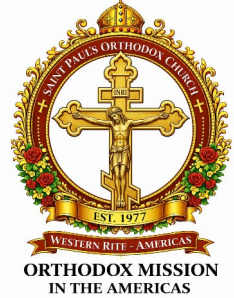




St. Paul's Orthodox Church

Monthly Gazette

October 2026



Parish News

We now have evening prayer every Wednesday evening. It starts with a light meal at 6:30 with evening prayer starting around 7:00 p.m.

In our Western Rite Orthodox parish, when a woman begins to feel drawn toward the monastic life, she brings that calling directly to our bishop. He listens to her carefully, not rushing, not treating her as unusual, but simply as someone seeking to give her whole life to Christ. We now have a nun in our parish.

Stevie Callaway is now Sister Francis Mary.



Stevie Callaway, who received the religious name Francis Mary, is following a call to religious life in the Western Orthodox Christian tradition. Her path has grown through prayer, worship, service, and a desire to place her life more fully in God's hands.

For 18 years, Stevie has cared for others through work in emergency medicine, hospital and laboratory settings, and primary care. She is also a licensed massage therapist and the founder of Arizona Balanced Bodyworks. Across these roles, she has sought to meet people with compassion, dignity, and attentive care.

Extremely personal hardships deepened Stevie's reliance on prayer and her commitment to serve. Drawn to the Benedictine way of life, she began formation in her church and received the name Francis Mary. She continues to discern her vocation through daily prayer, obedience, and service to her parish community.

Sister Francis Mary hopes to bring the same spirit of care that shaped her professional life to her religious calling: to be present with those who are hurting, to serve faithfully in ordinary tasks, and to grow in love of Yahweh, Yeshua, and the Holy Spirit, and in love for thy neighbor and all animals.

October Birthdays

None

October Anniversaries

None

Special Prayers

Mary M.

Jack

Calendar

The following is the calendar for October, 2026.

Holy Communion is every Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

Morning Prayer and Bible Study Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m.

Evening Prayer Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m.

October

4 - Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

7 - Morning Prayer and Bible Study 10:00 a.m.

7 – Evening Prayer 7:0 p.m.

11- Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

14 - Morning Prayer and Bible Study 10:00 a.m.

14 - Evening Prayer 7:00 p.m.

18 - Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

18 – St. Luke the Evangelist

21 - Morning Prayer and Bible Study 10:00 a.m.

21 - Evening Prayer 7:00 p.m.

25 - Holy Communion 10:30 a.m.

28 - Morning Prayer and Bible Study 10:00 a.m.

28 - Evening Prayer 7:00 p.m.

28 – St. Simon & St. Jude, Apostles

Special Dates

St. Luke the Evangelist

In the Western Rite, **St. Luke the Evangelist** is honored on **October 18** as the beloved physician, companion of St. Paul, and divinely inspired author of both the **Gospel according to Luke** and the **Acts of the Apostles**. His witness is treasured for its clarity, gentleness, and profound emphasis on the mercy of Christ.

His Identity: Physician, Disciple, and Historian of the Church

Tradition holds that Luke was a **Gentile from Antioch**, trained as a physician and skilled in Greek writing. St. Paul refers to him as “**the beloved physician**” (Col. 4:14) and notes that Luke remained faithfully at his side even during his final imprisonment.

In Western-Rite devotion, Luke’s medical background is not incidental. His Gospel shows a physician’s attentiveness to human suffering, portraying Christ as the divine healer whose mercy restores the broken, the poor, and the marginalized.

His Gospel: The Face of Christ’s Mercy

Luke’s Gospel is the longest of the four and is distinguished by its warm, pastoral tone. It contains:

- The Annunciation and Visitation
- The Magnificat
- The Good Samaritan

- The Prodigal Son
- Zacchaeus
- The disciples on the road to Emmaus

These passages—many found only in Luke—form the backbone of Western preaching on divine compassion and the universality of salvation. Luke writes with careful attention to eyewitness testimony, noting that he “traced everything accurately from the beginning,” a detail deeply valued in Western-Rite liturgical scholarship.

His Symbol: The Winged Ox

In Western tradition, the Evangelists are represented by the four living creatures of Ezekiel and Revelation. St. Luke’s symbol is the **Winged Ox**, signifying **sacrifice**. This is because his Gospel opens with the priestly ministry of Zechariah in the Temple—an unmistakable cue to the sacrificial mystery fulfilled in Christ. Western commentators from St. Jerome to St. Gregory the Great affirm this symbolism.

