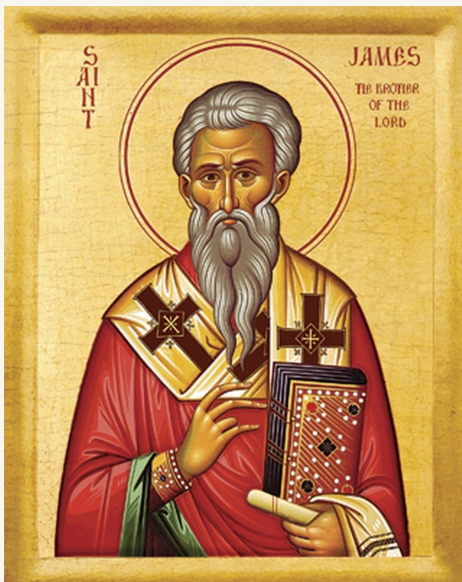


Orthodox Christian Fellowship at Penn State
Newsletter

10/22/2020

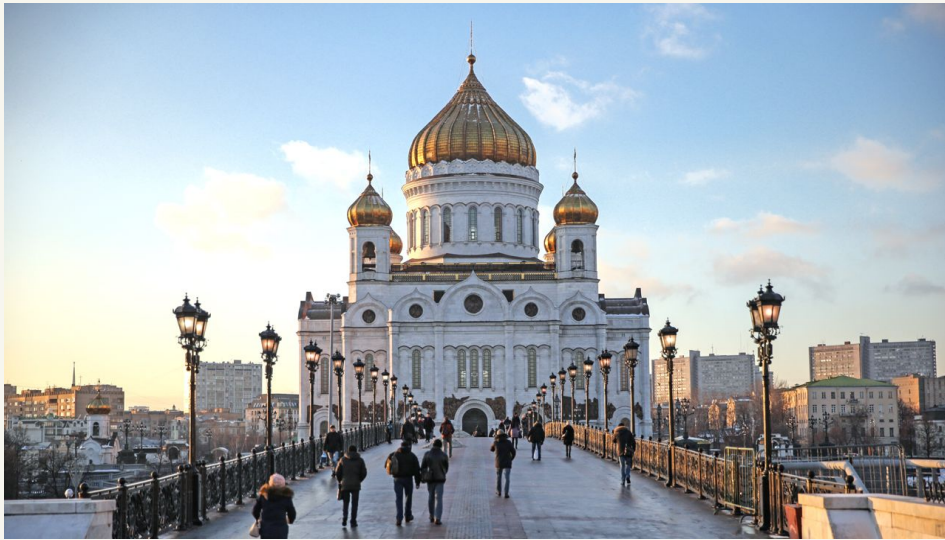


Featured Saint: Apostle James, Brother of the Lord



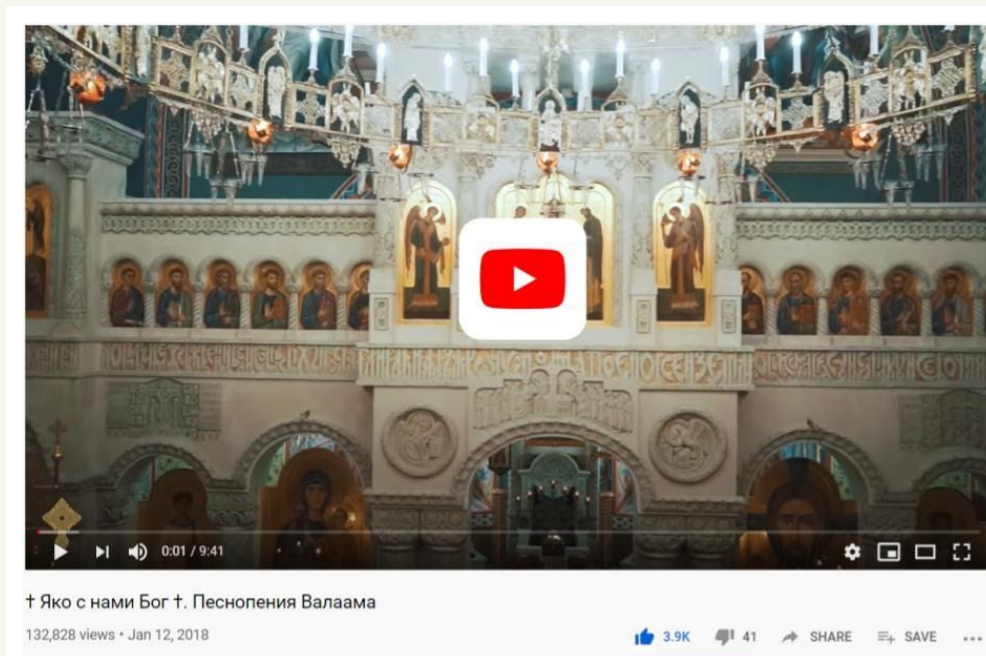
St. James is commemorated on October 23rd. St. James was the son of St. Joseph, making him the brother of the Lord. He became an apostle of Jesus and was the first bishop of Jerusalem. St. James presided over the Council of Jerusalem and converted many Jews to Christianity. He is the author of a Divine Liturgy-- his liturgy serves as the basis for the Liturgies of St. John Chrysostom and St. Basil. He wrote a book in the New Testament, the Epistle of St. James, and he was martyred in 63 A.D.

Orthodox churches around the world: Cathedral of Christ the Saviour



The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour is located in Moscow, Russia, and is the third tallest Orthodox Christian church building in the world. The current church is the second to stand on this site. When Napoleon Bonaparte retreated from Moscow, Tsar Alexander I declared in 1812 his intention to build a cathedral in honor and gratitude to Christ. The church building process started in 1839 and took several decades to finish. It was finished in 1883 but was later destroyed in 1931. The second building and current church building was rebuilt between 1995 and 2000. The Cathedral of Christ the Saviour is the most important and one of the most well-known cathedrals in Moscow. Many come from all over to visit this cathedral.

Hymn of the Week: For God is With Us



Typically sung during the Nativity vigil before Christmas day, this hymn is a joyous proclamation of Christ's presence among us. This version of the hymn is sung by the Valaam Monastery choir in Russian. The translation is below:

God is with us. Understand, all ye nations, and submit yourselves,
For God is with us
Submit yourselves, ye mighty ones: For God is with us.
