

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

The Most Reverend MICHAEL, Archbishop of NY and the Diocese of NY & NJ
V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson
Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Sub-Deacon Vlashi
Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



Sunday, April 10, 2016

Gospel: Mark 9:17-31

Saint: Matthew 4:25-5:12

Tone 4

Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20

Saint: Ephesians 5:9-19

4th Sunday of Great Lent: St John Climacus (of the Ladder)



**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory
Forever!**

**4th Sunday of Great
Lent: St John Climacus
(of the Ladder)**

*Dweller of the desert and angel in the body, you were shown to be
a wonder-worker, our God-bearing Father John. You received heavenly
gifts through fasting, vigil, and prayer: healing the sick and the souls
of those drawn to you by faith. Glory to Him who gave you strength!*

Glory to Him who granted you a crown!

Glory to Him who through you grants healing to all!

Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints

4th Sunday of Great Lent— Tone 4. St. John Climacus (of The Ladder).
Martyrs Terence, Pompeius, Africanus, Maximus, Zeno, Alexander, Theodore,
Macarius, and 33 others, beheaded at Carthage (3rd c.). Martyrs James (Jacob)
the Presbyter, and Azadanus and Abdicius—Deacons, of Persia (ca. 380).

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

Walter Romanofsky on his 90th birthday; offered by his family Andrew & Maribeth.

Danielle Geeza, a member of our Diocesan Youth Department, who is fighting against cancer;

Archpriest Sergius Kuharsky, admitted to Monmouth Hospital, Long Branch NJ, with pneumonia;

Archpriest Ilya Gotlinsky, recuperating from gall bladder surgery;

Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, who underwent an angiogram, Tuesday, 5 April; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

Presbyter Theodore Gregory, who was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on Sunday, March 27, in his home parish of Saint Gregory Palamas Church in Glen Gardner NJ, by His Eminence, Archbishop Michael; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, April 10th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, April 13th

6:30 pm: Presanctified
Liturgy/Potluck

Saturday, April 16th

6:30 pm: No Vespers

Sunday, April 17th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, April 20th

6:30 pm: Presanctified
Liturgy/Potluck

Saturday, April 23rd

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 24th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, April 27th

6:30 pm: Presanctified
Liturgy/Potluck

Friday, April 29th

7:00 pm: Matins Service

Saturday, April 30th

11:30pm Pascha Service
12:00am Resurrection Divine
Liturgy followed by Blessing
of Pascha Baskets

Bulletin Sponsors:

**Andrew & Maribeth
Romanofsky**

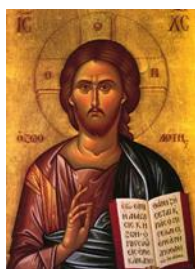
Readings:



Epistle: Hebrews 6:13-20; Ephesians 5:9-19

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore to himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Brethren, the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.



Gospel: Mark 9:17-31; Matthew 4:25-5:12

At that time, a man came to Jesus kneeling and saying: "Teacher, I brought my son to you, for he has a dumb spirit; and wherever it seizes him it dashes him down; and he foams and grinds his teeth and becomes rigid; and I asked your disciples to cast it out, and they were not able." And he answered them, "O faithless generation, how long am I to be with you? How long am I to bear with you? Bring him to me." And they brought the boy to him; and when the spirit saw him, immediately it convulsed the boy, and he fell on the ground and rolled about, foaming at the mouth. And Jesus asked his father, "How long has he had this?" And he said, "From childhood. And it has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you can do anything, have pity on us and help us." And Jesus said to him, "If you can! All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, "I believe; help my unbelief!"

And when Jesus saw that a crowd came running together, he rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You dumb and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him, and never enter him again." And after crying out and convulsing him terribly, it came out, and the boy was like a corpse; so that most of them said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when he had entered the house, his disciples asked him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" And he said to them, "This kind cannot be driven out by anything but prayer and fasting." They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he would not have any one know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of man will be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him; and when he is killed, after three days he will rise."

At that time, great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decap'olis and Jerusalem and Judea and from beyond the Jordan. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. "Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so men persecuted the prophets who were before you.



