

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 & the Diocese of NY/NJ

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searforce, Temporary Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Sub-Deacon Edward

HYMNS OF THE DAY

[Troparion from the Pentecostarion in Tone 7](#)

From the sealed tomb, Thou didst shine forth, O Life! Through closed doors Thou didst come to Thy Disciples, O Christ God. Renew in us through them an upright spirit, by the greatness of Thy mercy, O Resurrection of all!

[Kontakion from the Pentecostarion in Tone 4](#)

Thomas touched Thy life-giving side with an eager hand, O Christ God, when Thou didst come to Thy Apostles through closed doors. He cried out with all: “Thou art my Lord and my God!”

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

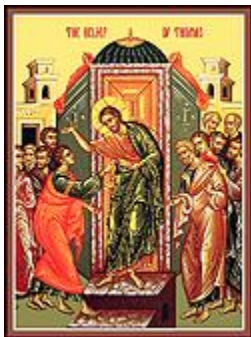
Irene Inferrera, on her birthday (4/14), offered by the Inferrera family.

Protopresbyter James Dutko, having surgery on Bright Tuesday, April 10; and the handmaidens of God **Danielle and Mary**, Offered by Archbishop Michael & the Diocese of NY/NJ.

SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

APRIL 15, 2018

ANTIPASCHA. 2ND SUNDAY OF PASCHA/ST THOMAS SUNDAY



Antipascha: St Thomas Sunday

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed “The Doubting Thomas.” This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, “The Touching of Thomas.” The Slavonic inscription is, “The Belief of Thomas.” When Saint Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

This day is also known as “Antipascha.” This does not mean “opposed to Pascha,” but “in place of Pascha.” Beginning with this first Sunday after Pascha, the Church dedicates every Sunday of the year to the Lord’s Resurrection. Sunday is called “Resurrection” in Russian, and “the Lord’s Day” in Greek.

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Apostle Aristarchus of the Seventy

Saint Aristarchus was one of the Seventy Apostles, whom the Lord Jesus Christ sent to proclaim the good news of the Gospel (Luke. 10:1-24).

Saint Aristarchus, a co-worker of the holy Apostle Paul, became bishop of the Syrian city of Apamea. His name is repeatedly mentioned in the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2) and in the Epistles of Saint Paul (Col. 4:10, Philemon 1:24). He accompanied Saint Paul on his travels (Acts 16:29), and was Bishop of Apamea, Syria.

Saint Aristarchus is also commemorated on April 15 with Saints Pudens and Trophimus and on September 27 together with Saints Mark and Zenas.

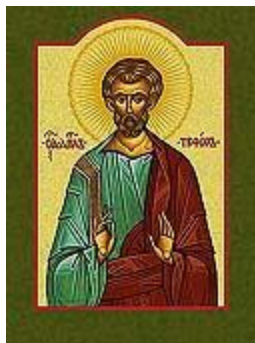


Apostle Pudens of the Seventy

Saint Pudens was one of the Seventy Apostles whom the Lord Jesus Christ sent before him with the good news of the Gospel (Luke 10:1-24).

Saint Pudens is mentioned in Saint Paul's second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:21). He occupied high position as a member of the Roman Senate. The saint received the foremost Apostles Peter and Paul in his home, where believing Christians gathered. His house was converted into a church, receiving the name "Pastorum". According to Tradition, the holy Apostle Peter himself served in it as priest.

Saint Pudens suffered martyrdom at Rome under the emperor Nero (54-68). He is also commemorated on January 4.



Apostle Trophimus of the Seventy

Saint Trophimus was one of the Seventy Apostles, whom the Lord Jesus Christ sent to proclaim the good news of the Gospel (Luke. 10:1-24).

Saint Trophimus hailed from the city of Edessa. His name is mentioned in the Acts of the Holy Apostles (Acts 20:4) and in Saint Paul's second Epistle to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:20). He was a disciple and companion of the Apostle Paul, sharing with him all the sorrows and persecution.

Saint Trophimus is also commemorated on January 4.



Martyr Basilissa of Rome the Disciple of Apostles Peter and Paul

The Holy Women Martyrs Basilissa and Anastasia lived in Rome and were converted to Christianity by the holy Apostles Peter and Paul. They devoted themselves to the service of the Lord.

