

*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      Sub-Deacon Vlashi  
Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky      Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



**Sunday, April 17, 2016**

Gospel: Mark 10:32-45

Saint: Luke 7:36-50

**Tone 5**

Epistle: Hebrews 9:11-14

Saint: Galatians 3:23-29

*5th Sunday of Great Lent: St Mary of Egypt*

**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**



*5th Sunday of Great  
Lent: St Mary of Egypt*

**Glory  
Forever!**

*Having been a sinful woman, you became through repentance a Bride of Christ.  
Having attained angelic life, you defeated demons with the weapon of the Cross.  
Therefore, most glorious Mary, you are a Bride of the Kingdom!*

## **Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints**

**5th Sunday of Great Lent— Tone 5. St Mary of Egypt.** Hieromartyr Simeon, Bishop in Persia, and those with him: Martyrs Abdechalias and Ananias— Presbyters, Usthazanes, Fusicus (Pusicius), Ascitrea, Azades the Eunuch, and many others (344). St. Acacius, Bishop of Melitene (ca. 433). Ven. Zosíma, Abbot of Solovétsky Monastery (1478). Uncovering of the Relics of Ven. Alexander, Abbot of Svir (1641). Martyr Adrian of Corinth (251). St. Agapitus, Pope of Rome (536). Repose of Ven. Macarios of Corinth (1805).

## **Prayer Requests**

### **For Health of:**

**Daniel DeMaso** on his 11<sup>th</sup> birthday; offered by the Jankowski family.

**Linda Jankowski** on her birthday; offered by her sons & husband.

**Robert & Andrew Morris** on their birthdays; offered by their families.

**Mother Sophronia**, a nun of our Diocese, attached to St. Olympia Mission in Potsdam, NY, who suffered a heart attack and is being treated at St. Joseph's Hospital in Syracuse; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

Members of the **Zablotsky Family** in Ukraine: Anna, Michael, Bohdan and Maria; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

**Savina**, the handmaiden of God; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

### **In Memory of:**

**Adele Taran**, mother Holly Dawson.

Please remember in your prayers the newly departed servant of God,

+ **Daniel**, and his family, **Renee, Trevor and Madeline**, grieving the sudden repose in the Lord of their husband and father; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.



### *Liturgical Schedule:*

#### **Sunday, April 17<sup>th</sup>**

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

#### **Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

#### **Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **Sunday, April 24<sup>th</sup>**

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

#### **Wednesday, April 27<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

#### **Friday, April 29<sup>th</sup>**

7:00 pm: Matins Service

#### **Saturday, April 30<sup>th</sup>**

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

#### **Sunday, May 1<sup>st</sup>**

Pascha - No Church Service

#### **Saturday, May 7<sup>th</sup>**

6:30pm: Vespers

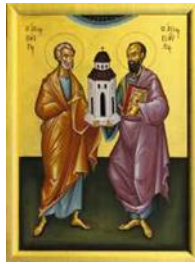
#### **Sunday, May 8<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am: No Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

### *Bulletin Sponsors:*

*Jankowski Family, Morris  
Family & Holly Dawson*

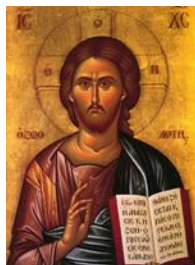
### *Readings:*



**Epistle:** Hebrews 9:11-14; Galatians 3:23-29

**Brethren**, when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the Holy Place, taking not the blood of goats and calves but his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption. For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify your conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

**Brethren**, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.



**Gospel:** Mark 10:32-45; Luke 7:36-50

**At that time**, Jesus went on with his disciples, to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they told him, "John the Baptist; and others say, Eli'jah; and others one of the prophets." And he asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Christ." And he charged them to tell no one about him. And he began to teach them that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

**At that time**, one of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house, and took his place at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it, Teacher?" "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly."



Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."