4th Sunday of Great Lent: St John Climacus (of the Ladder)

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is dedicated to St John of the Ladder (Climacus), the author of the work, The Ladder of Divine Ascent. The abbot of St Catherine's Monastery on Mount Sinai (6th century) stands as a witness to the violent effort needed for entrance into God's Kingdom (Mt.10: 12). The spiritual struggle of the Christian life is a real one, "not against flesh and blood, but against ... the rulers of the present darkness ... the hosts of wickedness in heavenly places ..." (Eph 6:12). Saint John encourages the faithful in their efforts for, according to the Lord, only "he who endures to the end will be saved" (Mt.24:13).



Bulletin Sponsors/Prayer Requests: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Bulletin Sponsors/Prayer Requests will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Candles/Memorial Candles: Candles may be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times and **General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:
OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

The Grey Book Study Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News

Baptism: Sub-Deacon Edward and Holly Dawson's grandchildren Michelle, Xavier and Nicole will be baptized today during Divine Liturgy.

Our Church Cleanup Day this year will be April 23rd at 9:00 a.m. The worship area and community room will be cleaned, dusted and polished. Everyone who can help, should come and help. This is the Saturday before Palm Sunday.

Choir practice will be every Sunday during Lent at 9:30

Sisterhood news: The Sisterhood of the Protection of the Mother of God will be sponsoring a Paschal basket raffle to be held on Sunday, April 24th. Tickets for the raffle are \$1.00 each, and can be obtained by seeing Maribeth Romanofsky. The basket will include traditional Paschal food items including ham, kielbasa, eggs, and cheese. Each parishioner is asked to please sell 10 tickets.

The Sisterhood held their annual election of new officers this past Sunday and the following people have agreed to serve: President - Holly Dawson, Vice-President - Tamara Zimmerman, Treasurer - Linda Dantinne, Secretary - Maribeth Romanofsky. The Sisterhood would like to offer many thanks to Lore Stefy, Barbara Funk, and Liz Pastore for their years of dedicated service as officers of our organization.

This Sunday, and next Sunday April 17th, at the close of the Divine Liturgy, there will be a special collection to cover the costs of flowers for Pascha. Please be generous in your donations so that our church will look beautiful for this special occasion. Thank you!

Presanctified Liturgies will be every Wednesday during Lent, followed by a potluck meal.



NY/NJ Diocese News

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY CHAPEL: Archpastoral Visit - 04/08/16

On the Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross (3 April 2016), Archbishop Michael celebrated the Divine Liturgy in the **Chapel of the Transfiguration on the campus of Princeton University**. Before the Liturgy began, His Eminence blessed a gift from the Orthodox Christian Fellowship [OCF] and chapel members -- a specially designed

circular rug (*“Orlets” or Eagle*) on which a bishop stands during services as a sign of his pastoral leadership over a particular geographic location. This rug was designed specifically for Archbishop Michael as the presiding hierarch of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey. Rather than the typical Byzantine eagle, the rug features an American bald eagle, the nation’s symbol, carrying an olive branch, above a grouping of various churches of the diocese and the Empire State Building and the new Freedom Tower in New York City, the Archbishop’s official See. The outer rings depict waves of the bodies of water, such as the Hudson River, and bridges connecting the two states and three deaneries. The requisite protecting walls of the Orlets depict the Wall of Honor at Ellis Island, the entry point to America for many of our Orthodox ancestors.



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

New on-line Orthodox resource encourages autism awareness, ministry SYOSSET, NY [OCA]

The Orthodox Church in America’s Department of Christian Service and Humanitarian Aid [CSHA] has joined US and international advocates in recognizing April 2016 as Autism Awareness Month.

“Autism Spectrum Disorder [ASD] is a lifelong developmental disability that can cause significant social, communication and behavioral challenges,” said Donna Karabin, CSHA Chair. “Each year, there are increasing numbers of children diagnosed with an ASD. Recent studies show one in 68 children has an Autism Disorder, with boys four times more likely than girls.

