

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

# Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

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

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson  
Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Sub-Deacon Vlashi  
Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



**Sunday, April 3, 2016**

Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

**Tone 3**

Epistle: Hebrews 4:14-5:6

*3rd Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Cross*

**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**



*3rd Sunday of Great  
Lent: Veneration of the  
Cross*

**Glory  
Forever!**

*Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden; it has mysteriously been quenched by the wood of the Cross! The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished; for You, O my Savior, have come and cried to those in hell: "Enter again into paradise."*

## *Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints*

**3rd Sunday of Great Lent— Tone 3. Veneration of the Cross.** Ven. Nicetas the Confessor, Abbot of Medikion (824). Virgin Martyr Theodosia of Tyre, and Martyr Irene (307-308). St. Illyricus of Mt. Myrsinon in the Peloponnesus. Martyrs Elpidephorus, Dius, Bithonius and Galycus. Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos "THE UNFADING BLOOM".

## *Prayer Requests*

### **For Health of:**

**Fr. Andrew Bartek** on his birthday; offered by Trudy Ellmore.

**His Grace, Bishop Matthias** on his birthday; offered by Trudy Ellmore.

### **In Memory of:**

**Tom Stekas**, godfather of Trudy Ellmore.

**Nikolai Taran, Sr.**, father of Holly Dawson.

**Our deepest sympathies are expressed to Father Michael Speck and his family** (Saint Nicholas Church, Auburn NY) on the falling asleep in the Lord on the morning of 3/30/16, of Father Michael's beloved mother, + **Anne**, offered by the Dioceses of NY/NJ.

### *Liturgical Schedule:*

#### **Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

9:30 am: No Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

#### **Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

#### **Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am: Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

#### **Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

#### **Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **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

### ***Bulletin Sponsors:***

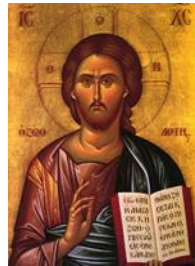
***Trudy Ellmore & Holly  
Dawson***

### ***Readings:***



**Epistle:** Hebrews 4:14-5:6

**Brethren**, since we have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest chosen from among men is appointed to act on behalf of men in relation to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can deal gently with the ignorant and wayward, since he himself is beset with weakness. Because of this he is bound to offer sacrifice for his own sins as well as for those of the people. And one does not take the honor upon himself, but he is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"; as he says also in another place, "Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchizedek."



**Gospel:** Mark 8:34-9:1

**The Lord said:** "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it; and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it profit a man, to gain the whole world and forfeit his life? For what can a man give in return for his life? For whoever is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the Son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God come with power."



### ***3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent: Veneration of the Cross***

The Third Sunday of Lent is that of the Veneration of the Cross. The cross stands in the midst of the church in the middle of the Lenten season not merely to remind men of Christ's redemption and to keep before them the goal of their efforts, but also to be venerated as that reality by which man must live to be saved. "He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me" (Mt.10:38). For in the Cross of Christ Crucified lies both "the power of God and the wisdom of God" for those being saved (1 Cor.1:24).



**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*

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

**Dues and assessments are being collected for the year 2016.** The total Parish Membership Fee is \$200. Partial payments are gladly accepted. Please note, in the memo of your check, the amount that will go to membership.

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

**The Sisterhood will meet today after Coffee Hour. Election of officers for 2016 will be held, and annual dues of \$15.00 will be collected. All women who are members of the parish are welcome to join.**





### *NY/NJ Diocese News*

#### ***Exploring Ministry: A Day in NYC to Discover How You Can Serve the Church***

Come and meet with other Orthodox teens and young adults who are interested in serving the Church. Men and women, 20-somethings and teens are invited to Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in NYC on Saturday, May 14th at 10 AM for a day of discovering what opportunities are available in the Church. Those in attendance will hear from men and women who are currently serving the Church in a variety of ways: Hospital and Military Chaplains, Parish Priests, a Full-time Deacon, a Full-time Choir Director, and a Theology Professor. Hear their stories and ask your questions.

Lunch will be included and a tour will be given of the Cathedral and its urban ministries. All those in attendance will be given a spiritual gifts inventory and a book about vocations and discerning a call to ministry. The day will end with a trip to Saint Vladimir's Seminary for a tour. Transportation will be provided.

