

*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 Searfoorce, 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 \(Resurrection\) in Tone 3](#)

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead. And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out: “O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

### [Troparion \(from the Pentecostarion\) in Tone 2](#)

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the Tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices, and placed it in a new tomb. But Thou didst arise on the third day, O Lord, granting the world great mercy.

### [Troparion \(from the Pentecostarion\) in Tone 2](#)

The Angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said: “Myrrh is fitting for the dead; but Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption! So proclaim: ‘The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.’”

### [Kontakion \(from the Pentecostarion\) in Tone 2](#)

Thou didst command the Myrrhbearers to rejoice, O Christ God. By Thy Resurrection, Thou didst stop the lamentation of Eve, the first mother. Thou didst command them to preach to Thine Apostles: “The Savior is risen from the tomb!”

### [Kontakion \(Pascha\) in Tone 8](#)

Thou didst descend into the tomb, O Immortal, Thou didst destroy the power of death. In victory Thou didst arise, O Christ God, proclaiming, “Rejoice!” to the Myrrhbearing Women, granting peace to Thine Apostles, and bestowing Resurrection on the fallen.

## *Prayer Requests*

### *For Health of:*

**Inna**, grandmother of Matushka Katerina Vansuch, who sustained serious injuries in a fall and is receiving treatment in Russia where she lives; and **Genevieve**, hospitalized after recently suffering a stroke, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

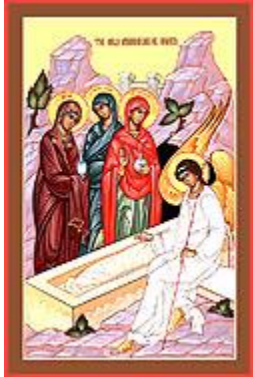
**Archpriest Jason Kappanadze**, having full knee replacement surgery on Wednesday April 25<sup>th</sup>, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

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## SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

APRIL 22, 2018

3RD SUNDAY OF PASCHA: MYRRHBEARING WOMEN



### *Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women with the Noble Joseph*

Today we commemorate the Holy Myrrh-bearing women Saints Mary Magdalene (July 22), Mary the wife of Clopas, Joanna (June 27), Salome, mother of the sons of Zebedee (August 3), Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus (June 4). Also Saint Joseph of Arimathea (July 31), and Nicodemus.

The holy right-believing Queen Tamara of Georgia is commemorated twice during the year: on May 1, the day of her repose, and also on the Sunday of the Myrrh-Bearing Women.

Synaxis of all Saints of Thessalonica.

Saint Seraphim Bishop of Phanar (December 4, 1610)

New Martyr Elias Ardunis (January 31, 1686)

New Martyr Demetrius of the Peolponnesos (April 13, 1803)



### *St. Theodore the Sykeote the Bishop of Anastasiopolis*

Saint Theodore the Sykeote was born in the mid-sixth century in the village of Sykeon, not far from the city of Anastasiopolis (in Galatia, Asia Minor), into a pious family. When his mother Maria conceived the saint, she had a vision of a bright star overshadowing her womb. A clairvoyant Elder, whom she consulted, explained that this was the grace of God being poured forth on the infant in her womb.

When the boy reached the age of six, his mother presented him with a golden belt, since she intended that her son should become a soldier. That night the Holy Great Martyr George (April 23) appeared to her in a dream, and he told her not to consider military service for her son, because the boy was destined to serve God. The saint's father, Cosmas, had served as a messenger of the emperor Justinian the Great (527-565), and he died at an early age. The boy remained in the care of his mother, and his grandmother Elpis, his aunt Dispenia and his little sister Vlatta also lived with them.

In school, Saint Theodore displayed great aptitude in his studies, chief of which was an uncommon ability for reasoning and wisdom. He was quiet, mild, he always knew how to calm his comrades, and he did not permit fights or quarrels among them.

The pious Elder Stephen also lived at his mother's house. Imitating him, Saint Theodore at the age of eight began to eat only a small morsel of bread in the evening during Great Lent. So that his mother should not force him to take supper with everyone, the boy returned home from school only toward evening, after he had partaken of the Holy Mysteries with Elder Stephen. At the request of his mother, the teacher began to send him home to supper at the end of his lessons. Saint Theodore, however, ran to the church of the Great Martyr George, where the saint appeared to him in the form of a youth, and ushered him into the church.