“If our Orthodox parishes do not already have autistic children, adolescents or adults in their communities, it is highly likely they will in the future,” Mrs. Karabin continued. “It is vitally important for clergy, Church School educators and fellow parishioners to learn about Autism – what it is and what it is not.”

To this end, a new educational resource—the Autism and Your Parish Video Series—was recently developed by Maura Oprisko, a wife and mother of three children, one of whom is her seven-year-old autistic son, William. Maura and her family attend Saint Stephen Church [OCA], Crawfordsville, IN, where their pastor, Priest Joel Weir, is grateful for the steps Maura has taken to help the parish better understand their shared challenges.

“Maura is doing great work to raise awareness and equip parishes to better serve persons on the autism spectrum,” Father Joel said. “I know as a priest I’ve benefited greatly from her willingness to educate me and our parishioners on autism so we can better minister to her son and support her and her family.”

Maura designed the free, downloadable video program to help parishes incorporate Autism Awareness Month into their educational programs. She suggests workshop formats and offers printable worksheets, available on her web site blog, The Least of These.

The themes of the 10–15 minute videos include an introduction titled What is Autism?. Two additional videos—the Function of Autistic Behaviors: What Looks Strange has a Purpose and Meltdowns: Why They Happen and What to Do—are also available.

“While initially designed for use as a three-part workshop during Lent, the program is valuable any time of the year,” Mrs. Karabin adds. “As Maura says, ‘I want to talk about raising an autistic child in the Church. I want to discuss things we can do to improve our experience and lighten our burden by being part of our Church community. I want to find out and discuss the wisdom of Holy Scripture and the saints when it comes to parenting special kids. I want, above all, to point my kids in the direction of the Kingdom of God. So let’s figure this out, together.’”



Orthodox Mission Team Opportunities Still Available!

Many people still do not know that, through the OCMC, the Orthodox Church sends and supports long-term missionaries and short-term mission team volunteers to preach and teach the Faith, minister to youth, provide healthcare, and help the Church grow around the world.

Mission Teams recently returned from Kenya and Albania, where Team members led clergy, women, and young adult retreats and participated in evangelism. God is teaching the Team members; they learn about God through their experience, while offering a witness of their Orthodox faith. There are opportunities for everyone to bring the light of Christ to those who remain in darkness. To learn more about serving on an OCMC Mission Team, please visit www.ocmc.org, call 1-877-463-6784 FREE, or e-mail Teams@ocmc.org.

Planting More Seeds Among the Turkana: The 2016 OCMC Evangelism Team to Kenya

In the face of 100 degree heat, the shade offered by the large tree we approached was welcoming, but would the 90+ people already gathered beneath the tree be as welcoming? We had traveled by truck for more than four hours, a group of students from Holy Cross Seminary, a priest, a former missionary to Albania, several OCMC staff members, and the newly-ordained Bishop of the Kisumu Diocese, His Grace Athanasius, to share the Orthodox Faith with people in three villages OCMC had never before visited. We'd learned from experience that these first meetings can go many different ways, from joyous celebration to suspicious hesitation.

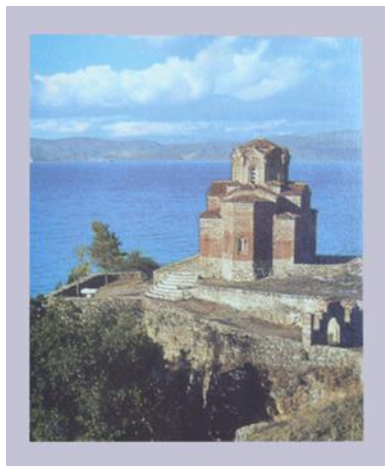
The people of the first village we visited knew we were coming, but we could tell that they had questions about who we were and why we were there. Thankfully we also had three Turkana Orthodox priests with us as well to help with first introductions. We greeted the elder men first, then the women, and then the youth and children, as is customary in Turkana society. We shared about ourselves and where we were from. Common bonds like the fact that we had children and that we were people of faith helped us open up to one another. These bonds, however, were sealed in the most beautifully Turkana way imaginable – through song and dance. That is where it all began!