If again ye shall rise up in your might, again shall ye be
overthrown: For God is with us.
If any take counsel together, them shall the Lord destroy: For God is
with us.
And the word which ye shall speak shall not abide in you: For God is
with us.
For we fear not your terror, neither are we troubled: For God is with
us
But the Lord our God, He it is to Whom we will ascribe holiness, and
Him shall we fear:
For God is with us.

Orthodoxy & "Cancel Culture" - Sister Vassa

In this short article, Sister Vassa discusses the Orthodox view on "Cancel Culture" and why this behavior is an unhealthy one to engage in. In the past, and even in the present, Christians have not chosen to participate in cancel culture regarding many different aspects of life. This includes the current calendar system which names days of the week after pagan gods. We also utilize sources and incorporate canons and hymns from other Christian groups. This especially applies to the argument of boycotting services such as Google and Netflix who provide a service but may have some "evil aspects" to them.

Read the full article below:

When I recently posted on Instagram about "Shtisel," a Netflix-series I enjoyed, one commentator under my post suggested that "everyone stand up against Netflix and remove or close your accounts." Because, he or she continued, "We are all complicit if we are watching Netflix and not protesting their movie..."

I have not watched, nor even heard of, the Netflix-movie mentioned in that commentator's remark. But here is why I, as an Orthodox Christian, would not cancel my Netflix-subscription because of it. And it's also why I wouldn't stop using Google or Amazon or Facebook, despite their evil aspects:

Traditionally, Christians have not embraced a "cancel culture," with regard to the most prominent and accessible technology and art of their time. They have rather used these to their benefit, in the light of Christian faith.