Vigil will be held at the Seminary at 6:30 PM and at the Cathedral at 5:30 PM for those who wish.

*This event has been organized by the Diocese of New York and New Jersey (OCA) and has been funded by a grant from The Forum for Theological Education. It is open to Orthodox teens and young adults from all jurisdictions.*

For questions contact Rev. Matthew Brown at [priestmatthewbrown@gmail.com](mailto:priestmatthewbrown@gmail.com) or 201-972-0014.



### ***Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News*** **Holy Synod concludes Spring Session** *SYOSSET, NY [OCA]*

The Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America concluded its Spring Session at the Chancery here on Friday, April 1, 2016. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, presided at the sessions.

Highlights of the meeting included the following, according to Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, OCA Secretary.

- His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, delivered his opening address on Tuesday morning, March 29. He prefaced his address by reflecting on the funeral of a young girl who had fallen asleep in the Lord after a battle with cancer, at which he presided at Saint Nicholas Cathedral, Washington DC on the preceding day. He spoke about her intense faith in the face of serious illness and the lessons inherent therein, adding that the Church exists precisely to minister to the faithful and to bring them into a closer relationship with God. He also reflected on the “Four Pillars” guidelines for the future of the Orthodox Church in America.
- The reports of the OCA’s Officers—Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor; Archpriest Eric G. Tosi, Secretary; and Melanie Ringa, Treasurer—were received. The positive financial status of the OCA was noted.
- In their report on the OCA Pension Plan, His Grace, Bishop David of Sitka and Alaska and Maureen Ahearn, Plan Administrator, reviewed suggested changes involving the “In-Service Benefit Option” and the definition of “spouse” in the Pension Plan wording. Proposed changes will be presented at the Fall 2016 meeting of the Metropolitan Council.

- Members of the Office of Review of Sexual Misconduct Allegations and the Sexual Misconduct Policy Advisory Committee shared current issues and reviewed current cases. The hierarchs will undergo a training session on sexual misconduct prevention at their June 2016 retreat.
- Members of the Board of Theological Education—Archpriests John Behr and Chad Hatfield of Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Archpriest Steven Voytovich of Saint Tikhon’s Seminary, Archpriest John Dunlop of St. Herman’s Seminary, and Archdeacon Kirill Sokolov, Director of the Diaconal Vocations Program—offered recommendations with regard to candidates for ordination to the diaconate and priesthood. The Holy Synod also discussed with the Board possible “alternative” methods for priestly formation for individuals unable to attend residential programs.
- The OCA General Counsel, Judge E. R. Lanier, reported on the current status of various legal issues. He reviewed issues related to the recent Obergefell decision and the documents slated to be issued to defend the Church’s position. In his report, Protopresbyter Leonid Kishkovsky, Director of External Affairs, spoke of Metropolitan Tikhon’s recent visits to the Ecumenical Patriarchate and the Orthodox Church of Finland, reviewed the current status of Orthodox Churches worldwide, and addressed matters related to the Great and Holy Council, slated to convene in Crete in June 2016. He also discussed the current status of the OCA’s Representation Church of the Great Martyr Catherine in Moscow, Russia and the positive work conducted by Archimandrite Alexander [Pihach].
- In a closed session, the Holy Synod reviewed a number of clergy issues. As reported earlier, the hierarchs unanimously elected His Grace, Bishop Alexander of Toledo and the Bulgarian Diocese to the vacant See of Dallas and the South with the title “Bishop of Dallas, the South and the Bulgarian Diocese.” The formal Service of the Election of a Bishop followed the celebration of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts on Wednesday, March 30.
- The Holy Synod blessed the publication of the corrected edition of the 2003 OCA Metrical Record Book for parish use. Likewise approved was the process for updating the OCA web site.
- Three new Internal Auditors—John Skrobat, Dimitri Pletz, and Matushka Theodora Blom—were approved.
- Reports on the work of the OCA’s departments and commissions and individual dioceses were presented.
- The Holy Synod reviewed and approved recommendations for clergy awards and elevations. The Saint Romanos Medal was awarded to Dr. Vladimir Morosan and Aleksei Shipovalnikov in recognition of their outstanding contributions in the field of liturgical music.
- Plans for the second annual OCA Mission School, slated to be held in the summer of 2016, were reviewed and approved. Also approved were plans for the Holy Synod’s June 2016 retreat, which will include an in-depth discussion on theological education and, as noted above, training on sexual misconduct prevention.
- His Grace, Bishop Paul of Chicago and the Midwest reported on the impending work of a committee formed to address the prevention of spiritual abuse, in response to the directive of the 18th All-American Council.
- His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa offered a report on the membership and work of the Standing Committee on Canonical Procedures.