When Saint Theodore turned ten, he fell deathly ill. They brought him to the church of Saint John the Baptist and placed him in front of the altar. The boy was healed by two drops of water that fell from the face of the Savior in the dome of the temple. At this time the Great Martyr George began appearing to the boy at night, and also leading him to his own temple to pray until morning. His mother, fearing the dangers of the forest at night, urged her son not to go at night.

Once, when the boy had already gone, she angrily followed him to the church, and she dragged him out by the hair and tied him to his bed. But that very night the Great Martyr George appeared to her in a dream, and commanded her not to hinder the child from going to church. Both Elpis and Dispenia had the same vision. The women then understood Saint Theodore's special calling, and they no longer hindered him. Even his little sister Vlatta began to imitate him.

At twelve years of age, the saint had a dream in which he saw Christ on the Throne of Glory, Who said to him, "Struggle, Theodore, so that you may obtain a perfect reward in the Kingdom of Heaven."

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From that time, Saint Theodore began to intensify his labors. He spent both the First Week of Great Lent and the Week of the Veneration of the Cross in complete silence.

The devil considered how to destroy him. He appeared to the saint in the form of his classmate Gerontius, and urged him to jump off a precipice, but the Great Martyr George saved the boy.

Another time, the boy went into the desert to obtain the blessing of the Elder Glycerius. Then there was a terrible drought throughout the land, and the Elder said, "Child, let us pray to the Lord on bended knee, asking Him to send rain. Then we shall learn whether our prayers are pleasing to the Lord." The old man and the boy began to pray, and immediately it began to rain. Then the Elder said to Saint Theodore, that the grace of God was upon him, and he blessed him to become a monk when the time came.

When he was fourteen, Saint Theodore left home and lived near the church of the Great Martyr George. His mother brought him food, but Saint Theodore left everything on the stones by the church, and he ate only a single prosphora each day. Even at such a young age, Saint Theodore was granted the gift of healing. Through his prayers a demon-possessed youth was restored to health.

Saint Theodore then fled human glory and he withdrew into complete solitude. Under a large boulder not far from the church of Saint George, he dug a cave and persuaded a certain deacon to cover over the entrance with earth, leaving only a small opening for air. The deacon brought him bread and water and he told no one, where the monk had hidden himself.

For two years Saint Theodore lived in this seclusion and complete quiet. His relatives mourned for the saint, thinking that he had been devoured by wild beasts.

The deacon finally revealed the secret, since he was afraid that Saint Theodore would perish in the narrow cave, and moreover he pitied the weeping mother. They took Saint Theodore out of the cave barely alive.

The mother wanted to take her son home and nurse him back to health, but the saint remained near the church of Saint George, and after several days he was completely well.

News of the youth's exploits reached the local bishop Theodosius, who ordained him to the diaconate, and later to the holy priesthood, although the saint was only seventeen years old at the time.

After a certain while Saint Theodore went to venerate the holy places in Jerusalem, and there at the Chozeba Lavra near Jordan, he received monastic tonsure.

When he returned to his native land, he again continued to live near the church of Saint George. His grandmother Elpis, his sister Vlatta and his mother entered a women's monastery on the saint's advice, and his aunt died in a good confession.

The ascetic life of the young hieromonk attracted to him people seeking salvation. The saint tonsured the youth Epiphanius, and later on a pious woman, healed by the saint from her sickness, brought him her son Philoumenus. Then the virtuous youth John also came to him. Thus brethren gradually gathered around the monk.

Saint Theodore continued in his harsh labors. At his request a blacksmith made him an iron cage without a roof, and so narrow that it was scarcely possible to stand. In this cage the monk stood in heavy chains from Holy Pascha until the Nativity of Christ. From the Baptism of the Lord until Holy Pascha he secluded himself in his cave, from which he emerged only for church services on Saturdays and Sundays. Throughout the whole of the forty-day Fast the saint ate only greens, and bread on Saturdays and Sundays.