His Role in the Acts of the Apostles

Luke’s second volume, **Acts**, is the Church’s earliest history, chronicling the spread of the Gospel from Jerusalem to Rome. The “we-sections” of Acts reveal Luke’s presence during portions of St. Paul’s missionary journeys, including the voyage to Malta and Paul’s imprisonment.

For Western-Rite Orthodox Christians, Acts is cherished as the narrative of the Church’s apostolic foundation, the descent of the Holy Spirit, and the first proclamation of the Kingdom.

His Legacy: Evangelist of Tenderness and Truth

Western tradition remembers Luke as:

- **Evangelist of Christ's mercy**
- **Historian of the early Church**
- **Physician of souls**
- **Patron of artists**, due to the ancient tradition that he painted the first icon of the Theotokos
- **Faithful companion of St. Paul**

He is believed to have died at the age of **84**, “full of the Holy Spirit,” and was later venerated in Greece and Constantinople.

Western-Rite Liturgical Note

Unlike the feasts of some Apostles, St. Luke's feast is kept **without a vigil**, reflecting the Western tradition that he died not as a martyr but as a confessor—a witness by life and teaching rather than by blood.

St. Simon and St. Jude, Apostles

The Western Rite commemorates **St. Simon and St. Jude** together on **October 28**, honoring them as steadfast Apostles who proclaimed Christ in lands marked by hardship, division, and spiritual darkness. Their shared feast reflects the ancient tradition that they labored side-by-side and, according to early Christian memory, sealed their witness with martyrdom in Persia.

St. Simon the Zealot

St. Simon is called *the Zealot* (Luke 6:15), a title that likely refers either to his earlier association with the Jewish Zealot movement or to his fervent zeal for the Law of God. In Western tradition, Simon's conversion is seen as a sign of Christ's power to transform human passion into holy devotion.

His apostolic ministry is associated with Egypt, Cyrene, and Persia. Western writers emphasize his courage in preaching Christ in regions hostile to the Gospel, portraying him as a model of steadfastness and purity of heart.

St. Jude Thaddeus

St. Jude—also called **Thaddeus**—is remembered for his Epistle, a brief but powerful exhortation urging believers to “contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.” In Western-Rite devotion, Jude is honored as a clear and uncompromising teacher of apostolic truth, warning against false teachers and calling Christians to perseverance.

Tradition holds that Jude was a relative of the Lord, one of the “brethren” mentioned in the Gospels, and that he preached in Judea, Samaria, Syria, and Mesopotamia before joining Simon in Persia.

Their Shared Mission and Martyrdom

Ancient Western tradition unites Simon and Jude in their final missionary journey. They are said to have confronted pagan priesthoods and idolatrous cults with apostolic authority, performing miracles and establishing Christian communities. Their martyrdom—likely by the sword—became a symbol of unity in witness and fidelity to Christ.

Their Symbolism in Western Tradition

- **St. Simon** is often represented with a **saw**, recalling the manner of his martyrdom in some traditions.
- **St. Jude** is depicted with a **club or halberd**, or holding the **image of Christ**, reflecting the tradition that he carried a miraculous likeness of the Lord to King Abgar of Edessa.

Together, they embody **courage, unity, and unwavering proclamation of the Gospel**.

Western-Rite Liturgical Note

Their feast is kept as a **Double Feast** in the classical Western calendars, emphasizing their apostolic dignity. The propers highlight themes of steadfast faith, unity in mission, and the triumph of Christ over falsehood. Their Collect asks God to grant the Church perseverance through the intercession of these two faithful Apostles.

Their Legacy for Western-Rite Orthodox Christians

St. Simon and St. Jude are remembered as:

- Apostles who brought the Gospel to difficult and hostile lands
- Models of zeal transformed by grace
- Teachers of perseverance and doctrinal clarity
- Martyrs whose shared witness strengthened the unity of the Church

Their feast invites the faithful to remain steadfast in truth, courageous in witness, and united in charity.