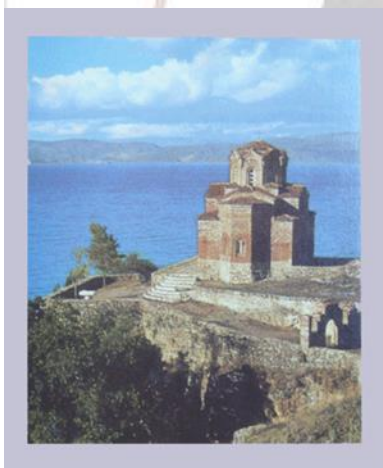
On Thursday evening, March 31, the members of the Holy Synod met with graduating OCA students from Saint Tikhon’s Seminary, South Canaan, PA and Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, Yonkers, NY. After sharing a Lenten dinner, the hierarchs and seminarians engaged in an informative discussion and question and answer session that touched on a wide range of topics and concerns.





### **Join an OCMC Short-Term Teaching Team in 2016**

Orthodox Mission Teams empower the Church at home and abroad by working, witnessing, worshipping, and making disciples. Help in the efforts to educate and encourage mission communities around the world in the Orthodox Faith by teaching catechists, youth and young adults, clergy, and other church leaders. In 2016, the opportunities to be "messengers who bring good news" are available on Orthodox Mission Teams to Mexico, Albania, Indonesia, and Kenya. Team applications and additional opportunities are available online at [www.ocmc.org](http://www.ocmc.org), or by calling OCMC at 1-877-463-6787 (ext. 142).



#### ***Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, LI:***

*O Holy Spirit, behold how vile my soul is! How she fearfully conceals Your fruit within herself, for fear of the Jews, for fear of the countless children of darkness, whom she has multiplied in herself from her marriage with the world.*

*She has borne innumerable wolves and foxes, and has placed them in her royal chambers, while Your Son has nowhere to rest His head. And they all seek to keep what has been born of the Spirit. Ah, the accomplices of Herod! For they are afraid of might and true light! And those, who have usurped their crowns and placed them bloodstained on their heads, worry about their crowns most of all.*

*Flee, my soul, flee with the new fruit of your womb, with your only-begotten fruit; flee into Egypt, into a land even more somber than Israel. Behold, the multitudes of slaves that she has produced in herself from the seed of the world are out to hunt down your only Son, and are seeking to kill Him.*

*The eyes of malefactors are darker than their crowns, however, and in their blindness they fail to distinguish God's infant. Therefore they will slaughter many infants, in order to slay yours.*

*I once saw a frozen shepherd beside a tiny fire. He never took his eyes off the fire, as though he wanted to help it burn with the embers of his eyes. And he sheltered the fire from the cold wind with his hands, and he kept blowing with his breath, so that it would burn more strongly, grow larger, withstand the winds, and warm him.*

*In this way are the raging winds from my heart threatening to extinguish the divine candle within you, my soul. And in this way are the raging wicked thoughts from my mind spitting on the only light within you, because it is about to bring about their downfall.*

*Everything that you, my soul, have multiplied in my mind and in my heart, does not consider you a mother but a stepmother, and there is no one among your repulsive progeny, who would place their finger on your burning tongue to cool it. Now for the first time, you have become a mother for you have borne a Son, who is growing up in obedience to you and the Holy Spirit, and in the tender love of parenthood.*

Do not burden His head, O bondswoman, with the slavish cares of this world. He must grow in spiritual power, and be in that which is of His Father. Lo, your Son comes like a flame, which will consume your adversaries, and will warm and sanctify you.

As a messenger He comes from a kingdom, where you used to reign in virginal purity and beauty. How can you fail to recognize your Son, my demented soul?

As a herald He comes from the kingdom of light, where you also used to shine with the splendor of many suns, to summon you into that kingdom once again. How can you not distinguish the voice of your Son, my deaf soul?