Living in such manner, he received from the Lord the power over wild animals. Bears and wolves came up to him and took food from his hand. Through the saint's prayers, those afflicted with leprosy were healed, and demons were cast out from whole districts. In the nearby village of Magatia, when locusts threatened the crops, people turned to Saint Theodore for help. He sent them to church. After Divine Liturgy, which he served, the villagers returned home and learned that during the service all the locusts had died.

When the military commander Mauricius was returning to Constantinople by way of Galatia after a Persian war, the monk predicted that he would become emperor. The prediction came true, and the emperor Mauricius (582-602) fulfilled the saint's request: he sent bread to the monastery each year for the multitude of people being fed there.

The small temple of Saint George could not accommodate all those who wanted to pray in it. Then through the efforts of the saint a beautiful new church was built. During this while the Bishop of Anastasiopolis happened to die. The people of the city requested Metropolitan Paul of Ancyra to install Saint Theodore as their bishop.

So that the saint would not resist, the messengers of the Metropolitan and the people of Anastasiopolis dragged him out of his cell by force and carried him into the city.

As bishop, Saint Theodore toiled much for the welfare of the Church, but his soul yearned for solitary communion with God. After several years he went to venerate the holy places in Jerusalem. And there, concealing his identity, he settled at the Lavra of Saint Sava, where he lived in solitude from the Nativity of Christ until Pascha. Then the Great Martyr George led him to return to Anastasiopolis.

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Secret enemies tried to poison the saint, but the Mother of God gave him three small pieces of grain. The saint ate them and remained unharmed. Saint Theodore felt weighed down with the burden of being a bishop and he asked Patriarch Cyriacus of Constantinople (595-606) for a release to return to his own monastery and celebrate the services there.

Theodore's sanctity was so evident that when he celebrated the Eucharist, the grace of the Holy Spirit appeared as a radiant purple light, overshadowed the Holy Gifts. One time, when the saint elevated the discus with the holy Lamb and proclaimed "Holy things are for the holy," the holy Lamb floated up in the air, and then settled again upon the discus.

The Orthodox Church venerated Saint Theodore as a saint, even while he was still alive.

In one of the cities of Galatia, a terrible event occurred: during a church procession the wooden crosses being carried began to strike each other by themselves, with the result that Patriarch Thomas (607-610, March 21) summoned Saint Theodore, asking him the meaning of this terrible portent. Having the gift of foresight, Saint Theodore explained that this indicated coming misfortunes for the Church of God (he was prophetically indicating the future heresy of the Iconoclasts). In his grief the holy Patriarch Thomas begged the saint to pray that he would soon die, so that he would not witness the coming woe.

In the year 610 the holy Patriarch Thomas reposed, having asked the blessing of Saint Theodore. Saint Theodore also departed to the Lord.



***Translation of the relics of the Blessed Vsevolod, in Holy Baptism Gabriel, the Prince of Pskov***

The Transfer of the Relics of Holy Prince Vsevolod-Gabriel of Pskov (1834): See February 11.



***Apostle Nathaniel, Apostle and Evangelist Luke & Apostle Clement of the Seventy***

The Holy Apostles Nathaniel, Luke and Clement of the Seventy: See June 11, October 18 and September 10.



***Venerable Vitalius of Gaza***

Saint Vitalius, a monk of the monastery of Saint Seridus, arrived in Alexandria when Saint John the Merciful (November 12) was Patriarch of Alexandria.

When he was sixty years old, undertook an extraordinary task: he wrote down from memory the names of all the prostitutes of Alexandria and he began to pray for them. He worked from morning to evening, earning twelve copper coins each day. In the evening the saint bought a single bean, which he ate after sunset. Then he would give the rest of the money to one of the harlots, whom he visited at night and said, "I beg you, take this money and do not sin with anyone tonight." Then he stayed with the harlot in her room. While she slept, the Elder spent the whole night at prayer, reading the Psalms, and quietly left in the morning.