The Turkana teach through story. We came with the story of Christ – His life, death, and resurrection. We presented what we could from the Gospel in the form of skits. Some of them elicited laughter, others fear, and still others questions. Each skit was followed by a time where the stories could be more fully explained. More questions followed, we enjoyed a meal together, and slowly the idea of Christ as God was shared – an idea further planted by the showing of a movie about Christ's life translated into the Turkana language.

For three days to the people of three villages, nearly 400 in all, we planted this seed, and we saw our prayers answered. We are Orthodox. We know that coming to the Faith is a journey. We were not expecting to convert these people. We just wanted to invite them to embark on a journey toward Christ. Thankfully, as we prepared to leave, each village asked that we return to continue sharing about this Jesus Christ!

With this invitation, the Turkana Orthodox priests said they would come again. Over time, a year or more, those who want it will be catechized. The richness of the Orthodox Faith and its fulfillment of their own beliefs will be revealed. Then through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, they will join our Orthodox family.

This is how it has happened in more than 15 Turkana villages since 2007, and it has seen more than 1,500 people come into the Faith. The work must continue! Each team, each missionary, each donation, and each prayer plays its part in welcoming people into the Church and transforming lives forever.



Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, LII:

Rejoice, my soul your Infant has grown up, and has girded Himself with a strength mightier than the earth. The Demolisher of all your towers of smoke has grown up in the world, and the world has neither noticed nor recognized Him.

The wilderness has been His companion, and meditation and prayer have bound Him to heaven, His homeland.

Behold Him, as He now of His own free will sets out to visit your swarthy offspring. In His eyes eternity glistens; and on His face eternity is written; and in His hands eternity resides. Mightier than the world, behold, He goes forth to struggle against the world -- against all your shadowy world, my enslaved soul. Rejoice, my soul, see how your Infant has grown up, undetected by the world, and has girded Himself with a strength mightier than the world.

As calm as any heroic man of mettle, who is conscious of his own invincible might even before his adversaries' vulnerability is vanquished, my Beloved stepped out among the wild beasts, and the beasts cleared out of His way, filled with fright.

In truth, nature recognized Him before people did, and submitted itself to Him as a lawful servant submits himself to his lawful Lord.

But among men only one recognized Him,¹ and he began to cry out, and his cry became the voice of one crying in the wilderness, a voice that men quickly strangled by violence and bloodshed.² For violence is the weapon of the weakling, and bloodshed is the way of weakness, from Cain to Herod.

The father of all the tyrants from the beginning of the world³ greeted Him and offered Him all the treasures of this world, if only He would spare and not trample on his crops in the world.⁴

The ruler of this world saw my Favorite, just as in the morning the shadow of night watches the rising of the sun and dies while watching.

As the herald of the living and everlasting Trinity, my Favorite stood before the ruler of the world of illusions. And the king of darkness tried to introduce disharmony and confuse the personified trinity in unity. And so, in his customary way, using the craft he had tested on the human race, he first flattered the stomach of my Champion. If he could entrap His stomach first, he would then give it hegemony over the heart and the mind, and would make them shadows and servants of the stomach.

But the lower man remained in unscathed harmony with the middle and upper man. The stomach of my Champion remained faithful to the united trinity, in which the three are coequal and one.

Then the ruler of darkness and evil struck with flatteries at the heart of my Favorite. The heart of the latter, however, being brighter than light, did not receive darkness into itself, but instead remained as faithful as His stomach to His threefold harmony.

Finally the ruler of darkness mustered all his dark powers and attacked the mind of my Saviour, urging Him to test God with nonsensical, breakneck miracles.

The mind of my Only-Begotten, however, was like a blazing torch that scorches every impurity and then puts it to flight. And so not even the mind left the sweet harmony of holy trinity.

Thus did my Victor win the first victory over the king of smoke and ashes, who then came forth to negotiate with my General, offering him everything --except dominion over the world.

