brethren: Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore, Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore, let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

### **GOSPEL: Mt 8:28-9:1**

At that time, Jesus came to the other side, to the country of the Gergesenes, there met Him two demon-possessed men, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that no one could pass that way. And suddenly they cried out, saying, "What have we to do with You, Jesus, You Son of God? Have You come here to torment us before the time?" Now a good way off from them there was a herd of many swine feeding. So, the demons begged Him, saying, "If You cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of swine." And He said to them, "Go." So, when they had come out, they went into the herd of swine. And suddenly the whole herd of swine ran violently down the steep place into the sea, and perished in the water. Then those who kept them fled; and they went away into the city and told everything, including what had happened to the demon-possessed men. And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus. And when they saw Him, they begged Him to depart from their region. So, He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city.

### **GOSPEL: Jn 17:1-13**

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

<b>MON. July 14</b>	Apostle Aquila of the Seventy; Rom 16:17-24, 16:21, Mt 13:10-23
<b>TUE. July 15</b>	Great Prince Vladimir, Equal of the Apostles; 1 Cor 1:1-9, Mt 13:24-30
<b>WED. July 16</b>	Hieromartyr Athenogenes; 1 Cor 2:9-3:8, Mt 13:31-36
<b>THU. July 17</b>	Great Martyr Marina of Antioch; 1 Cor 3:18-23, Mt 13:36-43
<b>FRI. July 18</b>	Martyr Emilian of Silistria in Bulgaria; 1 Cor 4:5-8, Mt 13:44-54
<b>SAT. July 19</b>	Uncovering of the relics of Venerable Seraphim of Sarov; Rom 9:1-5, Mt 9:18-26
<b>4:00 PM</b>	<b>VESPERS</b>
<b>SUN. July 20</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, <i>Holy Prophet Elijah, Tone 5</i></b>
<b>9:10 AM</b>	<b>HOURS</b>
<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>DIVINE LITURGY</b> Followed by Coffee Hour



## FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**Bobbie Royhab**, 148 Cottage Cove Drive, Marblehead, OH 43440; **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Irene Vangeloff**, 3580 Shaw Ave., Apt. 305, Cincinnati, OH 45208

## PRAYER LIST

**Parishioners & Family:** Rachel and her unborn baby / Alex and her unborn baby / Kristen Cassell / Laura DeKemper / Tom Hileman / Cliff & Kathy Ruggles / Sandra / Renee Haynal / Sharon Shaheen (Patti Owen's sister) / Norb / Heidi Golob / Ron & Bobbie Royhab / Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Tom Hileman / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášová / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / James Bargdill / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

**Other Requests:** Catechumen Sessely / Catechumen Daniel / Catechumen Adam / Ron Ossivicki / Kristy Ackley / Steve Rohweder / Nicole Williams / John Couture / Don / Ann Turinsky / Marcia / Sarah King / Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Catechumen Nickolas Dawenport / Catechumen Joshua Paull / Catechumen Danielle Paull / Catechumen Wrenley Paull / Arimus Paull / Linkoln Paull / Catechumen Ryan Stamp / Matushka Melania / Sharyn Osborne / Christine Zahm / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Susanne / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čizmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

**Military:** Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



## JULY REPOSED

Mary Danchisen (1927) No date provided; Michael Wolf (1929) No date provided; Triantafilos Lefas (1995) No date provided; **2-** John Danchisen (2009); **6-** Anna Mazur (1969); **6-** Joseph Golob Jr (2006); **7-** Mary Martha Glovinsky (1975); **9-** Andrew Holodnak (1971); **10-** Gretta Gresh (2018); **14-** John Gulla (1968); **20-** Mitered Archpriest Sava Chaly (1991)

Former Pastor; **21-** Anna Mazurik (1973); **27-** Father Vladimir Meschersky (1937) Former Pastor; **29-** Sally Franklin (2018); **29-** Robert Zgonc (2018); **29-** Charles Hagmaier (2018)

---



## VIGILS FOR JULY 6

**Susan Guzy 1** Special Intentions

**Laura Kovach 3** For health and/or healing of Bobbie R., Kristi A., Ron O., Peggy S., Ann T., Alex M., Nick S., Mike T., Matushka Melania, Ron R., Betty K., Margaret M., Hannah S., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Irene V, and Heidi & Wayne G.