He did this each day, visiting all the harlots in turn, and he made them promise to keep the purpose of his visit secret. The people of Alexandria, not knowing the truth, became indignant over the the monk's behavior, and they reviled him. However, he meekly endured their scorn, and he only asked that they not judge others.

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The holy prayers of Saint Vitalius saved many fallen women. Some of them went to a monastery, others got married, and others found respectable work. But they were forbidden to tell anyone the reason why they had changed their life, and thereby stop the abuse heaped upon Saint Vitalius. They were bound by an oath they had made to the saint. When one of the women began to break her oath and stood up to defend the saint, she fell into a demonic frenzy. After this, the people of Alexandria had no doubt concerning the sinfulness of the monk.

Certain of the clergy, scandalized by the behavior of Saint Vitalius, reported him to the holy Patriarch John the Merciful. But the Patriarch did not believe the informers and he said, "Cease to judge, especially monks. Don't you know what happened at the First Council of Nicea? Some of the bishops and the clergy brought letters of denunciation against each other to the emperor Saint Constantine the Great (May 21). He commanded that a burning candle be brought, and not even reading the letters, he burned them and said, "If I had seen with my own eyes a bishop sinning, or a priest, or a monk, then I would have veiled such with his garb, so that no one might see his sin." Thus the wise hierarch shamed the calumniators.

Saint Vitalius continued on with his difficult exploit: appearing himself before people under the guise of a sinner and a prodigal, he led the prodigal to repentance.

One time, emerging from an house of ill repute, the monk encountered a young man going there -- a prodigal fellow, who with an insult struck him on the cheek and cried out, that the monk was a disgrace to the Name of Christ. The monk answered him: "Believe me, that after me, humble man that I be, thou also shalt receive such a blow on the cheek, that will have all Alexandria thronging to thine cry".

A certain while afterwards Saint Vitalius settled into a small cell and in it at night he died. At that very hour a terrifying demon appeared before the youth who had struck the saint, and the demon struck the youth on the cheek and cried out: "Here is a knock from Saint Vitalius." The youth went into a demonic madness. In a frenzy he thrashed about on the ground, tore the clothing from himself and howled so loudly, that a multitude of people gathered.

When the youth finally came to his senses after several hours, he then rushed off to the cell of the monk, calling out: "Have mercy on me, O servant of God, for I have sinned against thee." At the door of the cell he came fully to his senses and he told those gathered there about his former encounter with Saint Vitalius. Then the youth knocked on the door of the cell, but he received no answer. When they broke in the door, they then saw, that the monk was dead, on his knees before an icon. In his hand was a scroll with the words: "Men of Alexandria, judge not beforehand, till cometh the Lord, the Righteous Judge".

At this moment there came up the demon-possessed woman, punished by the monk for wanting to violate the secret of his exploit. Having touched the body of the saint, she was healed and told the people about everything that had happened with her.

When the women who had been saved by Saint Vitalius learned about his death, they gathered together and told everyone about the virtues and mercy of the saint.

Saint John the Merciful also rejoiced, in that he had not believed the calumniators, and that a righteous man had not been condemned. And then together with the throng of repentant women, converted by Saint Vitalius, the holy Patriarch solemnly conveyed his remains throughout all the city and gave them reverent burial. And from that time many of the Alexandria people made themselves a promise to judge no one.

***Hieromartyr Sava (Trlajic) of Serbia, Hieromartyr Platon the Newmartyr of Banjaluka & Hieromartyr Platon, Bishop of Banja Luka***

No information available at this time.

## GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

### **Prokeimenon, Tone 6:**

O Lord, save Thy people / and bless Thine inheritance! (*Psalm 27:9*)  
vs. To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me! (*Psalm 27:1*)

### **Epistle Reading**

**The reading from the Acts (6:1-7) of the Holy Apostles**

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**In those days**, when the disciples were increasing in number, the Hellenists murmured against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. And the twelve summoned the body of the disciples and said, "it is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables. Therefore, brethren, pick out from among you seven men of good repute, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint to this duty. But we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And what they said pleased the whole multitude, and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit, and Philip, and Prochoros, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolaos, a proselyte of Antioch. These they set before the apostles, and they prayed and laid their hands upon them. And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