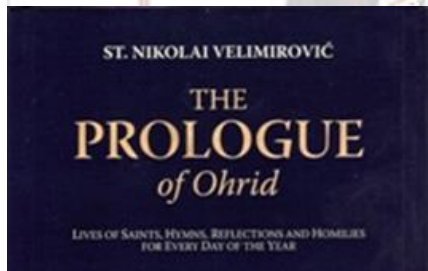
Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, LI:

II. The Realities of the Spiritual World

The Saints

"I love them that love me, and glorify them that glorify me." (Proverbs 8:17, I Kings 2:30,) says the Lord of His saints. The Lord gave the Holy Spirit to the saints, and they love us in the Holy Spirit. The saints hear our prayers and have the power from God to help us. The entire Christian race knows this.

+ *St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, XII.1,8*



1. The Holy Martyrs Terence (Terentius), Africanus, Maximus, Pompeius (Pompilius) and Thirty-Six Others with Them

They all suffered for Christ and were crowned with wreaths of glory during the reign of Emperor Decius. By order of the emperor, the governor of Africa announced to the people that everyone had to offer sacrifices to the idols. Those who resisted, the governor threatened with cruel tortures. Upon hearing about these threats, many fell away from the Faith and worshipped the idols. However, these forty remained unwavering in their faith and were subjected to torture. St. Terence encouraged his companions, saying: "Brothers, let us be on guard that we do not deny Christ our God, lest He deny us before His Heavenly Father and the holy angels." The governor divided them into two groups. Thirty-six of them, after being flogged and having their skin scraped and salt poured into their open wounds, were all beheaded. The first four were cast into prison with heavy iron chains around their necks, hands and feet. An angel of God appeared in the prison and touched the chains of the shackled men, and the chains fell off. After that, the angel prepared a bountiful table for them and fed them. Once again, they were brought out and tortured, and again they were imprisoned. Then the governor ordered the soothsayers to gather as many poisonous, loathsome creatures as possible, such as snakes and scorpions, and to lock them up in the same cell with the martyrs. The loathsome creatures did not touch the God-pleasers, but rather lay huddled in the corner, where they remained for three days. On the third day, when the door of the cell was opened, the repulsive creatures rushed out and bit the soothsayers. Finally, the governor pronounced the death penalty upon the four martyrs. When they were brought out to be beheaded, they joyfully chanted psalms and praised God, Who had vouchsafed them a martyr's death. They suffered honorably in the year 250 A.D., and were found worthy of the Kingdom.

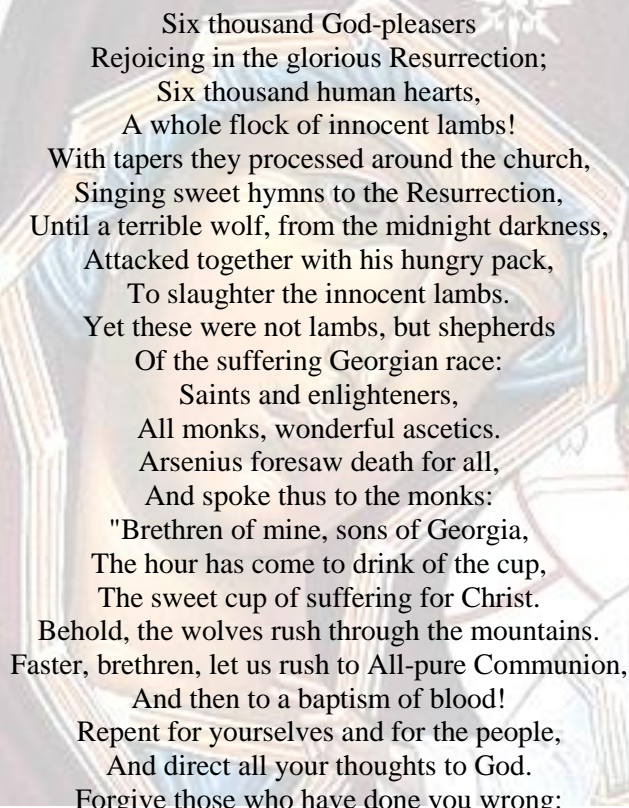
2. The Six Thousand Martyrs in Georgia

In the desert of St. David of Garesja in Georgia, there were twelve monasteries, in which many monks lived the ascetic life for centuries. In 1615 A.D., the king of Persia, Shah Abbas I, attacked Georgia, devastated it and beheaded many Christians. Once, while hunting early in the morning on the Feast of the Resurrection, Shah Abbas noticed many lights in the mountains. They were the monks from the twelve monasteries, in procession around the Church of the Resurrection with lighted tapers in hand. When the

