

ORTHODOX BIBLE/BOOK STUDY @ OREGON STATE PRISON, SALEM

OSP NEWS & PRAYER LETTER

Class Date: May 3, 2017

Inmates Present: 8

Leaders Present: 3; Fr. Jerry Markopoulos, Chaplain Dennis Stahlnecker (part time), Paul Crawford.

Study Subject: Pascha Feast today, Resurrection of Christ

Each year Fr. Jerry is able to present a Paschal Feast for the inmates in our Orthodox Study. It requires special prison permissions and set-up time in the Chapel Library, but it is very much worth it. We had eight men join us today, two of whom were new and another not regularly with us. We sat at two tables, had our meal self served and talked. One man said he "hadn't eaten a meal like this for 20 years!" Another especially liked the lemon wedges since they aren't to be had in prison. They didn't want to be wasteful so every last bit of food was eaten! (The food was provided by Peter Drakatos and St. George GOCC, Eugene.)

Fr. Jerry began our Pascha Celebration asking God's blessing on the food, simply but with heart lifting praise for the Resurrection of His Son! We had good but unplanned table conversation with several opinions about the Bible and how literally we are to take it. A few of the men are talkative and/or loud, while, some hardly speak, but there were some edifying comments. I believe this isn't normal during prison meals. The conversation was not directly controlled, so it was a revealing of the characters involved. There was evidence in the talk of God at work in us all.

Pray for:

- 1) Fr. Jerry's continued strength and wisdom in our studies. The Lord guides him so that his teaching is heard respectfully and sometimes is given without words;
- 2) Paul for strength in this spiritual arena that absorbs a person's energy and for patience when odd comments are heard; should a response be given or should it be left alone?
- 3) the men to have times when they can talk openly with each other about God;
- 4) them to hear God's Words to them as we meet;
- 5) their families; the son of one inmate has a son who's wedding he will have to miss;
- 6) the Peace of Christ to surround and uphold these men;
- 7) the Holy Spirit to protect and defend them from the work of Satan to confuse, provoke and mock their seeming inability to help their families;
- 8) protection from the threat of prison upheavals & riots.

In Christ our Life, Paul