Liturgy of St. Tikhon

An Order for Sext

In the Western-Rite Orthodox tradition, **Sext** is the **Sixth Hour**, prayed around **midday**, when the sun stands at its height. It is one of the ancient **Little Hours**, inherited from the monastic rhythm of the early Church and preserved in both the Roman and Benedictine traditions. Sext invites the faithful to pause in the middle

of the day, recollect the presence of God, and seek strength against temptation and weariness.

Its Biblical and Spiritual Meaning

Midday has long been associated with **trial, spiritual dryness, and the “noontday demon”** mentioned in Psalm 91. The Church therefore sanctifies this hour with prayer, asking Christ to guard the heart when fatigue and distraction often arise.

Sext recalls:

- **Christ’s crucifixion**, which began at the sixth hour
- The **sun at its zenith**, symbolizing divine light shining upon human weakness
- The need for **perseverance**, purity of intention, and renewed dedication

Western-Rite Orthodox devotion emphasizes that Sext is a moment to “steady the soul,” resisting the temptations that creep in during the middle of the day.

Structure of Sext in the Western Rite

While forms vary slightly between the Monastic Breviary, the Anglican tradition, and the English Missal, Sext generally includes:

- **Opening versicle and response**
- **Psalmody**, often featuring Psalms that speak of trust, protection, and steadfastness
- **A brief chapter (capitulum)**
- **A responsory**
- **The Collect**, asking God to purify the heart and strengthen the will
- **Conclusion**, often with a blessing or dismissal

The tone is simple, quiet, and steady—unlike the more elaborate offices of Matins or Vespers. Sext is intentionally short, reflecting its purpose as a sanctifying pause in the midst of labor.

Themes Emphasized in Western-Rite Orthodoxy

Sext highlights several key spiritual themes:

- **Purity of heart** in the midst of daily work
- **Guarding the mind** against distraction and temptation
- **Perseverance** in prayer and duty
- **Union with Christ's Passion**, which unfolded hour by hour
- **Sanctification of time**, reminding the faithful that every moment belongs to God

In Western-Rite Orthodox spirituality, Sext is often described as the “hour of clarity,” when the faithful ask Christ to illumine their thoughts and strengthen their resolve.

Liturgical Note

In Western calendars, Sext is traditionally prayed after Terce and before None. It is retained in Western-Rite Orthodox parishes as part of the daily office cycle, especially in monastic or mission-minded communities. Its Collects frequently echo themes of protection, steadfastness, and the cleansing of the heart.

Its Legacy

The Order for Sext remains a quiet but powerful witness to the Church's ancient rhythm of prayer. It teaches the faithful to pause, breathe, and turn again toward Christ—sanctifying the middle of the day with praise, Scripture, and humble petition.

Joke of the Month

Does the cloud of smoke sound familiar?

The bishop arrives for a big feast day liturgy, and the altar servers are *thrilled*. They've been practicing all week. They have charts. They have diagrams. They have a flow-chart titled **"Incense Deployment Strategy."**

The bishop walks into the sacristy, sees the thurible, and says, "Brethren... today we shall use *extra* incense."

The deacon's eyes widen. "Your Grace... how extra?"

The bishop smiles the smile of a man who has never once read a safety manual. "Let the people behold the glory of God."

This is the moment everything goes wrong.

Because the thurifer — a very enthusiastic teenager — hears this and thinks, *Ah yes. The bishop wants MAXIMUM HOLINESS*. So he loads the thurible like he's fueling a steam locomotive.

The liturgy begins.

The bishop censes the altar. A cloud rises.

He censes the icons. A fog forms.

He censes the people. Entire pews disappear.

By the time they reach the Gospel procession, the nave looks like a Victorian train station. The choir is singing by faith alone because they cannot see their music. The acolytes are navigating by echolocation.

The bishop tries to chant the Gospel, but every time he inhales, he coughs out a small puff of incense like a startled dragon.

Then — THEN — the smoke alarm goes off.

Not a beep. Not a chirp. No.

It announces, in a calm robotic voice:

“Warning: Air quality unacceptable.”

The bishop freezes.

The deacon whispers, “Your Grace... shall I silence it?”

The bishop, eyes watering, replies, “No, Deacon. It is participating in the liturgy.”

The thurifer, still swinging the thurible like a medieval censer-flail, calls out, “Your Grace! Should I stop?”

The bishop shouts through the haze, “YES. FOR THE LOVE OF ALL SAINTS, STOP.”