### ***5th Sunday of Great Lent: St Mary of Egypt***

Our venerable mother Mary of Egypt was a desert ascetic who repented of a life of prostitution. She lived during the sixth century, and passed away in a remarkable manner in 522. The Church celebrates her feast day on the day of her repose, April 1; additionally, she is commemorated on the Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt, the fifth Sunday in Great Lent.

She began her life as a young woman who followed the passions of the body, running away from her parents at age twelve for Alexandria. There she lived as a harlot for seventeen years, refusing money from the men that she copulated with, instead living by begging and spinning flax.

One day, however, she met a group of young men heading toward the sea to sail to Jerusalem for the veneration of the Holy Cross. Mary went along for the ride, seducing the men as they traveled for the fun of it. But when the group reached Jerusalem and actually went towards the church, Mary was prohibited from entering by an unseen force. After three such attempts, she remained outside on the church patio, where she looked up and saw an icon of the Theotokos. She began to weep and prayed with all her might that the Theotokos might allow her to see the True Cross; afterwards, she promised, she would renounce her worldly desires and go wherever the Theotokos may lead her.

After this heart-felt conversion at the doors of the church, she fled into the desert to live as an ascetic. She survived for years on only three loaves of bread and thereafter on scarce herbs of the land. For another seventeen years, Mary was tormented by "wild beasts—mad desires and passions." After these years of temptation, however, she overcame the passions and was led by the Theotokos in all things.

Following 47 years in solitude, she met the priest St. Zosima in the desert, who pleaded with her to tell him of her life. She recounted her story with great humility while also demonstrating her gift of clairvoyance; she knew who Zosima was and his life story despite never having met him before. Finally, she asked Zosima to meet her again the following year at sunset on Holy Thursday by the banks of the Jordan.

Zosima did exactly this, though he began to doubt his experience as the sun began to go that night. Then Mary appeared on the opposite side of the Jordan; crossing herself, she miraculously walked across the water and met Zosima. When he attempted to bow, she rebuked him, saying that as a priest he was far superior, and furthermore, he was holding the Holy Mysteries. Mary then received communion and walked back across the Jordan after giving Zosima instructions about his monastery and that he should return to where they first met exactly a year later. When he did so, he found Mary's body with a message written on the sand asking him for burial and revealing that she had died immediately after receiving the Holy Mysteries the year before (and thus had been miraculously transported to the spot where she now lay). So Zosima, amazed, began to dig, but soon tired; then a lion approached and began to help him, that is, after Zosima had recovered from his fear of the creature. Thus St. Mary of Egypt was buried. Zosima returned to the monastery, told all he had seen, and improved the faults of the monks and abbot there. He died at almost a hundred years old in the same monastery.

Later, the story of Mary's life was written down by St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

The Life of St. Mary of Egypt is read during Great Lent along with the Great Canon of St. Andrew.





**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](mailto: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*

***Our Church Cleanup Day this year will be next Saturday, April 23<sup>rd</sup> 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 or Linda Dantinne. The basket will include traditional Paschal food items including ham, kielbasa, eggs, and cheese. Each parishioner is asked to please sell 10 tickets.

This 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*

#### **Diocesan Diaconal Formation Program**

The Diaconal Formation Program immerses students in the life of the Orthodox Church through serving in the altar, singing in the choir, and studying Scripture, Church History, Liturgics, and Spirituality. The Diaconal Formation program meets every Saturday from September to December (Fall Semester) and January to May (Spring Semester). Students attend one of two campuses: Endicott NY or Philadelphia PA. Completion of the course of studies fulfills the necessary academic requirements for ordination to the Holy Diaconate. In accordance with Canon Law, all decisions regarding ordination rest with the diocesan hierarch. Men among the laity interested in pursuing theological study, spiritual formation, and liturgical training, and sense they might be called to the diaconal ministry, are encouraged to seek guidance from their parish priest.