Safe travel for family

Special Intentions

**Sandy Martin 1** Special Intentions

**Natalie Twarek 9** God's blessing to our new catechumens Sessely, Dan and Adam, For the health of Danielle, For the health and recovery of Bobbie, For the health & recovery of Matushka Melania, For the health and recovery on Marilyn, Tom, Kathy & Cliff, Steve, Basil, Ron, Irene, Rodney, Betty, Carol, Kayla, Pam, Jim, Heidi, Wayne, Nicole, Peggy, Ann, Laura, Mike, Marcia, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara, and Walter, For the health of Nick, Jen, Tony, Father David, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, Special intentions

---



## JULY CANDLE SPONSORS

**Altar Candles:** Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Ryan & Natalia Stamp, Birthday remembrance of +William Stamp (July 16<sup>th</sup>) (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, In birthday memory of Susan (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** Available (**\$20**)

---



## ATTENDANCE

**07/05** Vespers, 7 attending (2 guests); **06/29** Divine Liturgy, **48** attending (21 guests)

---



## READERS LIST

Sunday Jul 13 – Joe

Sunday Jul 20 – Tim

Sunday Jul 27 – Jake

---



## JULY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**8** – Josh Paull; **16** – Peter & Stephanie Kowal Anniversary (31); **23** – Fr. Peter Ordination (1995); **27** – Greg & Natalie Twarek Anniversary (51); **30** – Tim & Jennifer Heffernan Anniversary; **30** – Dale & Angela Bricker Anniversary

---



## 68<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL HALUPKI FESTIVAL

Festival raffle tickets are available. We are asking each parish household to sell at least 20 raffle tickets at \$5 each.

Please ask your friends and family 'how many tickets they would like to purchase,' not **if** they want any... approach is everything! Thank you in advance for your help!

---



## CHARITY OF THE MONTH

"Zoe for Life" is the charity we donate to for the month of July.

---



## COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

July 13 - Valerie  
 July 20 - Natalia & Ryan  
 July 27 - Donna  
 Aug 3 - Available  
 Aug 10 - Sessely & Dan Maciejewski

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall



## SUNDAY OFFERING

### Sunday, July 6, 2025

Tithe	\$1,927.00
Donations	\$ 242.00
Candles	\$ 61.00
Vigils	\$ 90.00
Zoe for life (July)	\$ 225.00
Altar candles	\$ 50.00
Candles at the Cross	<u>\$ 25.00</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$2,620.00</b>

*May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!*

## UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDAR



**July 14<sup>th</sup>** – Baking Day 8:00 am (*Monday*)

**July 15<sup>th</sup>** – Baking Day 8:00 am (*Tuesday*)

**July 14<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup>** – 21<sup>st</sup> All American Council, Phoenix AZ (*Monday - Friday*)

**July 26<sup>th</sup>** – Market Day (*Saturday*)



## ANNUAL PEACH FESTIVAL

The Annual Peach Festival, sponsored by Women of St. John and St. Paul Lutheran Church will take place on Saturday, August 9<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 – 6:30 pm, at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Marblehead, in fellowship hall. The menu will include mouth-watering peaches, ice cream, brats, hot dogs, sloppy joes, beans, soup, chips, pies, and other desserts. This year's event will also include live music, a craft table, a bake sale, car show and flea market. *See the flyer on the bulletin board!*



## MARKET DAY

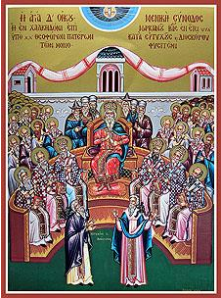
Our sincere thanks are extended to the following parishioners who helped with our Market Day yesterday, July 12<sup>th</sup>; Laura, David, Stephanie, Tim, Tina, Sue, Sessely & Daniel, Judy, Mimi, Sandy, and Mat. Michelle. The gross income from the sale was **\$3,386.39**. May Our Lord reward you all abundantly for your time and energy with good health, peace, and happiness!

Our next Market Day will take place next Saturday, **July 26<sup>th</sup>** starting with set up at **8:00 AM**. We will have perohi, kielbasa and kraut, spanakopita, and a large variety of baked goods. Your help is greatly appreciated!



## CLEANING SCHEDULE

Jul 14, Bobbie  
Jul 21, Natalie  
Jul 28, Basil & Tim  
Aug 4, Susan



### Fathers of the First Six Councils

Commemorated on July 13

The Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils.

In the Ninth Article of the Nicea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith proclaimed by the holy Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, we confess our faith in “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.” By virtue of the catholic nature of the Church, an Ecumenical Council is the Church’s supreme authority, and possesses the competence to resolve major questions of church life. An Ecumenical Council is comprised of archpastors and pastors of the Church, and representatives of all the local Churches, from every land of the “oikumene” (i.e. from all the whole inhabited world).