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**Alleluia, Tone 8:**

O Lord, Thou hast been gracious to Thy land; Thou hast turned back the captivity of Jacob. (*Psalm 84:1*)  
vs. Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other. (*Psalm 84:10*)

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**Gospel Reading**

**The Reading is from Mark (15:43-16:8)**

**At that time**, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. And Pilate wondered if he were already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the body to Joseph. And he bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud, and laid him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus saw where he was laid. And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week they went to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they were saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the door of the tomb?" And looking up, they saw that the stone was rolled back; for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe; and they were amazed. And he said to them, "Do not be amazed; you seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen, he is not here; see the place where they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him, as he told you." And they went out and fled from the tomb; for trembling and astonishment had come upon them; and they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid.



*Daily Inspirations by Abbott Tryphon*

**Acquiring Humility**

*The truly humble man does not consider himself  
humble*



Saint Macarius of Egypt, called The Great by the Church, because of his perfection of the virtues, and his profound humility, and who said of himself that his struggle to acquire humility was not complete, is but one example of the true meaning of humility. Even though this great saint lived in an age of great saints, and even knew the greatest of monastics, Saint Anthony the Great, said that none had achieved a state where they were completely free of at least a grain of pride.

It is easy to see ourselves as being better than other men, marking our piety, charity, and commitment to the divine services, as signs of our humility. Yet as long as pride is lurking beneath the surface, we are falling short of the Glory of God.

The delusional, soul-killing nature of false humility, pretending to be of Christ, is a delusion that plays into the hands of the Evil One, and leads down the road to perdition.

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## PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

#### Sunday, April 22<sup>nd</sup>

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 28<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>

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, May 5<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>

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 3

#### Saturday, May 12<sup>th</sup>

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### Sunday, May 13<sup>th</sup>

9:30 am: 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 3

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



### Daily Reflection Casting Pearls before Swine

*“Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces.” (Mt 7: 6)*



What does our Lord mean here, 1. by “what is holy” and by our “pearls,” and 2. Who are the “dogs” and “swine” before whom we are not to offer these?

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1. The “holy” and the “pearls” in us are our God-like and God-given gifts, like love, faith, wisdom, desire (both spiritual and physical), beauty (both spiritual and physical), creativity, compassion, etc. 2. The “dogs” and “swine” on whom we might be tempted to waste our God-given gifts and energies are not other people, because we are never to regard other people as “dogs” or “swine.” They are the evil spirits that may entangle us in sinful obsessions, like lust of the flesh, love of money, vainglory, self-centered fear, idleness, or despondency. For example, in the widespread case of “lust of the flesh” (often misnamed as “unrequited love”), we might find ourselves giving away all our love, all our desire, all our beautiful, God-given energies not to the visible, flesh-and-blood human being who is the object of our lust (because he or she simply rejects it), but to a ravenous spirit that is “tearing us in pieces.” As St. Paul writes, “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.” (Eph 6: 12) And, as Bonnie Tyler reminds us, "It ain't right with love to share, / When you find he doesn't care / for you..." (Bonnie Tyler, "It's A Heartache").

So today, if I find myself being “torn to pieces” by some obsession, be it lust or workaholism or something else, let me not become bitter against other people or another person, somehow involved in this story. Let me, first of all, recognize the value of “what is holy” and what are precious “pearls,” in me. And then, let me gratefully and prayerfully place myself and my gifts where they belong, before God, asking Him to re-direct my love, my desire, and my beauty toward His purpose for me, as I forgive myself and others for the whole story of my “sin” (i.e., my “amartia” or “missing the mark” of my God-given purpose or vocation). Thank You, Lord, for guiding and keeping me, as Your precious work-in-progress, full of precious “pearls,” even when I don’t put them to proper use. Glory be to You.

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### *Orthodox Quote of the Day*

Would it be difficult for God to constantly help everyone? No, but then man would not be really helped in this way. A spoiled child, whose parents constantly give him chocolates so he wants them always to be giving him, will become lazy, ill-disposed and unfortunate. Man, too, will never mature spiritually if he is constantly assisted by God without struggling himself.

**St. Seraphim of Sarov**