#### *Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News* **Parishes: Send us your 2016 Holy Week, Pascha photos!** *SYOSSET, NY [OCA]*

All parishes and institutions of the Orthodox Church in America are invited to submit by e-mail a maximum of three [3] photos from their Holy Week and Paschal celebrations. Photos should be sent as attachments to [info@oca.org](mailto:info@oca.org) no later than Monday, May 16, 2016. As in years past, the photos will be featured on the OCA web site and Facebook page in a special photo gallery.

Of special interest are photos of the services, the faithful, processions, fellowship, baptisms and receptions, etc.

Unfortunately, requests to extract photos from parish web sites, photo albums, slide shows, etc. cannot be honored. Please include in the body of the e-mail a caption for each photo, and clearly indicate the name and location of the parish and the names of officiating clergy.

#### **Revised text of Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko’s “The Orthodox Faith” series on-line**

The complete revised text of the four volume “The Orthodox Faith” series by the late Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko is now available on-line.

The revised and expanded text was released by Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press on March 18, 2016—the first anniversary of Father Thomas’ repose. [See related story.]

Revisions include combining the expanded “Bible” section—part of Volume Three, originally known as “Bible and Church History”—with Volume One, formerly titled “Doctrine.” The new Volume One is titled “Doctrine and Scripture”, while Volume Three—“Church History”—has been greatly revised and expanded by Dr. David C. Ford, Professor of Church History at Saint Tikhon’s Seminary. The revised Volumes Two and Four—“Worship” and “Spirituality”—also feature revisions. All four volumes now include listings of additional resources and new illustrations.

Hard copies of the four volume set—an ideal resource for individual and group study and an essential addition to every parish and home library—are available for \$55.00. Each volume also may be purchased individually. Orders may be placed on-line from Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press and Bookstore or by calling 1-800-204-BOOK.





### **Volunteers Urgently Needed for OCMC Teaching Team to Indonesia at the End of June!**

On June 28th, OCMC will be sending a team of Orthodox volunteers to teach the Faith in Medan, Indonesia. This teaching is needed by the Orthodox faithful, especially the youth, in this predominately Muslim country, and volunteers are needed for this team now more than ever. Please consider applying if you are able to give your time to help strengthen the Faith of Orthodox children in Indonesia by visiting <http://www.ocmc.org>, e-mailing [teams@ocmc.org](mailto:teams@ocmc.org), or by calling 1-877-463-6784 ext. 141.

### **OCMC Welcomes His Eminence Konstantinos of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Singapore and South Asia**

Last week, OCMC was honored to welcome His Eminence Metropolitan Konstantinos of the Orthodox Metropolitanate of Singapore and South Asia. His Eminence shared with the OCMC staff many of the good works being done by the Church in the Metropolis which is home to more than a fifth of the world's population, but is still mostly non-Christian.

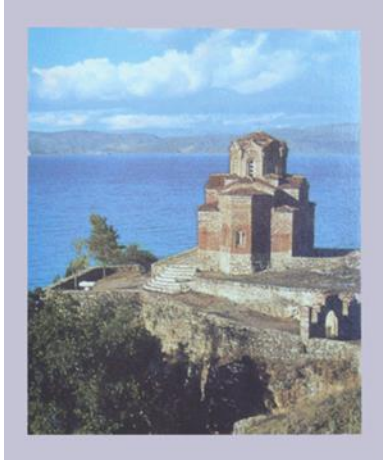
Though the Metropolis now has 32 priests, 25 churches, 2 monasteries, and a theological school, Orthodox Christianity is not well-known in this part of the world. "Orthodox" is a term usually associated with Judaism, and "Christian" is associated with Protestantism typically. Still, the Church has begun to take root in many of the countries throughout the Metropolis, living in harmony with the other major Faith groups that have a much larger presence, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam.