When the emperor Nero (54-68) persecuted Christians and gave them over to torture and execution, Saints Basilissa and Anastasia took the bodies of the holy martyrs and gave them reverent burial. Rumors of this reached Nero, so Saints Basilissa and Anastasia were locked up in prison. They subjected them to cruel tortures: they scourged them with whips, scraped their skin with hooks, and burned them with fire. The holy martyrs remained

unyielding, however, and bravely confessed their faith in Christ the Savior. By Nero's command, they were beheaded with the sword (+ ca. 68).

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Martyr Suchias and his Soldiers in Georgia

The Holy Martyr Suchias and his 16 Georgian Companions were illustrious dignitaries who served at the court of the Albanian (Hagbanite) ruler (i.e. "Caucasian Albania" on the present day territory of Azerbaijan).

Escorting the Albanian ruler's daughter Satenika, wife of the Armenian emperor Artaxar (88-123), Saint Suchias and his sixteen companions arrived in Artashat, the ancient capital of Armenia (the city was later destroyed by the Romans in the year 163).

Preaching there at the time was a Greek Christian named Chrysos, who had been enlightened and ordained by the holy Apostle Thaddeus (August 21). The Georgian dignitaries came to believe in Christ the Savior, and they resolved to devote their lives to the service of God. All seventeen of the newly-converted followed Chrysos into

Mesopotamia. When Bishop Chrysos baptized them in the waters of the Euphrates, they were permitted to behold the Lord of Glory, Jesus Christ.

The holy martyrs set up a cross at the place of their Baptism and named it the "Cross of the Annunciation." Bishop Chrysos gave all the saints new names: the eldest was called Suchias (replacing his old name Bagadras), and his companions were named Andrew, Anastasius, Talale, Theodoritus, Ivherion, Jordan, Kondrat, Lukian, Mimnenus, Nerangius, Polyeuctus, James, Phoka, Domentian, Victor and Zosimas.

After the martyric death of Bishop Chrysos, Saint Suchias became the spiritual leader of the brethren. All soon resettled in a wild locality on Mount Sukaketi, not far from the mountain village of Bagrevandi. Here the former dignitaries led very strict ascetic lives. The scant mountain vegetation served as their food, and they drank from a cold spring of water.

The new ruler of pagan Albania, Datianos, learned that his former officials had accepted Christianity and had gone into solitude. He sent his associate Barnapas with a detachment of soldiers to persuade them to return to court and return also to their former faith. Barnapas searched for Saint Suchias and his companions, but keeping their vow of service to God, they refused all entreaties.

Then by order of Barnapas, Saint Suchias and his companions were stretched out and nailed to the ground, and then burned. After this, their bodies were dismembered and scattered all about Mount Sukaketi, from which the martyrs received also the title the "Mesukevians" (more correctly, "Sukaketians"). This occurred in the year 123 (by another account, in the year 130; although an Athos manuscript of the eleventh century from the Iveron monastery gives the year as 100).

The holy relics of the martyrs remained incorrupt and unburied until the fourth century, when they were placed in graves and consigned to the earth by local Christians (the names of the holy martyrs were found written on a cliff).

The holy hieromartyr Gregory, Enlightener of Armenia (September 30), built a church on this spot and established a monastery. And afterwards, a curative spring of water was discovered there.

Martyr Sava the Goth of Wallachia

The Holy Martyr Sava, a Goth, lived during the fourth century. At this time the Arian bishop Wulfilas preached Christianity among the Goths, and Saint Sava was among those who were baptized.

Saint Sava led a virtuous life, devout, peaceful, temperate, simple, and quiet. He avoided women, and spent all his days in prayer. He often sang in church and devoted himself to its welfare, boldly preaching Christianity.

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The Gothic princes and judges, under the influence of the pagan priests, began a persecution against the Christians and demanded that they eat meat offered to idols. Many of the pagans, to save the lives of their friends and relatives who had accepted Christianity, gave them ordinary meat instead of meat offered to idols.