The Orthodox Church acknowledges Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils:

The First Ecumenical Council (Nicea I) (May 29, and also on seventh Sunday after Pascha) was convened in the year 325 against the heresy of Arius, in the city of Nicea in Bithynia under Saint Constantine the Great, Equal of the Apostles.

The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I) (May 22) was convened in the year 381 against the heresy of Macedonias, by the emperor Theodosius the Great.

The Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus) (September 9) was convened in the year 431 against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon) (July 16) was convened in the year 451, against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian.

The Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) (July 25) “Concerning the Three Chapters,” was convened in the year 553, under the emperor Justinian the Great.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) (January 23) met during the years 680-681, to fight the Monothelite heresy, under the emperor Constantine Pogonatos.

The fact that the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicea II) is not commemorated today testifies to the antiquity of today’s celebration. The Seventh Council, commemorated on the Sunday nearest to October 11, was convened at Nicea in the year 787 against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene.

The Church venerates the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because Christ has established them as “lights upon the earth,” guiding us to the true Faith. “Clad in the garment of truth,” the doctrine of the Fathers, based upon the preaching of the Apostles, has established one faith for the Church. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible.

The Orthodox Church’s conciliar definitions of dogma have the highest authority, and such definitions always begin with the Apostolic formula: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15: 28). The Ecumenical Councils were always convened for a specific reason: to combat false opinions and heresies, and to clarify the Orthodox Church’s teaching. But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the

dogmas, the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind of the Church, and are given precision by the holy Fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. The Church, in expounding its dogmas, is dealing with the concerns of a given historical moment, “not revealing everything in haste and thoughtlessly, nor indeed, ultimately hiding something” (Saint Gregory the Theologian).

A brief summary of the dogmatic theology of the First Six Ecumenical Councils is formulated and contained in the First Canon of the Council of Trullo (also known as Quinisext), held in the year 692. The 318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council are spoken of in this Canon I of Trullo as having: “with unanimity of faith revealed and declared to us the consubstantiality of the three Persons of the Divine nature and, ... instructing the faithful to adore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with one worship, they cast down and dispelled the false teaching about different degrees of Divinity.”

The 150 Holy Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council left their mark on the theology of the Church concerning the Holy Spirit, “repudiating the teaching of Macedonius, as one who wished to divide the inseparable Unity, so that there might be no perfect mystery of our hope.”

The 200 God-bearing Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council expounded the teaching that “Christ, the Incarnate Son of God is One.” They also confessed that “she who bore Him without seed was the spotless Ever-Virgin, glorifying her as truly the Mother of God.

The 630 Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council decreed that “the One Christ, the Son of God... must be glorified in two natures.”

The 165 God-bearing Holy Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council “in synod anathematized and repudiated Theodore of Mopsuestia (the teacher of Nestorius), and Origen, and Didymus, and Evagrius, renovators of the Hellenic teaching about the transmigration of souls and the transmutation of bodies and the impieties they raised against the resurrection of the dead.”

The 170 Holy Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council “taught that we ought to confess two natural volitions, or two wills [trans. note: one divine, and the other human], and two natural operations (energies) in Him Who was incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ, our true God.”

In decisive moments of Church history, the holy Ecumenical Councils promulgated their dogmatic definitions, as trustworthy delimitations in the spiritual battle for the purity of Orthodoxy, which will last until such time, as “all shall come into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph. 4: 13). In the struggle with new heresies, the Church does not abandon its former dogmatic concepts nor replace them with some sort of new formulations. The dogmatic formulae of the Holy Ecumenical Councils need never be superseded, they remain always contemporary to the living Tradition of the Church. Therefore the Church proclaims:

“The faith of all in the Church of God hath been glorified by men, which were luminaries in the world, cleaving to the Word of Life, so that it be observed firmly, and that it dwell unshakably until the end of the ages, conjointly with their God-bestown writings and dogmas. We reject and we anathematize all whom they have rejected and anathematized, as being enemies of Truth. And if anyone does not cleave to nor admit the aforementioned pious dogmas, and does not teach or preach accordingly, let him be anathema” (Canon I of the Council of Trullo).

In addition to their dogmatic definitions, the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils exerted great efforts towards the strengthening of church discipline. Local Councils promulgated their disciplinary canons according to the circumstances of the time and place, frequently differing among themselves in various particulars.