More often than not, the Church has tried to introduce itself through gestures of goodwill – witnessing for the love of Christ by being the love of Christ for any and all who need it. The Church has established many philanthropic ministries throughout the Metropolis, including 8 clinics, a hospital, a dentistry clinic, 2 orphanages, 2 boarding houses, 5 kindergartens, 10 primary schools, 2 high schools, and a technical academy. Each of these ministries service people regardless of their religious or ethnic affiliation. Providing these services to people in need has earned the Church respect, in some instances even where perceptions of Christians are less than favorable.

In other cases, the Church has revealed itself through miraculous movements of the Holy Spirit. One story His Eminence shared was of a man whose son had slipped into a coma. He and his family were Hindu. He had prayed to his gods pleading for them to heal his son. Desperate, he then asked an Orthodox priest to pray for his son. The priest prayed, and his son came out of his coma and has now fully recovered! Shortly after, the man and his entire family became Orthodox.

OCMC is committed to helping the Church in South Asia to continue its loving witness. Each year OCMC sends Mission Teams to the Metropolis. This year OCMC is sending a healthcare team and two teaching teams to Indonesia! OCMC also helps support the Metropolis' clergy through the Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) program. Please visit [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org), e-mail [missions@ocmc.org](mailto:missions@ocmc.org), or call 1-877-463-6784 FREE if you'd like to help the Church in South Asia through one of these programs.





***Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, LIII:***

*Let heaven descend* and let the earth arise, when the pre-eternal Nous, born of the Holy Spirit and the Most Pure Virgin in the cave of my soul, opens His mouth.

His words drip onto cemeteries, and ashes turn green and blossom.

Those rejected by the world, who have also rejected the world, run to greet Him, but those cherished by the world flee from Him in terror.

"I and the Father are one. Before man was, I am." --Thus speaks Wisdom, born in your virginity, my soul. Listen and understand your eternity, which was lost in the ashes of time.

"Every soul, who does the will of the heavenly Father, can be called a mother of God's Wisdom." Thus speaks the Wisdom of God, born of the Holy Spirit within you, my soul:

"I am the life and the resurrection of the dead. Whoever severs his bond with Me, has severed his bond with life and becomes like a cloud of smoke in which there is neither light nor moisture.

"You who think that you are alive, but are in fact a dead cloud of smoke blown about by capricious winds; come to Me, and I shall fill you with light and water, with true light and living water, and you will be truly alive.

"You who are voluntarily coming to Me and filling yourselves with My life, are losing yourselves, such selves as the world made you, and are becoming one with Me, just as I am one with the heavenly Father. Truly you will no longer fear time, for time is the scourge of the world, and belongs to the world, not to Me.

"Nor will you be confounded by tribulations in time and space. All tribulations are merely the imaginary hissing of time's scourge in a playground, and they belong to the world, not to Me. "Peace I give to you, peace which time cannot consume, peace which space cannot constrict, peace which even all the tribulations of the world cannot confound. "Those who are filled with the world are devoid of life, and are slaves of the world. Those who are filled with life are devoid of the world, and are the sons of life.

"I am full of life, and there is no death in Me, not even so much as the tip of a needle. Therefore the world fails to recognize Me, for there is nothing of the world within Me. The world knows only its own, just as life knows only its own.

"And truly, I am the most unknown guest in the world. I have come to offer, not to take. From My own fullness I offer; from nothingness there is nothing to take. My fullness -- is the fullness of God, who sent Me into the world to give Myself to the world, to bring cemeteries to life, and then to return again to the Kingdom of Life. I and life are one. Before Adam was, I am; and after Adam was, I am."9

O my soul, rise from the dead! While the One who can resurrect you is within you, arise! If He ever leaves you, you will not be able to do anything except give birth to the dead and bury the dead. Transform yourselves into listening and obedience, you lifeless offspring of my soul, and arise from the tomb.

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***Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, LII:***

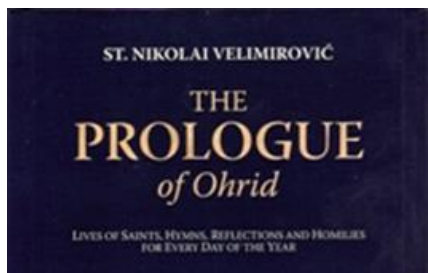
**II. The Realities of the Spiritual World  
The Saints**

"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.