Some Christians agreed to such a ruse, but Saint Sava refused and declared that Christians ought to confess their faith without dissimulation. After this, Saint Sava was driven out by those who lived in his village, but they later asked him to return. When the persecution of Christians had intensified, the fellow villagers of Saint Sava decided to go to the judge and swear that there were no Christians among them. Saint Sava declared, "Do not swear for me, because I am a Christian."

The inhabitants then swore that there was only one Christian in their village. On the judge's orders, Saint Sava was brought to him. The judge, seeing his poverty, decided that he could neither help nor harm anyone, so he set him free.

Meanwhile, the persecution continued. Soon, Atharid, one of the Gothic military commanders, descended on the village during the Feast of Holy Pascha. Saint Sava was preparing to greet the Great Feast with Bishop Guthik, but along the way an angel returned him to his own village. The priest Sapsal had recently arrived there from Greece. Soldiers arrested Sapsal and Saint Sava, whom they did not even allow to get dressed.

The priest rode on a cart, but Saint Sava had to walk naked behind the cart through the thorns, and they beat him with rods and switches. The Lord preserved the martyr, so that in the morning when they reached the city, Saint Sava said to his oppressors, "Look at my body, and see whether there are any traces of the thorns or of your blows."

The soldiers were astonished, seeing the martyr healthy and unharmed, without the slightest trace of injury. Then they stretched Saint Sava on the axles of a cart, and they beat him the whole day. During the night, a certain pious woman got up to prepare food for the household, and seeing the martyr, she set him free. He began to help her with the housework.

During the day, by Atharid's order, they suspended Saint Sava from the lintel of the house. They placed meat offered to idols before him and the priest, offering to set them free if they ate it. The priest Sapsal replied, "We would prefer that Atharid crucify us, than to eat meat defiled by devils."

Saint Sava asked, "Who has sent this food?"

"Master Atharid," the servant replied.

"There is only one Master, God, Who is in Heaven," said the martyr. In anger one of the servants struck Saint Sava in the chest with a spear. Everyone thought that the martyr was dead, but the saint did not feel any pain. He said to the one who had struck him, "Your blow felt as if you had struck me with soft wool."

Atharid gave orders to put Saint Sava to death. They left the priest Sapsal tied up, and led Saint Sava to the River Mussova to drown him. Along the way the saint gave thanks to God for allowing him to suffer for His Holy Name.

During all this the servants said, "Why shouldn't we free this innocent man? Atharid will not find out if we free him." Saint Sava heard them and cried out, "Do as you are commanded! For I see angels coming with glory to receive my soul!" Then they threw the martyr into the river, after they tied a large beam of wood to his neck.

Saint Sava suffered on April 12, 372, when he was thirty-eight years old. The executioners recovered the body of the martyr and threw it on shore, but Christians later hid it. Still later, one of the Scythian leaders, the Christian Junius Saran, brought the relics of Saint Sava to Cappadocia, where they were reverently received by Saint Basil the Great (January 1).

St. Basil of Poiana Marului

Saint Basil, the Elder of Saint Paisius Velichkovsky (November 15), was born toward the end of the seventeenth century. He received monastic tonsure at Dalhautsi-Focshani Skete in 1705 or 1706, laboring in asceticism with great fervor.

Saint Basil was ordained to the holy priesthood, and became igumen of Dalhautsi in 1715. He remained in that position for twenty years, and was a wise instructor of monks, teaching them obedience, humility, and the art of the Jesus Prayer.

The fame of this great spiritual Father began to spread, so that even Prince Constantine Mavrocordat heard of him. Saint Basil's community became known as a spiritual school of hesychasm, based on the wisdom of the Holy Fathers. When the number of his disciples increased until there was no longer room for all of them at Dalhautsi, they settled in other Sketes in the area. In this way, his influence and teaching spread to other places, inspiring a spiritual renewal of Romanian monastic life in the eighteenth century.

Saint Basil renovated the Poiana Manului (Apple Orchard) Skete near the city of Romni-Sarat between 1730-1733, then moved there with twelve disciples. In addition to his duties as Igumen of Poiana Marului, Saint Basil was

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the spiritual guide of all the Sketes in the Buzau Mountains. One of his most famous disciples was Saint Paisius Velichkovsky, whom he tonsured on Mount Athos in 1750.