Shah discovered that they were monks, he asked in amazement: "Has not all of Georgia been given over to the sword?" He then ordered his soldiers to immediately behead all the monks. At that moment, an angel of God appeared to Abbot Arsenius and informed him of their impending death. Arsenius informed his brethren. They all received the All-pure Mysteries (Communion) and prepared themselves for death. Suddenly, the assailants arrived and cut to pieces first the abbot, who was the first to come out, and then the rest. They all suffered honorably and were crowned with incorruptible wreaths in the year 1615 A.D. Thus ended the history of these famous monasteries, which, for more than a thousand years, had served as the spiritual hearth of enlightenment for the Georgians. Only two of the monasteries exist today: St. David and St. John the Forerunner. The Georgian King Archil gathered the relics of the monks and honorably interred them. Even today, these relics emit a sweet-smelling myrrh (oil) and heal the sick.

Hymn of Praise

The Six Thousand Martyrs of Georgia



Six thousand God-pleasers
Rejoicing in the glorious Resurrection;
Six thousand human hearts,
A whole flock of innocent lambs!
With tapers they processed around the church,
Singing sweet hymns to the Resurrection,
Until a terrible wolf, from the midnight darkness,
Attacked together with his hungry pack,
To slaughter the innocent lambs.
Yet these were not lambs, but shepherds
Of the suffering Georgian race:
Saints and enlighteners,
All monks, wonderful ascetics.
Arsenius foresaw death for all,
And spoke thus to the monks:
"Brethren of mine, sons of Georgia,
The hour has come to drink of the cup,
The sweet cup of suffering for Christ.
Behold, the wolves rush through the mountains.
Faster, brethren, let us rush to All-pure Communion,
And then to a baptism of blood!
Repent for yourselves and for the people,
And direct all your thoughts to God.
Forgive those who have done you wrong:
For us the gates of Paradise are opening--
Let every brother forgive his brother.
Christ is Risen--that we may resurrect.
We are faithful to Him unto death!"

Reflection

When a man detaches his mind from earth and opens it toward God with the desire to please Him, then God reveals His will in various ways. St. Peter of Damascus writes: "If a man has a full intention to please God, then God teaches him His will either through thoughts, through some other person, or through Holy Scripture." Such a man becomes attentive and keen, and awaits God's promptings from within and from without. For him, chance ceases to exist. The whole world becomes as a ten-stringed harp, which does not give out a single sound without the finger of God.

Contemplation

Contemplate the resurrected Lord Jesus:

1. How He appeared to two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus, and they did not recognize Him;
2. How the hearts of these two disciples burned within them when He spoke to them, and how they recognized Him only when He blessed and broke bread for them;
How the Lord suddenly disappeared before their eyes.

Homily: on living hope

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Peter 1:3).

Brethren, who has dead hope and who has living hope? He who hopes in dead things has a dead hope. He who hopes in the Living God has a living hope.

Further, he who hopes in himself and in other people has a dead hope. He who hopes in the Living God has a living hope.

Further, he who hopes in luck and well-being in this brief earthly existence, and who does not extend his hope beyond the grave has a dead hope. He who hopes in the resurrection and eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven has a living hope.

Truly, a living hope is better than a dead hope; as life is better than death; as light is better than darkness; as health is better than sickness; as understanding is better than ignorance.

But Who brought and showed man that living hope--Who and how? The Apostle Peter gives an answer to that question: Our Lord Jesus Christ, by His Resurrection from the dead. No one else but the Lord Jesus Christ and by nothing else than His Resurrection from the dead. By His Resurrection, the Lord gave wings to the pathetic hopes of man and extended those hopes beyond the grave, showing man the goal and purpose and fruit beyond the grave.