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





### **1. The Priestly-Martyr Simeon, Bishop of Persia**

During the reign of the wicked Emperor Sapor [Savori], Simeon was tortured for Christ along with his two presbyters, Audel and Ananias. The emperor's eunuch, Ustazan--who had earlier denied Christ and afterward, touched by the rebuke of St. Simeon, had again confessed the true Faith before the emperor--was executed before them. A thousand other Christians were also led to the place of execution with Simeon. Simeon intentionally moved out of the way in order to be the last one to be beheaded. He did this to encourage the other Christians to the end, so that not one of them would waver because of their fear of death. When the presbyter Ananias placed his head on the chopping block, his entire body quivered. The emperor's court clerk, Fusik, who secretly was a Christian, began to encourage Ananias saying: "Do not be afraid, old man, close your eyes and be brave, so that you may see the Divine Light." As soon as Fusik said this, he was recognized as a Christian and was accused before the emperor. The emperor exhausted him through great torture, as well as his daughter, the maiden Askitria. After St. Simeon saw his flock depart to the other world, he was finally beheaded. The following year on Great Friday (Good Friday), Azat [Ustazan], the beloved eunuch of the emperor, was also slain for Christ and with him a thousand other faithful. Then the emperor mourned for his eunuch and suspended the further killing of Christians. They all suffered honorably for Christ the King and Lord in the year 341 or 344 A.D.

### **2. Saint Acacius, Bishop of Melitene**

Acacius lived the ascetical life in the place where he was born, i.e., in Melitene, Armenia. Blessed Otreius, the bishop of that city, who participated at the Second Ecumenical Council [Constantinople 381 A.D.], ordained him a presbyter. Following the death of Otreius, Acacius became a bishop. He participated in the Third Ecumenical Council [Ephesus 431 A.D.], which condemned the evil blasphemy of Nestorius against the Mother of God. Here, together with St. Cyril of Alexandria, Acacius zealously fought for the purity of the Orthodox Faith. St. Acacius possessed much grace from God and worked many miracles. After long and zealous service to God, Acacius died peacefully in the year 435 A.D.

### **3. Saint Agapitius, Pope of Rome**

Agapitus was sent to the Emperor Justinian in Constantinople by Theodotus, King of the Goths, to dissuade him from his campaign against the Goths. En route, he healed a mute and blind person. In Constantinople, Agapitus assisted in confirming Orthodoxy, and died in the year 536 A.D.

### **4. The Venerables Sabatius and Zosimus**

Sabatius and Zosimus were the co-founders of the ascetic [monastic] community on the Solovetz (Solovki) Island in the White Sea. Many great saints were glorified in the Solovetz Monastery. St. Sabatius died in 1435 A.D., and Zosimus died in 1478 A.D.

#### **Hymn of Praise** *Saint Zosimus*

On an desert isle amidst the stormy sea,  
Beyond the vanity of the world and beyond conversation,  
Zosimus, his soul nourishes with prayers



And defends it from demons with the Name of God.  
Vicious demons become embittered against him,  
And all of their power, against him, direct.  
To them, Zosimus speaks: "In vain is your effort  
As long as the mighty hand of God protects me.  
To slay me, is it the will of God?  
Then strike quickly, and time do not waste!  
Why do you change yourselves into beasts and serpents,  
Into angry wolves, tigers and scorpions,  
When you do not have the strength of shadows  
In order to do me any harm?  
You are dreadful only to the sons of sin  
And to the lovers of pleasure and laughter.  
But to the lovers of Christ's yoke,  
The Mother of God, and pure asceticism,  
You are like the fog, which the wind carries,  
Which one moment is blown in and the next moment blown away.  
If the fog, a rock, is able to uproot,  
Then me, a sinner, you are able to sway!  
Leave me alone; I give not myself over to you.  
I am the servant of Christ; I look to Christ."