As a champion of freedom He comes from a kingdom of freedom, where you also used to dwell, unacquainted with the fear and hunger of slavery, -- He comes to free you from the heavy chains, in which the obesity of the world has shackled you. How can you still hesitate to greet your liberator with cheering, my dumb soul?

O Spirit Almighty, strengthen the salvation-bearing Infant in the cradle of my soul. And protect Him from all the poisoned arrows flying at Him from Israel above and from Egypt below.

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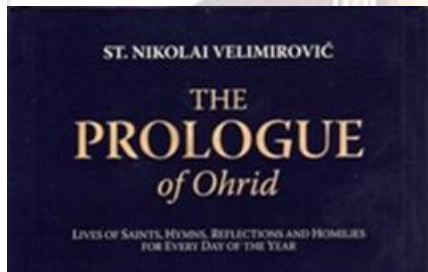
***Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, L:***

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

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

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

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**1. Saint Nicetas the Confessor**

Nicetas was born in Bithynia, in the city of Caesarea. His father, Philaret, was tonsured a monk after the death of his spouse, while Nicetas remained with his paternal grandmother. After reaching maturity and completing all of his studies, Nicetas entered the Monastery of Medikion, where the Abbot Nicephorus tonsured him a monk. After seven years of hardship and ascetic labors, Patriarch

Tarasius ordained him a hieromonk (priest-monk). Following the deaths of Abbot Nicephorus and Athanasius (Nicetas's faithful companion), the monastic brotherhood elected Nicetas abbot, against his will. For many years St. Nicetas was an example to his brethren of asceticism and a holy life. When Leo V, the Armenian, was crowned emperor (after the pious Irene and the right-believing Emperors Nicephorus and Michael), the iconoclastic struggle was again inflamed. The emperor deposed Patriarch Nicephorus and sent him into exile and, in his place, elevated the heretic Theodotus Cassiteras, a man of impure life. Nicetas was also imprisoned and tortured, but he remained steadfast in his Orthodoxy. He was led from prison to prison, suffering from hunger, thirst, chills, oppressive heat and mockery. But he did not permit himself to waver. He was particularly bothered by the laughter and scorn of a certain Nicholas. One night, Nicholas's deceased father appeared to Nicholas in a dream and rebuked him, saying: "Leave that servant of God alone!" From that moment, Nicholas repented and not only did not annoy the saint anymore, but turned others away from annoying him also. When Leo the Armenian met

with a wicked death, the rule of the empire was taken up by the Orthodox Emperor Michael Balbus (the "Stammerer") who liberated all the Orthodox sufferers. Nicetas then withdrew to an isolated place near Constantinople, where in prayer and thanksgiving to God for all things he spent the remaining days of his earthly life. During his lifetime he worked many miracles through prayer. When he died, his body was translated to his monastery. During the funeral procession, many of the sick reached out and touched his body, and were healed. His relics were placed next to the grave of Nicephorus, his spiritual father, and Athanasius, his companion. This great hierarch reposed in the year 824 A.D.

## **2. Saint Paul the Sorrowful**

Paul was a Russian by birth. In his youth he was enslaved by the Turks. Not wanting to deny the Christian Faith or to embrace Islam, he was tortured and slain by the sword in Constantinople in the year 1683 A.D.

## **3. The Holy Martyr Ulphianus**

Ulphianus was a young man from the city of Tyre. He suffered for Christ at the hands of Urban, the governor of the city of Tyre, who was also the torturer of Amphianus (April 2). Finally, he was tied in a sack with a dog and a snake, and was thrown into the sea. He suffered and was glorified in the year 306 A.D.

### **Hymn of Praise**

*Saint Paul the Apostle*

*Saint Nicetas the Confessor*

"I bear on my body the wounds of Christ,  
"And only in the Cross of the Lord do I boast."

Thus said Paul the chosen Apostle.

After him there followed a company of those who have repented,

A company of penitent ones, who received wounds

And spent their days in many sufferings

For the sake of the Living Christ, the Savior and Lord,

As did St. Paul, the Apostle of the people.

And the wonderful Nicetas bore a heavy cross;

Suffering and scorn he endured for Christ.

A spirit of steel in a fragile body--

In holy Nicetas the courageous martyr.

He conquered the emperor and outlived empires;

Therefore, the earth and the heavens are amazed at him.

Now crowned with glory among the angels,

He helps all who are persecuted for the Cross.

Before God his prayer ascends,

And to earth his help descends.