All of this is confirmed not by a credulous man, but by an apostle who wavered for a long while in his faith and who denied Christ three times. That is why St. Peter's testimony of the resurrected Lord and the significance of His Resurrection is inexpressibly priceless for us.

O resurrected Lord, Thou Victor over death, uproot from us dead hope, and plant a living hope in us through the prayers of St. Peter, Thy great apostle.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration with Abbott Tryphon

My Sins

Accuse myself, blame myself, judge myself

We see people's sins, but we don't know whether they have made peace with God. We don't know if the person who has sinned regrets it, but we are not called to judge them, but only to forgive them. As we become aware of our own sins, and begin to realize how much forgiveness and mercy we need, we are less likely to see the sins of others.

If we find ourselves judging others, we must turn it around, and judge only ourselves. We must accuse ourselves, blame ourselves, judge ourselves, and get our focus off the other person. The only way we can

overcome the sin of judging others, is to see only the sins of ourselves. True repentance comes only when we work on our own fallen nature.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon



Daily Reflection **Mid-Lenten Complacency**

*"Before Your Cross we bow down,
O Master, and Your holy
Resurrection we glorify."
(Byzantine Hymn of the Cross,*

chanted on the 4th week of Lent)



In the very middle of Lent, throughout this fourth week, we bow down before the cross, which is placed in the center of the church, having been solemnly brought out of the altar during last Sunday's vigil. Why now, in the middle of Lent? Because our Lord's death on the Cross marks the very middle, the center, of Salvation History.

We entered into Lent with a commemoration of the "beginning," of Adam's banishment from paradise (on Forgiveness Sunday), which we "read" from the perspective, the light, of the central event of the Cross. And we "read" this central event, of our Lord's crucifixion and death, in the light of the Resurrection. At the very end of our Lenten journey we will return to the central moment of our common story, when we accompany the God-Man in His final trials during Great Week, before we transition to the full celebration of His glorious exit from the Tomb.

Today let me refresh my Lenten focus, and let the life-giving Cross shed new light on my mid-Lenten complacency. With Pascha just three weeks away, may our Lord Jesus Christ, Who suffered, died, and was buried for my sake, strengthen and renew me to take up His cross again, in His light and lightness. *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me,"* He says to me today, *"for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."* (Mt 11: 29)

Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers

"Put God before your eyes" by St. John of Kronstadt

A man becomes spiritual insofar as he lives a spiritual life. He begins to see God in all things, to see His power and might in every manifestation. Always and everywhere he sees himself abiding in God and dependent on God for all things. But insofar as a man lives a bodily life, so much he does he do bodily things; He doesn't see God in anything, even in the the most wondrous manifestations of His Divine power. In all things he sees body, material, everywhere and always - "God is not before his eyes." (Ps. 35:2)

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

The great mystery of the incarnation remains a mystery eternally. Not only is what is not yet seen of it greater than what has been revealed - for it is revealed merely to the extent that those saved by it can grasp it - but also even what is revealed still remains entirely hidden and is by no means known as it really is.

+ *St Maximus the Confessor, 500 Various Texts*

April – 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	2 6:30pm Vespers
3 9:30am No School 9:40am Hours 9:45am Gen'l Confession 10:00am Divine Liturgy/Social	4	5 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	6 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	7	8 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	9 6:30pm Vespers
10 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy/Social	11 6:30pm The Canon of St. Andrew of Crete Service	12 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	13 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	14	15 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	16 No Vespers
17 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	18	19 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	20 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	21	22 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	23 6:30pm Vespers
24 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	25 <u>Great and Holy Monday</u>	26 <u>Great and Holy Tuesday</u> 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	27 <u>Great and Holy Wednesday</u> 6:30pm Holy Unction Service/Potluck	28 <u>Great and Holy Thursday</u>	29 <u>Great and Holy Friday</u> 7:00pm Matins Service 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	30 <u>Great and Holy Saturday</u> 11:30pm Pascha Service 12:00am Ressur4ection Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Pascha Baskets