The holy Elder Basil also wrote introductions to the writings of Saints Gregory of Sinai, Nilus of Sora, and others who wrote about the spiritual life, guarding the mind, and on the Jesus Prayer. He taught that the Holy Scriptures are a “saving medicine” for the soul, and recommended reading the Holy Fathers in order to obtain a correct understanding of Scripture, and to avoid being led astray through misunderstanding. Saint Basil also warned against any inclination to excuse ourselves and our sins, for this hinders true repentance.

Saint Basil fell asleep in the Lord on April 15, 1767, leaving behind many disciples. His influence has been felt in other Orthodox countries beyond the borders of Romania.



St. Ephraim the Great of Atsquri

Saint Ephraim the Great of Atsquri—one of the most important figures in the Georgian Church of the 8th and 9th centuries—was a disciple and companion of Saint Grigol of Khandzta.

On his way from Klarjeti in southern Georgia to Abkhazeti in the northwest, Saint Grigol met the young Ephraim and immediately perceived in him a like-minded companion and the future wonderworker and bishop of Atsquri.

Grigol promised to take the young man as his disciple. On his way back to Klarjeti Saint Grigol accompanied Ephraim and another youth, Arsenius, the future Catholicos of Georgia. He entrusted the upbringing of these two holy youths to his spiritual sons Christopher and Theodore.

The brothers of Khandzta Monastery objected to the arrival of the youths, since the monastery rules prohibited young visitors. But Saint Grigol told them that God had revealed this as His will and that, after being raised at the monastery, these young men would be like spiritual successors of Saint Ephraim the Syrian and Saint Arsenius the Great.

Saint Ephraim was later consecrated bishop of Atsquri and became a major figure in the Church of his time. He significantly contributed to the definitive strengthening of the autocephaly of the Georgian Church. As a result of his labors, the Georgian Church received a blessing from Antioch to prepare its own chrism in Mtskheta.

Saint Ephraim administered the diocese of Atsquri for forty years. God endowed him with the gifts of prophecy, wonder-working, and healing. He lived to an advanced age and reposed peacefully. Even today, those who approach his holy relics are healed of their infirmities. (Saint Ephraim of Atsquri is also mentioned in the Life of Saint Arsenius the Great [commemorated September 25].)

GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

Prokeimenon, Tone 3:

Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; / His understanding is beyond measure! (*Psalm 146:5*)
vs. Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God! (*Psalm 146:2*)

Epistle Reading

The reading from the Acts 5:12-20 of the Holy Apostles

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon's Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

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Alleluia, Tone 8:

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior! (*Psalm 94:1*)
vs. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King over all the earth. (*Psalm 94:3*)

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from John 20:19-31

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them: "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them: "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him: "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them, and said: "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to Him: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.



Daily Inspirations by Abbott Tryphon

Procrastination

Putting off for tomorrow what can be done today



We all have times when we procrastinate. There is a story of a young monk who confessed to his elder that he was always struggling with procrastination. His elder told him it was his lack of faith which made it impossible for him to see God everywhere, and in all things, and for this reason he was careless and lazy about everything having to do with his salvation.

The holy Apostle Paul said, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness. I will all the more gladly boast of my weaknesses, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

It is in our weakness that we tend to put things off, especially when it comes to those things that pertain to our salvation. We know the importance of keeping a prayer rule, of spending time each day with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, and of being productive in our spiritual lives. We know the importance of frequent church attendance, yet put it off. Tomorrow, we tell ourselves, will be the day we will begin to take our spiritual life seriously. Tomorrow we will set our priorities, and keep to them. But tomorrow never comes.

God desires we struggle on a daily basis, ever making progress in our journey into His heart. We only need to make that first step, remembering "...I can do all things in him who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13). Procrastination does not have to dominate our life, for in the Lord we can turn things around and make progress. Procrastination only has power over our lives if we let it. Taking steps to curb the habit of slothfulness must begin with a decision that today, with God's help, will be the day that I leave laziness and procrastination aside, and move forward with action.