Take, for example, the technology that is the calendar. We as Christians call this weekday, on which I'm writing this post, "Wednesday," despite the fact that it is named after, and celebrates, the supreme Germanic god Wodin, husband of Friga, the Germanic goddess of love, after whom "Friday" is named. Have we, or any generations of Christian English-speakers before us, suggested "everyone stand up against" the pagan names of our weekdays? No. Instead, in my own Byzantine tradition, we fast on Wednesdays and Fridays, honoring the Cross and the Theotokos (the two themes of every Wednesday and Friday in the Byzantine liturgical week), the central mysteries of Christianity, even as we call these days "Wednesday" and "Friday" after pagan deities, without needing to "cancel" that pagan tradition, in order to live ours. Those of us who celebrate church-feasts according to the "Old" Julian Calendar have also christianized this pagan Julian calendar, introduced by a pagan Roman emperor, Julius Caesar, and inspired by the pagan mindset of his time.

Am I comparing "apples and oranges," by comparing using Netflix, Google, Amazon, etc., and using pagan calendar-systems? No. I'm comparing the most prominent and accessible non-Orthodox technologies of various times, which have provided us with the ability to function, be informed about, educated in, and survive in, "this world," even while we profess the truth of our faith. Because our Lord Jesus Christ willed it so, that we not be removed from this world, but be sanctified by truth, as He prayed to the Father: "I do not pray that You take them out of the world, but that You keep them from the evil one...Sanctify them in the truth." (Jn 17: 15, 17a)

Our tradition has also accepted, in part, the writings and other artistic contributions of un-canonical, apocryphal, and un-saintly sources. E.g., most of our Marian feasts (in honor of the Theotokos) are inspired by the apocryphal Protoevangelium of James; We have canons in our canonical codex that are authored by Pope Theophilus of Alexandria (+412), who among his other crimes persecuted St. John Chrysostom; We have a hymn in our liturgical services of Palm Sunday that is authored by the iconoclast Emperor Theophilus (+842), and so on.

My point is that we have no "cancel culture," which cancels or erases from our attention any source, be it pagan or heretical or even criminal, when it has something good to offer, which we can use, enlightened and sanctified by our faith and truth. And that's why I don't cancel my subscription to Netflix, and continue to use Google, Amazon, and the rest.

Featured Prayers

Prayer for the living:

O Lord Jesus Christ, our God, in Thy mercies and lovingkindness Thou regardest the humble prayers of all who call upon Thee with their whole heart; incline Thine ear and hear now my prayer, offered to Thee in humility:

Be Mindful, O Lord, of Thy Holy, Universal and Apostolic Church; confirm and strengthen her, increase her and keep her in peace, and preserve her unconquerable forever.

Be mindful, O Lord, of our bishop, (your bishop's name), and of every bishop of the Orthodox Church; the priests and deacons, and all the clergy of the Church, which Thou hast established to feed the flock

of Thy word; and by their prayers have mercy upon me and save me, a sinner.

Be mindful, O Lord, of all civil authorities, of our armed forces, of this city in which we reside, and of every city and the countryside; grant them peaceful times, that we, in their tranquility, may lead a calm and peaceful life in all godliness and sanctity.

Be mindful, O Lord, of my parents, (their names), of my brothers and sisters, (their names), of relatives, (their names), and of my friends, (their names); grant that they may have mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation, pardon and remission of their sins; that they may ever praise and glorify Thy Holy Name.

Be mindful, O Lord, of those who travel by land, by sea, and by air; of the old and young, the sick, the suffering, the sorrowing, the afflicted, the captives, the needy and the poor; and upon them all send forth Thy mercies, for Thou art the Giver of all good things.

Be mindful, O Lord, of me, Thy humble servant; grant me Thy grace, that I may be diligent and faithful, avoiding evil company and influence, resisting temptation; that I may lead a godly and righteous life, blameless and peaceful, ever serving Thee; that I may be accounted worthy of entering the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen.