### **Reflection**

"I await a thousand deaths for myself," wrote St. Athanasius the Great to his flock in Egypt at the time of the terrible Arian heresy. Every spiritual man, who has looked in spirit and seen the net which contains every human soul in this world, can say this about himself. The more spiritual a man is, the denser the net looks. Such is the will of God: that the most spiritual are saved by the most narrow path. The Psalmist David also says: *Many are the afflictions of the righteous* (Psalm 34:19). However, in the end, victory and glory belong to the righteous. They need only to arm themselves with faith and forbearance. Whoever



believes also understands their sufferings. He who clothes himself with patience will see victory and glory. To him who loves the Lord, even the narrowest path is sufficiently wide, the greatest pain an easy yoke, and the most violent death a joyful wedding feast.

### **Contemplation**

Contemplate the Lord Jesus in hades:

1. How He descended into hades with great power, at which hades trembled;
2. How the evil spirits, who were then lords of hades, fled before His Face;
3. How the souls of the righteous ancestors and prophets overwhelmingly rejoiced at His coming.

### **Homily: on the great desire of God**

*"Who will have all men to be saved" (1Timothy 2:4).*

God desires that all men be saved; that is why He descended into hades to save those who had lived on earth before His coming. For, had He not descended into hades, an enormous number of righteous souls would have perished forever. Moreover, had He not descended into hades, the main habitat of malice against God and the human race, hades would have remained undestroyed. There were two reasons that motivated Christ, the Giver of Life, to descend into hades in the Spirit: first, to destroy the nest of the powers of hades and, second, to bring from hades to heaven the souls of the ancestors, prophets and righteous men and women who had fulfilled the Old Law of God (dispensation) and had thus pleased God. Before Satan had done exulting at the sight of Christ humiliated and lifeless on the Cross, Christ appeared and lifeless on the Cross, Christ appeared alive and almighty in the midst of hades, the primary abode of Satan. What unexpected and dreadful news for Satan! For three years Satan had woven snares against Christ on earth, and in three days, behold, Christ destroyed Satan's kingdom and carried away the most precious booty, in the form of a throng of righteous souls.

O Lord, Thou desirest that all men be saved. We pray to Thee: save even us. For there is no salvation or Savior outside of Thee. In Thee do we hope, Thee alone do we worship--Thee, the Father and the Holy Spirit, now and always. Amen.

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



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

#### **Great Lent**

#### ***The Journey of Joyful Sorrow in the expectation of the Resurrection***

The main reason Christianity spread so rapidly following the Resurrection of Christ, was the power behind the resurrection. The truth of Christ's resurrection empowered believers to joyfully embrace martyrdom, knowing that they would be joined in eternal bliss with their resurrected Saviour. Although their martyrdom would involve both mental and physical anguish, they were almost joyful in their willingness to go to their deaths, rather than betray their faith. Not the kind of thing one would do just to be part of some "religion". Many contemporaries observed that these Christians were facing their martyr's death as though they were about to be married. They were not grim faced, but shown a certain light in their countenance, embracing, as they did, their crown of martyrdom.

When Saint Polycarp was sentenced by the proconsul, he responded by asking why they were delaying his death by burning. These believers were rejoicing as they faced their immanent death, for their knowledge of the bodily resurrection of Christ, was proof enough to have giving them an invincible courage as they faced certain death. Grand Duchess Elizabeth and Nun Barbara were said to have been singing hymns, after having been thrown into the well, by the Bolsheviks, as the prepared for eternal life with Christ.

Early Christian apologists cited hundreds of eyewitnesses, many of whom willfully and resolutely endured prolonged torture and death rather than repudiate their testimony. Their willingness to suffer death, ruled out deception on their part. According to the historical record most Christians could have ended their suffering simply by renouncing the faith. Instead, most opted to endure the suffering and proclaim Christ’s resurrection unto death.

What makes the earliest Christian martyrs remarkable is that they knew whether or not what they were professing was true. They either saw Jesus Christ alive-and-well after His death or they did not. If it was all just a lie, why would so many Christians perpetuate a myth, given their circumstances? Why would they all knowingly cling to such an unprofitable lie in the face of persecution, imprisonment, torture, and death?