It is procrastination that often stands in the way of our combating habitual sins that keep us from making spiritual progress. Procrastination can keep us from reconciling with family members or friends who've been estranged for years. It can keep us from making a good confession, thus unburdening ourselves of guilt that has been weighing us down. Procrastination need not rule our lives.

Fear of failure can also be a cause for procrastination. We fear that we will not be good enough at a task at hand, so we put it off. This is often a common problem among young college students.

Finally, let me make it very clear that I am not addressing the form of procrastination caused by depression. I am referencing that which is caused by laziness.

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PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

[Blessing of the Graves today after Divine Liturgy starting at Union Cemetery and then New Kuban](#)

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Sunday, April 15th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade 3

Saturday, April 21st

11:30 pm: Holy Pascha Vigil (Nocturns, Matins, Divine liturgy)

Sunday, April 22nd

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade 3

Saturday, April 28th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, April 29th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade

Saturday, May 5th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, May 6th

9:30 am: No Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General Confession
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K - Grade

Request & Bulletin Sponsor: 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 will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles can be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times.

General Confession: Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Receiving Holy Communion: Holy Communion is offered to those baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the reception of the Sacrament by prayer and fasting. Blessed Bread is available for all our visitors at the very end of the Divine Liturgy.

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



Daily Reflection The Acts of the Apostles

“While he (the lame man, just healed by the prayer of Peter and John) clung to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the portico called Solomon’s, astounded. And when Peter saw it he addressed the people,

‘Men of Israel, why do you wonder at this, or why do you stare at us, as though by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified his servant Jesus,



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whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he had decided to release him. But you denied the Holy and Righteous One, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Author of life, whom God raised from the dead. To this we are witnesses. And his name, by faith in his name, has made this man strong whom you see and know; and the faith which is through Jesus has given the man this perfect health in the presence of you all.’’ (Acts 3: 11-16)

In the weeks following Pascha and leading up to Pentecost (the 50th day after Pascha), we have daily readings in our churches from the Book of Acts of the Apostles. This book of the New Testament describes how the Apostles “acted,” and how the Holy Spirit “acted” upon and through them, as a consequence of our Lord’s victory over death in His resurrection.

In the reading for this Bright Saturday, quoted above, we can see that St. Peter, who himself had been so weak in faith that he denied Christ thrice during His passion, is now bringing healing and instruction to others, by his now-renewed and Spirit-strengthened faith. Here, when Peter points out to the people, “...you denied the Holy and Righteous One...,” he is not being hypocritical, as one might think, – because Peter, after all, “also” denied the Holy and Righteous One, during His passion. No, in the event described above, which happened after the risen Lord’s healing conversation with Peter, in which Peter is invited to affirm thrice that he “loves” Christ (Jn 21), and after Peter had been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost (Acts 2), Peter has learned his own limitations, and the fact that it is not “by our own power or piety” that any follower of Christ can bring about healing, or do any good, in this world. So, Peter hasn’t been brought either to silence or inaction, through his sin. Because he has allowed himself to be healed, both by responding to our Lord Jesus Christ’s forgiving love, and by further sticking around, in the community of Christ’s followers, for the descent of the Holy Spirit.

So let me also stick around, in community and communion with Christ and His followers, whatever “denials” of Christ I have demonstrated in the past. Let me stick around, that I may have that conversation with the Lord, even today, in which I affirm that I love Him; and that I may embrace His Spirit, Whom He sends abundantly upon us every day, when we don’t block Him out. Thank You, God, that it is not “by our own power or piety” that we become useful to ourselves and others, but by faith in You. Let me be in You, and You in me, today, as I re-focus on You, despite my own weaknesses.

Orthodox Quote of the Day

In spite of our sinfulness, in spite of the darkness surrounding our souls, the Grace of the Holy Spirit, conferred by baptism in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, still shines in our hearts with the inextinguishable light of Christ... and when the sinner turns to the way of repentance the light smooths away every trace of the sins committed, clothing the former sinner in the garments of incorruption, spun of the Grace of the Holy Spirit. It is this acquisition of the Holy Spirit about which I have been speaking.

St. Seraphim of Sarov