The universal unity of the Orthodox Church required unity also in canonical practice, i.e. a conciliar deliberation and affirmation of the most important canonical norms by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils. Thus, according to conciliar judgment, the Church has accepted: 20 Canons from the First, 7 Canons from the Second, 8 Canons from the Third, and 30 Canons from the Fourth Ecumenical Synods. The Fifth and the Sixth Councils concerned themselves only with resolving dogmatic questions, and did not leave behind any disciplinary canons.

The need to establish in codified form the customary practices during the years 451-680, and ultimately to compile a canonical codex for the Orthodox Church, occasioned the convening of a special Council, which was wholly devoted to the general application of churchly rules. This was convened in the year 692. The Council “in the Imperial Palace” or “Under the Arches” (in Greek “en trullo”), came to be called the Council in Trullo. It is also called the “Quinisext” [meaning the “fifth and sixth”], because it is considered to have completed the activities of the Fifth and Sixth Councils, or rather that it was simply a direct continuation of the Sixth Ecumenical Council itself, separated by just a few years.

The Council in Trullo, with its 102 Canons (more than of all the Ecumenical Synods combined), had a tremendous significance in the history of the canonical theology of the Orthodox Church. It might be said that the Fathers of this Council produced a complete compilation of the basic codex from the relevant sources for the Orthodox Church’s canons. Listing through in chronological order, and having been accepted by the Church the Canons of the Holy Apostles, and the Canons of the Holy Ecumenical and the Local Councils and of the holy Fathers, the Trullo Council declared: “Let no one be permitted to alter or to annul the aforementioned canons, nor in place of these put forth, or to accept others, made of spurious inscription” (2nd Canon of the Council in Trullo).

Church canons, sanctified by the authority of the first Six Ecumenical Councils (including the rules of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, and the Constantinople Councils of 861 and 879, which were added later under the holy Patriarch Photius), form the basis of THE RUDDER, or KORMCHAYA KNIGA (a canon law codex known as “Syntagma” or “Nomokanon” in 14 titles). In its repository of grace is expressed a canonical norm, a connection to every era, and a guide for all the local Orthodox Churches in churchly practice.

New historical conditions can lead to the change of some particular external aspect of the life of the Church. This makes creative canonical activity necessary in the conciliar reasoning of the Church, in order to reconcile the external norms of churchly life with historical circumstances. The details of canonical regulation are not fully developed for the various eras of churchly organization all at once. With every push to either forsake the literal meaning of a canon, or to fulfill and develop it, the Church again and again turns for reasoning and guidance to the eternal legacy of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, to the inexhaustible treasury of dogmatic and canonical truths.



---

### **Navigating the Path to Confession after Grave Sins** **by Archpriest Konstantin Lisnyak**

What steps should one take after committing sins that weigh heavily on the conscience, leading to avoidance of confession? It’s a dilemma faced by many, marked by a deep sense of shame towards one’s parish priest and the act of confession itself. Is seeking absolution from an unfamiliar priest in a different church a viable solution, or should one confront this internal struggle head-on? How detailed must one be when confessing

such sins, and why is it crucial not to postpone confession?

Archpriest Konstantin Lisnyak, dean of the Soledar district, addresses these concerns:

The crux of this issue often lies in deceitful shame, a barrier particularly common among newcomers to the faith, those taking their initial steps on their spiritual journey. This fear of confession can lead to avoidance of church attendance within one's own community. It's not uncommon for individuals, regardless of their status or societal role, to feel apprehensive about participating in services locally, opting instead for the anonymity of distant monasteries to confess their most burdensome sins. They might undertake severe penances there, only to return to their regular priest with a superficial confession that glosses over the specifics of their actions, summarizing their sins as committed "in deed, word, and thought."

Such behavior reflects a form of deceit, a strategy to sidestep full accountability before God and the sanctity of the sacraments. The advice here is straightforward: eschew dishonesty with both God and oneself. The sacrament of confession should not be approached with evasion but with sincerity and openness.