The thurifer stops. The smoke alarm stops. The incense cloud slowly drifts toward the narthex like a confused weather system.

And the bishop, wiping his eyes, declares:

“From this day forward, incense shall be measured in teaspoons, not zeal.”

The parish applauds. The bishop bows. The thurifer is gently escorted to a ministry with fewer combustion risks.

The Psalms

Psalms 4 and 5

Psalm 4

Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness: thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress; have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.

2 O ye sons of men, how long will ye turn my glory into shame? how long will ye love vanity, and seek after leasing? Selah.

3 But know that the LORD hath set apart him that is godly for himself: the LORD will hear when I call unto him.

4 Stand in awe, and sin not: commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still. Selah.

5 Offer the sacrifices of righteousness, and put your trust in the LORD.

6 There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? LORD, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.

7 Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.

8 I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety.

Psalm 4 is traditionally prayed as an **evening psalm**, a companion to Psalm 3 (the morning psalm). In the Western Rite, it expresses the believer’s trust in God at day’s end, when the heart is weary, temptations rise, and the soul seeks rest in divine protection. It is a psalm of **quiet confidence**, **inner purification**, and **peaceful surrender** to God.

1. “Hear me when I call, O God of my righteousness.” — God Who Makes Things Right

Western commentators emphasize that “God of my righteousness” does not mean a judge declaring innocence, but **the God who sets things right**, who brings order, peace, and stability to a troubled life. David attributes all righteousness to God, not himself — a theme St. John Chrysostom stresses, noting that David speaks with humility, not self-confidence. orthodoxonline.org
The Secret of Spiritual Warfare - Meditation on Psalm 4 - Elevations of the Heart - Orthodox Online Network

The Western tradition sees this opening line as the believer’s evening cry: **“Lord, You have made things right for me before; do so again.”**

2. “Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress.” — From Constriction to Spaciousness

The psalm recalls past deliverance: God “enlarged” David when he was hemmed in. Western spiritual writers love this image — God creates **room** where there was pressure, **breathing space** where there was fear.

Evening prayer becomes a remembrance of God’s faithfulness throughout the day.

3. “O ye sons of men... how long will ye love vanity?” — The Western Warning Against Empty Things

Psalm 4 confronts those who chase **vanity** and **falsehood** — themes deeply rooted in Western ascetical teaching. The psalmist rebukes the pursuit of what is hollow, unstable, and spiritually weightless.

Western-Rite interpretation sees this as the evening examination of conscience: **What empty things have I loved today? What falsehoods have I believed?**

4. “Stand in awe, and sin not... commune with your own heart upon your bed.” — The Evening Discipline

This verse is central to Western spirituality. It teaches:

- **Reverence** (“stand in awe”)
- **Restraint** (“sin not”)
- **Interior reflection** (“commune with your own heart”)
- **Stillness** (“be still”)

Western monastic tradition calls this the **nightly purification of the heart** — the quiet moment when the soul confronts its passions and lays them before God.

5. “Offer the sacrifices of righteousness.” — The Sacrifice of a Clean Heart

In Western liturgical theology, evening prayer is a time to offer the “sacrifice of righteousness”: repentance, truthfulness, and trust. The psalm directs the believer away from outward show and toward inward sincerity.

6. “Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us.” — The Western Benediction

This line echoes the **Aaronic blessing** (“The Lord make His face to shine upon thee”). Western tradition hears in it the gentle radiance of God’s favor — the light that guides the believer into night without fear.

7. “Thou hast put gladness in my heart.” — Joy Greater Than Prosperity

David declares that God gives a deeper joy than material abundance (“corn and wine”). Western commentators emphasize that true gladness is **interior**, born of communion with God, not circumstances.

8. “I will lay me down in peace, and sleep.” — The Western Evening Peace

Psalm 4 ends with one of the most beloved lines in Western evening prayer. Sleep becomes an act of faith: **God alone makes me dwell in safety.**

Western-Rite Orthodoxy sees this as a foreshadowing of:

- **Christ’s rest in the tomb**
- **The believer’s nightly surrender to God**
- **The peace of the saints who rest in the Lord**

Why Psalm 4 Matters in the Western Rite

Psalm 4 is cherished because it:

- teaches evening self-examination and stillness
- warns against vanity and falsehood
- celebrates God’s power to “make things right”
- echoes the Aaronic blessing
- ends with peaceful trust in God’s protection

It is the Western-Rite psalm of **quiet courage**, **inner honesty**, and **restful faith** — the perfect complement to Psalm 3’s morning confidence.