### **Reflection**

After the Fourth Ecumenical Council [Chalcedon, 451 A.D.] the heretical Emperor Anastasius banished the Orthodox Patriarchs Elias of Jerusalem and Flavian of Antioch into exile. One day, simultaneously, both saints discerned the death of the heretical emperor and sent each other the news of this, saying: "Anastasius is dead! Let us also go to stand judgment with him before God." The emperor died, and two days later both patriarchs died. What zeal for the True Faith! What a humble hope before God's judgment! For these saints, it was not a matter of living longer on earth but the matter of God's truth. Neither did they say: "We judged him," but, "May God judge him!" Our stay on earth is not for the sake of sojourning, but for a personal choice for good or for evil, for truth or for falsehood. Blessed are we if, in everything, we trust God's will and hope in God's judgment. For in all things, one must have a strong faith. These Orthodox archpastors had strong faith. St. Acacius also had strong faith. Once, during a great drought, when the people were despairing, this wonderful Acacius led a procession of the people through the town and to its outskirts. He ordered that the Divine Liturgy be celebrated outside the town before the Church of St. Eustace. After consecrating the Holy Gifts, Acacius did not want to pour water into the wine, but prayed to God that He, the Most-High, would send down water into the chalice from the clouds. God heard the prayer of His faithful servant and sent abundant rain onto the dry fields as well as into the honorable chalice.

### **Contemplation**

To contemplate the resurrected Lord Jesus:

1. How for forty days after the Resurrection He remained on earth, showing Himself to the faithful and strengthening them in the Faith;
2. How by His forty-day manifestation, He demonstrated that He did not resurrect for His sake, but for the sake of mankind.



**Homily:  
About the wonderful promise of Christ**

*"I will give the victor the right to sit with Me on My throne" (Revelation 3:21).*

This, brethren, is the promise of Christ, the Victor over the devil, sin and death.

But the devil, sin and death are stronger than man. Who can overcome them? No one, except Christ and those who stand firm with Christ and with His weapons enter into battle.

The devil is as old as the world, and even older than the world. How can a man, whose life-span is measured by a pendulum, defeat him who, for many thousands of years, has learned to wage battle against man? How can a mortal overpower all the temptation of the devil, whose number equals the number of sins on earth? By no means, if he does not know that the Lord Jesus conquered the three main types of diabolical temptations on the high mountain. By no means, if a man does not remain firm and steadfast alongside Christ, Who is older than time and mightier than all the angels, both evil and good.

Sin is as old as the devil. How can man, whose life-span is measured by a pendulum, avoid sin, which, as a contagious disease and evil odor, has been passed from generation to generation, from man to man, since man has existed on this earth? By no means, if he does not know that there exists one Man, the One and Only, Who did not commit sin, either in birth or after birth; the God-Man Jesus Christ, Who, through the humbleness of His humanity and the fire of His Divinity, crushed sin on the Cross. By no means, if a man does not stand firm with Christ, Who is older than sin and Who is mightier than all of the sowers and carriers of sin.

Death is as old as man expelled from Paradise. How can a man, whose life span is measured by a pendulum, conquer death in this worldly grave? By no means, if he does not acknowledge the power of the Cross, the suffering of Christ, and the truth of His Resurrection from the grave. By no means, if he does not stand firm with Christ, the Almighty Victor over death.

Oh, what a glorious reward for those who achieve victory! They will be seated and crowned with wreaths of glory on the throne of the greatest Victor on earth and in heaven!

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**



***The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration with Abbott  
Tryphon***

**The All-Pure One  
*The holiness and purity of the Ever Virgin Mary***

The Orthodox Church teaches, as did the early Church, that the Holy Virgin Mary was sinless, not because she was born without sin, as in the Roman Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, but because Mary chose not to sin. While we acknowledge Protestants have always undervalued Mary because of their zeal in separating themselves from all things Roman, we Orthodox have maintained the ancient teachings concerning her sinless state.