### Guidance for Approaching Confession with Grave Sins

When grappling with the aftermath of serious sins and contemplating confession, several key considerations emerge:

1. **Confession Does Not Require Details:** It's vital to understand that detailing sins is unnecessary and, in some cases, inappropriate. Certain clergy, in their inquiries for specifics, may inadvertently encourage sin, especially during the confessions of the young. The holy fathers caution against detailing shameful sins, advising instead that they be acknowledged simply and directly. For instance, one may admit to fornication or adultery without delving into the specifics of how, when, and with whom. The intricacies of sin are beyond the priest's purview and should remain unexplored.
2. **The Importance of Regular Confession:** Maintaining a consistent practice of confession and Holy Communion is crucial. Frequent participation helps prevent the development of barriers to confession. Human nature is such that unused faculties diminish over time. The gap between sinning and confessing can harden the heart, leading to a state the Holy Fathers termed "stony insensitivity," i. e., absolute indifference. To avoid this, sin should be followed promptly by repentance.
3. **Preparation for Confession:** Approach confession as you would a doctor's appointment. Withholding symptoms from a doctor prevents accurate diagnosis and treatment, just as omitting sins from confession impedes spiritual healing. Remember, priests, seasoned in their ministry, are familiar with the breadth of human frailty and sin and are unlikely to be taken aback by your confessions.
4. **The Priest as a Guide, Not a Judge:** If your priest embodies the qualities of a genuine and understanding shepherd, he will welcome your efforts to confess and receive God's grace. Imagine confession as the cleansing of a neglected room, transforming it into a space fit for living and working. The Lord is already aware of your sins; confession is your dialogue with God, with the priest serving merely as a witness to your repentance. Do not elevate the priest to an unrealistic pedestal of holiness or fear him; he, too, is human, albeit with greater responsibilities.

In essence, hiding from God, as Adam did after the fall, is futile. Instead, step forward with the admission, "Yes, I have sinned, I am guilty! Forgive me, I repent!" In doing so, you open yourself to the divine assistance necessary for life's amendment.

### Seeking Confession with another Priest: Charting Spiritual Guidance

Faced with the dilemma of confessing grave sins, especially when the parish priest is a close acquaintance, one might ponder the appropriateness of seeking absolution from a different priest. This

situation necessitates choosing the lesser of two evils. If the barrier to confession is insurmountable due to personal connections, seeking another priest becomes a practical solution. However, this approach should be evaluated through the lens of spiritual maturity.

For those at the nascent stages of their spiritual journey, a degree of leniency can be afforded. It's permissible, under such circumstances, to confess elsewhere. Yet, this should not become a habitual escape, as it verges on duplicity before God. Mature believers recognize that such evasion mirrors the incoherence of spiritual infancy.

It's crucial to remember that confession isn't about enumerating sins with precision or employing theologically precise terminology. True confession emanates from a heart of genuine contrition, an internal state known to God. Often, a simple but heartfelt acknowledgment of sin, "I have sinned before God, I repent," suffices. The essence of confession is preceded by the laborious process of repentance—a journey of recognizing, lamenting, and forsaking sin, leading to a profound self-repudiation of one's transgressions.

Repentance is the lengthy preamble to the brief moment of confession, a transformation already underway before one speaks to the priest. The culmination of this spiritual journey is the priest's pronouncement of absolution, a moment that transcends the spoken words to touch the penitent's soul deeply.

This process is illustrated by the story of an officer who, overwhelmed by his sins, claimed indifference to shame. Yet, when asked to publicly confess before the congregation, he found himself moved to tears by their empathetic response. This poignant moment underscores that confession is less about the specifics and more about the sincerity and remorse that animate the act of seeking forgiveness.

#### Embracing Confession without Reserve: The Path to Spiritual Renewal

The act of confession transcends the mere disclosure of actions; its essence lies in the contrition of the heart. A person's detailed account of sin, devoid of genuine remorse, does not constitute true repentance. Confession is not just recounting events; it is a profound sacrament and a divine grace, a process of spiritual cleansing akin to a second baptism as described by some holy fathers. Thus, approaching confession as a mere formality empties it of its sacred purpose.

To those burdened by serious or humiliating sins, courage, heartfelt repentance, and consistent confession are crucial. For individuals hesitant to confess out of shame, the real challenge is spiritual maturity. As one progresses in their spiritual journey, the fear of judgement—either from the priest or others—diminishes. The true fear should be of sin itself and the complacency of remaining in a "muddy" state without striving for purification.

Confession should be seen as a liberating opportunity to cleanse one's soul, not as an ordeal of judgement. It's a healing process, akin to a medical treatment where the physician does not berate the patient for their ailment but focuses on the path to recovery. Similarly, a priest does not judge or punish but seeks ways to assist and rejoices in the penitent's desire for repentance.

In essence, confession is about honesty with oneself and God, about seeking redemption and opening the heart to divine mercy, a critical "medical procedure" for the soul where the ultimate goal is healing and transformation. It's a step towards spiritual growth, a chance to rise from the mud of sin and embrace the grace offered by God.