

# St. James Weekly Email Messenger

*Week of August 29 – September 4, 2010*

---

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ.....*

The Feast of the Beheading of the Holy Forerunner is a day of profound solemnity; it is a day on which we honor with great respect the one who prepared the way for the Lord Jesus by speaking the truth in love, and who suffered martyrdom for doing so.

I have been thinking of this phrase, *truth in love*, which St. Paul used in his letter to the Ephesians (4:15). It is a phrase that describes exactly what the Holy Forerunner did, and yet at the same time it is so easily misunderstood. To speak the truth is one thing, but to speak the truth in love is something yet again: it can only be done by those who first discern the truth about themselves, and who submit in humility to the One Who is Truth; and, it can only be done by those who are ready to sacrifice themselves for the good of the other.

To speak the truth to others means that we accept the truth about ourselves. This requires honest self examination, ruthless inventorying of who we are and how we have fallen short of the image of God within us. To speak the truth about others either in correction or in judgment is merely to give vent to our resentments in the arrogance of our own delusion unless we have somehow come to a realization of our own brokenness and our absolute inability to heal ourselves first. This is, to be sure, an important part of what our Lord meant when He said, *Judge not lest ye be judged*. To judge others even in truth may never be done unless we have first judged ourselves, i.e., unless we have first discerned the truth about ourselves, and given ourselves over to God to heal us. To see the truth about ourselves and to accept it always leads to humility; and, only those who are humble *can* speak the truth in love.

To speak the truth in love is to speak the truth in a way that seeks to edify the other; it is to sacrifice one's own resentments or opinions for the good of the other. Love is always an action of sacrifice for the good of the other. It is what our Lord's entire Life on earth was about, and it is what the Holy Forerunner did when he spoke the truth in love to Herod.

Herod was the King of Israel, guilty of a terrible action that brought shame upon the people of the entire nation of God's people. His adulterous marriage to the wife of his brother was a repudiation of the most basic principles that the people of Israel lived by. John, the Gospel tells us, spoke to Herod directly. He spoke righteously and personally to Herod. He did not gossip or tell tales to others; he went to Herod in person and spoke the truth in love, for the good of the people and for the good of Herod also. And amazingly, St. Mark in the lesson we heard yesterday says that Herod *feared John*, but that he also *heard him gladly*.

This is the way it is when the truth is told to us by one who has first discerned it within himself, and who is able in humility to speak it in love. And this, among other things, is what this solemn and great feast of

the Holy Forerunner should show us. To speak the truth in love can only be done if we first look at ourselves honestly, take careful inventory of who we are and how we have fallen short of the beauty of God's image within us. Seeing and accepting the truth about ourselves will lead us to humility, and in humility, only then will we be able to do what so few of us can do now: sacrifice our opinions and resentments, our desires and our selfish judgments to speak the truth in love for the good of the other. This, Brothers and Sisters, is the task before all of us!

---

**This Week at St. James offers the following schedule of meetings and Divine Services:**

- **Wednesday, September 1, 2010**
  - **6 PM: Prayers**
  
- **Saturday, September 4, 2010**
  - **3 PM: Parish Picnic in Hampstead, MD**
  - **6 PM: Great Vespers at picnic site**
  
- **Sunday, September 5, 2010: The 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost and the Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross**
  - **8:30 AM: *Prayers of Preparation***
  - **9 AM *Matins***
  - **10 AM: *Divine Liturgy***
    - ***Prayers of Thanksgiving***
    - **Fellowship Hour and Bible Study**

**News and Events at St. James:**

- **ALL ATTACHMENTS** are hyperlinks. Click on the hyperlinks for the documents indicated:
  - **September prayer list:**  
<http://stjamesorthodoxchurch.org/schedule/1009PrayerRequests.pdf>
  
  - **September calendar:**  
<http://stjamesorthodoxchurch.org/schedule/1009Calendar.pdf>
  
  - **Fasting guidelines:**  
<http://StJamesOrthodoxChurch.org/schedule/FastingChart.pdf>
  
  - **Daily Bible Readings from Bishop BASIL's cathedral in the publication *Dynamis*:**  
<http://www.dynamispublications.org>
  
  - **St. James Directory (encrypted):**  
<http://stjamesorthodoxchurch.org/schedule/SJOC2010.pdf>
  
  - **Bishop THOMAS' letter about the St. Thekla Pilgrimage:**  
<http://stjamesorthodoxchurch.org/schedule/StTheklaPilgrimage.pdf>

- **Parish picnic hyperlinks:**  
**The North Carroll Pavilion:** <http://northcarrollfarmshoa.org/amenities.php>  
**Driving Directions:** <http://stjamesorthodoxchurch.org/schedule/2010Picnic.pdf>
- **Sunday School** at St. James will begin again on **Sunday, September 5. On Saturday, September 4 we will come together for our parish picnic.** The picnic (from 3 PM to Vespers at 6 PM) will be held once again at the picnic grove, the North Carroll Pavilion, near the Williams' residence in Hampstead, MD. I will meet to form a car train from the church parking lot at 2:30 PM on Saturday. See the hyperlinks above for directions. If possible, families attending should try and bring four things; if you cannot do so, come anyway without them! There will be enough for all:
  - A package of *either* hamburgers or hotdogs to share
  - Rolls for whichever meat you choose to bring
  - A side dish or a dessert to share
  - A bottle of juice or some other beverage to share

I will see that a cooler with ice, plates, cups, utensils, water, napkins, ketchup and mustard, charcoal and lighter are brought from the church. Anything else you wish to bring and share will be appreciated as well.

- Please read the letter from Bishop THOMAS about the **St. Thekla pilgrimage** near the end of September. The hyperlink to that letter is above in the list of hyperlinks.
- **MANY YEARS** those who have already provided enough Prosfora for us. I will ask for Prosfora from time to time from those who have offered to bake it.
- **Please continue to bring in canned, microwavable lunch items** that you can purchase in any local grocery store. Please do not bring home-made foods items or frozen items. The number of people who come to our church begging for food has been steadily increasing recently; please help me to put together a stock-pile for the needs of our homeless community outside the doors of our temple. Other items have been requested of late as well: feminine napkins, socks, underwear, band aids, individual juice or ice tea drinks, shampoo, razors, other personal hygiene items, etc. **We also need bleach for cleaning up the concrete walkway outside the church, and individual coffee bags for separate cups of coffee for the homeless who ask me for coffee; I use the Maxwell House "coffee tea-bags" for that purpose.**

Pray without cease, and pray for one another and for me, your unworthy priest!

In Christ,

+Fr. Elias

St. James Orthodox Church

Westminster, MD

<http://StJamesOrthodoxChurch.org>