It is good to keep in mind that what is clear to some, may not be clear to others. The Bible ALWAYS has to be interpreted according to the Mind and Memory of the Church. Although Saint Paul told us that "all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23)", the word "all" throughout the Bible often means "some". It is a general rule that everyone has sinned, but sometimes "all" means almost everyone, and sometimes "many" means everyone, like the words "shed for you and for many for the remission of sins (Matthew 26:28)." In the latter case, "many" means "for all". Like all rules of grammar, there are exceptions.

Everyone born of father and mother is born suffering the effects of the ancestral sin brought about by the disobedience of our first parents. These include pain, sickness, an inclination toward evil rather than



good, and of course, death. No one is born guilty of any actual, personal sins. We are born sinless in this sense, but still suffering the effects of the sin of Adam. However, “all have sinned” cannot include our Lord Jesus Christ. It apparently didn’t include Enoch either, whom the Bible says was righteous and was therefore assumed up into heaven.

With the Bible, we don’t know the truth unless we know the Mind of the Church. In Timothy we read that the Church is the pillar and ground of truth. The Holy Apostle Peter tells us that “knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation II Peter 1:20”). The Church is the pillar and ground of the Truth, and only the Church can interpret the Holy Scriptures. Never did Jesus say, “take, read, this is my book”.

Ultimately, it is always the Mind of the Church that we must reference for all teachings, including that which is taught and believed regarding the Holy Virgin. The Western teaching that the Holy Virgin was born without sin was not accepted by any Christians until the Papal church adopted this doctrine in the ninth century.

From an Orthodox view, this teaching completely negates the Virgin Mary’s virtue, for how could she have represented all of humanity, as the new Eve, had she not been born like the rest of us? It was her purity and virtue that made her the candidate to become the Theotokos (God Bearer). She was chosen to become the living tabernacle of the Logos because of her holiness and her purity. She freely chose to be obedient to the Will of God, whereas the first Eve had chosen disobedience.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon



### *Daily Reflection* **Spiritual Procrastination**

*“My soul, my soul, arise! Why are you sleeping? The end is drawing near, and you will be confounded. Awake then, that Christ our God*

*may spare you, Who is everywhere, and fills all things.”* (Kontakion-hymn, Canon of St. Andrew of Crete)

Every year, as the end of Lent draws near, we sing this Kontakion in the middle of the Great Canon (on Thursday of the fifth week of Lent), which calls me to retrieve a sense of urgency about my meeting and walking with Christ. He is soon to walk His final journey, taking on my sins, my death, and my hell, in order to raise me up again in His glorious resurrection. But I tend to procrastinate and even “sleep,” as His disciples slept in Gethsemane, while the Lord prayed and was “deeply grieved, even unto death,” that the cup He was about to drink for us pass from Him. (Mt 26: 38-40)

Let me take a good look today at my spiritual procrastination, and “arise” to walk with Him again, however awkwardly and imperfectly. Let me take a quiet moment for heartfelt prayer, re-connecting with Him “Who is everywhere, and fills all things,” including me, whenever I scramble to my feet and follow His call: “See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand.” (Mt 26: 45-46)



### *The Philokalia: Daily Readings*

The task of virtue is to contend against hardship and suffering. The prize for victory, given to those who stand their ground, is the soul’s dispassion

+ *St Maximus the Confessor, 500 Various Texts*



*Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers*

**"True Fasting"**

Another old man came to see one of the Fathers, who cooked a few lentils and said to him: "Let us say a few prayers," and the first completed the whole Psalter, and the brother recited the two great prophets by heart. When morning came, the visitor went away, and they forgot the food. Fasting here witnesses that the true nourishment of Christians is prayer and meditation on the word of God, not the eating of food.

**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 Resurrection Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Pascha Baskets