Immediately following Christ’s crucifixion, His followers hid in fear for their lives. Yet following Christ’s resurrection they boldly proclaimed the resurrection despite intensifying persecution. Only a true resurrection could have accounted for a sudden change that would lead believers to give up everything, including their lives, to preach Christ’s resurrection.

One skeptic, Paul, was of his own admission a violent persecutor of the early Church. Yet after an encounter with the resurrected Christ, Paul underwent an immediate and drastic change from a vicious persecutor of the Church to one of its most prolific and selfless defenders. Following his encounter with the Risen Christ, Paul suffered impoverishment, persecution, imprisonment, beatings, and finally execution for his steadfast commitment to Christ’s resurrection.

The sorrow we Christians experience during our Lenten journey, is tempered with the knowledge that Christ is conquering death by His death, and that His resurrection is our resurrection. We look to the future with the same faith of the saints and martyrs that have gone on before us, and we’ve experienced the truth of Jesus Christ’s teachings, for our hearts of been transformed by the power of His message. Our sins have been forgiven, and we are guests at the Eucharistic banquet, awaiting our time when the gates of paradise will be opened to us. We fear nothing, just like the martyrs, because we know the truth of the Holy Resurrection of Christ our God.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon



### **Daily Reflection** **Those Who Need a Physician**

*“As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, ‘Follow me.’ And he got up and*

*followed him. And as he sat at dinner in Levi’s house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. When the scribes and Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, ‘Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?’ When Jesus heard this, he said to them, ‘Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners.’” (Mk 2: 14-17)*





So the scribes and Pharisees ask "Why?" This is not a well-meaning, earnest question. Hence the scribes and Pharisees are not posing it directly to Jesus, but rather to third parties, saying, Why does "he" eat with tax collectors and sinners? The question is not really seeking an answer. It is supposed to remain, firmly planted, in the minds of third parties. The scribes and Pharisees busy themselves with this kind of judgmental superficiality, while our Lord goes directly into the trenches, eating and drinking with those of us who really need Him.

Today I am so grateful for these liberating words, "I have come to call not the righteous"! Today, when in my church-world there is so much judgment "by association," so much judgment of one another, according to where and with whom one "was seen," according to external alliances, be they political, church-political, denominational, personal, or otherwise. As if Christ were merely an external alliance. No, He is the Physician of those who need one. And I remind myself today that I come to Him, and belong to Him, not as one who is "well," but as one not well, as one of "those who are sick." Today He says to me, *"I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."* Today let me have the ears to hear His call, amidst the chatter of those who "have no need of a physician."

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### *Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers*

#### **"The Forest" by St. Nikolai**

A man went into the forest to choose a tree from which to make roof-beams. And he saw two trees, one beside the other. One was smooth and tall, but had rotted away inside, and the other was rough on the outside and ugly, but its core was healthy. The man sighed, and said to himself: "What use is this tree to me if it is rotten inside and useless for beams? The other it is rough and ugly, is at least healthy on the inside and so, if I put a bit more effort into it, I can use it for roof-beams for my house." And, without thinking any more about it, he chose that tree. So will God choose between two men for His house, and will choose not the one who appears outwardly righteous, but the one whose heart is filled with God's healthy righteousness.

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### *The Philokalia: Daily Readings*

We must not only put bodily passions to death but also destroy the soul's impassioned thoughts.

+ *St Maximus the Confessor, 200 Chapters on the Knowledge of God*

Some say that the Kingdom of Heaven is the way of life which the saints lead in heaven; others that it is a state similar to that of the angels, attained by those who are saved; others that it is the very form of the divine beauty of those who "wear the image of Him who is from heaven" (1 Cor 15:49). In my judgment each of these three views is correct.

- + *St Maximus the Confessor, 200 Chapters on the Knowledge of God*

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## 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	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 6:30pm Vespers
17 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	18	19 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	20 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	21	22 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	23 6:30pm Vespers
24 <u>Palm Sunday</u> 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	25 <u>Great and Holy Monday</u>	26 <u>Great and Holy Tuesday</u> 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	27 <u>Great and Holy Wednesday</u> 6:30pm Holy Unction Service/Potluck	28 <u>Great and Holy Thursday</u>	29 <u>Great and Holy Friday</u> 7:00pm Matins Service 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	30 <u>Great and Holy Saturday</u> 11:30pm Pascha Service 12:00am Ressur4ection Divine Liturgy followed by Blessing of Pascha Baskets