



## **St Paul the Apostle Orthodox Church**

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Priest Silouan Cohen

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## **Week of January 26, 2025**

**Sunday, January 26**

THIRTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. TONE 6. NEW  
MARTYRS AND CONFESSORS OF RUSSIA.

**9:05am** -The 3<sup>rd</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> hours

**9:30am** - Divine Liturgy

**11:30am** - Agape meal (coffee hour) *followed by the Annual Parish Meeting in the nave.*

## **This Sunday's Hymns and Readings**

### ***Tone 6      Troparion***

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

### ***Tone 4      Troparion***

Today the Church of Russia forms a chorus in joy, praising her new martyrs and confessors; hierarchs and priests, royal passion-bearers, right-believing princes and princesses, venerable men and women, and all Orthodox Christians. Having laid down their life for faith in Christ during the days of godless persecution, they preserved the truth by the shedding of blood. By their protection, O long-suffering Lord, preserve our land in Orthodoxy till the end of the age.

### ***Tone 6      Kontakion***

When Christ God, the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

### ***Tone 3      Kontakion***

Today the new martyrs of Rus stand in white robes before the Lamb of God, and with the angels they sing to God the hymn of victory: "Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and praise, and honor, and power, and strength be to our God unto the ages of ages. Amen."

### ***Tones 6 & 7      Prokeimena***

O Lord, save Thy people, / and bless Thine inheritance! *To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me!* -- God is our refuge and strength, a help in afflictions that severely befall us.

***Epistle***      1 Timothy 1:15-17 & Romans 8:28-39

### ***Tones 6 & 4      Alleluias***

*He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust." The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them and delivered them out of all their troubles.*

***Gospels***      Matthew 15:21-28 & Luke 21:8-19

## This Week's Schedule

*Monday, January 27.* Translation of the relics of Saint John the Golden-mouth, archbishop of Constantinople.

- **No services or offices hours**

*Tuesday, January 28.* Venerable Ephrem the Syrian. Saint Isaac the Syrian, bishop of Nineveh.

- **9:30am - 11:30am Fr Silouan's office hours**

*Wednesday, January 29.* Translation of the relics of the hieromartyr, Ignatius, the God-bearer and bishop of Antioch.

- **2:30pm - 5:30pm Fr Silouan's office hours**
- **6:00pm - 9<sup>th</sup> hour with daily vespers**

*Thursday, January 30.* Synaxis of the Ecumenical Teachers: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John the Golden-mouth.

- **No office hours or services**

*Friday, January 31.* Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries, Cyrus and John, and those with them.

- **No services or office hours.**

*Saturday, February 1.* Forefeast of the Meeting of the Lord. Martyr Tryphon of Lampsacus Near Apamea in Syria. Venerable Brigid of Ireland.

- **5:00pm 9<sup>th</sup> hour with Great Vespers**

## Announcements

### *House blessings (updated)*

The sign-up sheet will remain posted on the bulletin board of the narthex **until February 2, 2025**. Please sign up ASAP if you have not already. If you live outside of Grayson County, however, or the suggested times truly do not work for you, contact me directly to schedule. Before I arrive, please make sure your home is clean, all electronic devices are turned off, your prayer corner is neat, and you have a candle and a list of *immediate* living and departed ready. No meal or honorarium is expected, but you may provide either one if you wish.

### *Annual meeting*

This is the final reminder that our Annual Parish Meeting is **Sunday, January 26**. Following a shortened coffee hour, we will return to the nave for our meeting. Please, bring a chair with you from the activity center to sit down. The agenda mainly consists of the following: *Priest's Report, Warden's Report, Treasurer's Report, presentation of newly elected parish council*. All are encouraged to attend, but only members are allowed to vote (recall the defining terms of membership on your Time, Talent, and Treasure cards).

### *Confession and office hours*

Eventually, confessions will be heard only in my office, as I would like to keep the Nave as a place only for the words of the divine services and the proclamation of the scriptures. When that time comes (that is, when my office is ready) I will notify everyone. For now, confession will continue to be heard in the nave as usual. **Confession is not available Sunday morning except for emergencies!**

My office hours are included in the weekly schedule. These are times when I will be at the church working in my office. You are free to come by and just talk with me if you would like. It is also a time you can come and pray in the church. Just stop by and let me know and I will let you in. **My office hours are for confession as well.**

## A Word from the Fathers

“When one undertakes to examine Scripture in an idle, intellectual way, he creates hatred and quarrelling. Why? Because the intellectual approach to Scripture does not help us to turn and reflect on our sins but instead makes us focus on problems and concepts related to the study of Scripture, with the result that our logical and intellectual faculties are aroused to no real purpose.

“Knowledge” by itself does not add anything. On the contrary, it encourages the cultivation of the individual and his private sense of things; it fosters the self-sufficiency of his personal opinions, which he then seeks to justify and impose on others. This kind of approach to Scripture immediately places you in conflict with others; it opposes your will and opinion to theirs, prompting you to disagree and argue with them, and to make enemies of your brothers. Filled as I am with my own opinions about things, I am not able to receive anything from God.

The correct way is to read Scripture with simplicity and to allow God to tell us what He wants to tell us. It’s one thing to read Scripture because you want to collect information, and another thing to read it because you want to acquire its true content, that is, the Holy Spirit. This kind of knowledge is the life of God (cf. Jn 17:3), the entry and extension of God into our life; it is God’s descent and dwelling among us. We can judge whether or not our study of Scripture is authentic based on the number of tears we shed when we study. To be sure, I can also read Scripture without shedding tears, and without a strong sense of my sins, but with the hope that God’s grace, through my reading of Scripture, will break open my hardened heart. Read Scripture, then, but don’t forget about your sins and reduce Scripture to an object of intellectual inquiry, for at that point it ceases being the word of God and you start seeing it as something human. The criterion for your study should be this: the way you read the Bible should bring peace to your heart, communion with God, love of neighbors, and the consciousness of your own sinfulness: the recognition of how unworthy and ill-prepared you are to stand before God.

- **Elder Aimilianos, *On Abba Isaiah* (trans. Fr. Maximos [Constas])**

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