Psalm 5

Give ear to my words, O LORD, consider my meditation.

2 Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King, and my God: for unto thee will I pray.

3 My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up.

4 For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness: neither shall evil dwell with thee.

5 The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

6 Thou shalt destroy them that speak leasing: the LORD will abhor the bloody and deceitful man.

7 But as for me, I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy: and in thy fear will I worship toward thy holy temple.

8 Lead me, O LORD, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face.

9 For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue.

10 Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee.

11 But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee.

12 For thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass him as with a shield.

Psalm 5 is the Church's **morning psalm of supplication**, prayed when the day is new, the mind is clear, and the heart seeks God's guidance before any other voice enters. In the Western-Rite Orthodox tradition, it is deeply connected to the **First Hour**, the moment when the faithful ask God to sanctify the beginning of the day and to guard them from the snares of the wicked.

1. "Give ear to my words, O Lord; consider my meditation." — The Morning Cry

Psalm 5 opens with urgency: David pleads for God to *hear*, *consider*, and *give heed*. Western commentators note that this triple appeal shows the

earnestness of morning prayer — not rushed, not casual, but intentional and heartfelt.

The Western tradition sees this as the soul's first act of the day: “**Lord, hear me before the world hears me.**”

2. “My King and my God, for unto Thee will I pray.” — Orienting the Day Toward God

Psalm 5 is explicitly a **morning psalm**: “In the morning, O Lord, Thou shalt hear my voice.” Western-Rite spirituality emphasizes that the day must begin with **orientation** — turning toward God before turning toward labor, concerns, or distractions.

The psalm teaches that prayer is not escape but **alignment**: the believer arranges the heart before God as carefully as the priest arranges the morning sacrifice.

3. “Thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness.” — The Morning Purification

Psalm 5 contains a strong contrast between the holiness of God and the corruption of the wicked. Western commentators stress that this is not self-righteousness but **spiritual clarity**: the believer begins the day by remembering who God is — pure, steadfast, and utterly opposed to deceit.

Morning prayer becomes a cleansing of the mind: “**Let me not walk in the paths of those who love falsehood.**”

4. “I will come into Thy house... and worship toward Thy holy temple.” — Bodily Orientation

Verse 7 introduces a distinctly Western liturgical theme: **physical orientation toward the sanctuary**. The worshiper bows toward the Temple, echoing Solomon's prayer and Daniel's practice of praying toward Jerusalem.

In Western-Rite Orthodoxy, this reflects the incarnational truth that prayer involves **body and soul** — posture, direction, reverence, and fear of God.

5. “Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness.” — Guidance for the Day

Psalm 5 is a prayer for **guidance**, asking God to lead the believer through the day’s dangers, temptations, and decisions. The Hebrew phrase “lead me in Thy righteousness” expresses the desire to walk the **divine path** (derek), not merely avoid evil.

Western tradition hears in this a morning petition: “**Guide my steps, guard my speech, steady my heart.**”

6. “Their throat is an open sepulchre.” — Discernment of False Speech

David describes the wicked with vivid imagery: deceitful speech, flattery, destruction. Western commentators note that morning is the time to ask God for **discernment**, so that the believer is not misled by false counsel or harmful words throughout the day.

7. “Let all those who put their trust in Thee rejoice.” — The Morning Benediction

Psalm 5 ends with joy and protection: “Spread Thy protection over them... Thou wilt bless the righteous; Thou wilt surround him with favor as with a shield.”

Western-Rite Orthodoxy sees this as the **morning blessing** — God’s shield of mercy placed over the faithful as they begin their work.

Why Psalm 5 Matters in the Western Rite

Psalm 5 is cherished because it:

- sanctifies the **beginning of the day**
- teaches earnest, heartfelt supplication

- contrasts God's holiness with human deceit
- emphasizes bodily reverence and orientation
- asks for guidance, protection, and discernment
- ends with joy and divine favor

It is the Western-Rite psalm of **morning clarity, moral courage, and trust in God's guidance** — the perfect complement to Psalm 4's evening peace.

If you need a Bible to delve further into these Psalms, please contact Bp. George.

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