

*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

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, August 14, 2016**

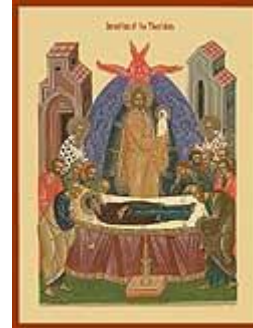
Gospel: Matthew 14:14-22

**Tone 7**

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

**8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Forefeast of the Dormition of the Mother of God**

**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**



*Forefeast of the Dormition  
of the Mother of God*

**Glory  
Forever!**

*Dance with joy, O peoples! Clap your hands with gladness!  
Gather today with fervor and jubilation; sing with exultation.  
The Mother of God is about to rise in glory, ascending from earth to heaven.  
We ceaselessly praise her in song as truly Theotokos.*

**(Troparion – Tone 4)**

*Today the universe dances with joy at your glorious memorial, and cries out to you,  
O Mother of God: "Rejoice, O Virgin, pride of Christians!"*

**(Kontakion – Tone 4)**

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

**8th Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 7. Translation of the Relics of Ven. Theodosius of the Kiev Caves** (1091). Forefeast of the Dormition. Prophet Micah (8th c. B.C.). Ven. Arcadius of Novotorzhk (11th c.). Hieromartyr Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea (ca. 389).

## **Weekly Bulletin Sponsors**

### **For Health of:**

**The Kozak Family.**

**Archpriest John Chupeck, Matushka Mary Perez, Mary Zizik, Abraham Behrend,** offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ and Archbishop Michael.

### **In Memory of:**

**Carol,** sister-in-law of Linda and Richard Dantinne.

### *Liturgical Schedule*

#### **Sunday, August 14<sup>th</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

#### **Saturday, August 20<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **Sunday, August 21<sup>st</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

#### **Saturday, August 27<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

12:15 pm: Council Mtg.

#### **Saturday, September 3<sup>rd</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **Sunday, September 4<sup>th</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General

Confession

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

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

***Kozak Family; Linda and  
Richard Dantine.***

### ***Readings:***

#### **The Prokeimenon in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tone:**

The Lord shall give strength to His people. The Lord shall bless His people with peace. (*Psalm 28:11*)

vs. Offer to the Lord, O ye sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!  
(*Psalm 28:1*)

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#### **Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 1:10-18

**Brethren,** I appeal to you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree and that there be no dissensions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarrelling among you, my brethren. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I belong to Paul," or "I belong to Apollos," or "I belong to Cephas," or "I belong to Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius; lest anyone should say that you were baptized in my name. (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas. Beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power.

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#### **Alleluia in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tone:**

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy Name, O Most High.

(*Psalm 91:2*)

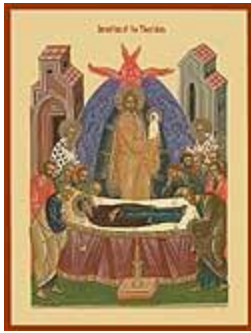
vs. To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night.

(*Psalm 91:3*)

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#### **Gospel:** Matthew 14:14-22

**At that time,** Jesus saw a great throng; and he had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." And he said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass; and taking the five loaves and the two fish he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Then he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.



### *Forefeast of the Dormition of the Mother of God*

The Troparion of the Forefeast invites us to gather on this day in gladness, for the Theotokos is about to depart from earth to heaven.



**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, for a donation of \$10. Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

**Memorial Candles:** Candles 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.

**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: [ChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com](mailto:ChurchMotherOfGod@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.



### *Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News*

## **IN SEARCH OF.....**

*Old pictures of the church, her people, her priests.  
Stories of special occasions and/or celebrations.  
Stories of how you found your way to this parish.  
Contact information for the families of the founders of the parish*

## **WHY?**

*In celebration of 50 years of ministry, and with the blessing of our rector Fr. Matthew, Trudy is compiling photos and stories in order to write a history of the founding and continued ministry of the our parish, the Orthodox Church of the Mother of God. The working title is "Jewel Box in Mays Landing".*



*Give Trudy a call at 609-593-6181 (h), 610-393-9897 (c); email her [trellmore@gmail.com](mailto:trellmore@gmail.com); or simply talk to her at church to share your story and pictures!*



### *NY/NJ Diocese News*

#### **Bringing the Orthodox Faith to the African-American Community**

*"We would love to reach out to African-Americans in our community, but we don't know how." "I don't know where to begin." "I'm afraid we'll be seen as too white and too exotic." "How do we merge the Black church and culture with [fill in Orthodox ethnic group of choice]?"* Sound familiar? Orthodox parishes across the country struggle with outreach to various ethnic groups -- wishing to expand the parish's evangelistic efforts in bringing Holy Orthodoxy to Blacks, Latinos, and Asians -- but lacking the knowledge, insights, and tools to do so. With the biggest of hearts and greatest of desires, this area of evangelism ... bringing and sharing Orthodoxy with ethnic minority groups ... can nevertheless seem daunting enough to persuade many to never even begin the effort.

To address these concerns and provide information, ideas, and tools to train and equip clergy and laity to begin effective outreach to African-Americans, the Diocese's Commission on Mission and Evangelism sponsored a one-day training workshop called **"Bringing the Orthodox Faith to the African-American Community."** Thanks to the gracious hosting of **Saints Peter and Paul Church in Manville NJ on Saturday, 16 July 2016**, the workshop brought together over 40 people from across two deaneries as well as outside of the diocese to hear and learn from two outstanding speakers on African-American outreach: Father Alexii Altschul (a founder of the Brotherhood of Saint Moses the Black), and Father Deacon Turbo Qualls (the Brotherhood's Chapter Development coordinator).

Father Deacon Turbo spoke first in the morning, following a Molieben (prayer service) for the *"Beginning of Any Good Work."* He addressed a powerful theme: Orthodoxy is not "the White Man's Religion" and was never imposed on Africans brought to America via the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (and, further, that Orthodoxy, unlike virtually all of Western Europe and Western Christianity, was never involved in the evil of such human trafficking). Rather, Orthodoxy is an historic African faith that has had roots in Africa since the time of the Apostles: the Acts of the Apostles notes the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch by Saint Thomas; and Church Fathers, many of whom lived and were from northern African nations like Libya, Egypt, and Carthage.

Father Alexii spoke in the afternoon about his experiences as a white man married to a black woman, raising a blended family, who ultimately found and embraced the ancient Orthodox Christian Faith. He began "Reconciliation Ministries" (now known as Reconciliation Services, it continues to serve the poor and marginalized of the Troost Avenue neighborhood of Kansas City). He, his late wife, and community started Saint Mary of Egypt Orthodox Church, now a parish of the Serbian Orthodox Church in North America.

After deliberating further opportunities for mutual discussion and networking, the workshop ended with another Molieben *"For the Cessation of Strife"* as found in the Great Book of Needs, Volume IV.

Plans are underway for more conferences in this outreach series beginning later this year.

#### **From the Office of the Bishop**

#### **Congratulations are extended to:**

**Igumen Joseph (Hoffman)**, awarded a Diocesan Gramota, on the occasion of his 25th Anniversary of Ordination to the Holy Priesthood, presented on Saturday, August 6, in the Church of the Transfiguration, Pearl River, New York, by Archbishop Michael.

**Archpriest Samuel and Matushka Joanne Kedala**, awarded a Diocesan Gramota, on the occasion of their 40th Anniversary of Marriage, presented on Sunday, August 7, in Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, New Jersey, by Archbishop Michael.

**Dr. Elizabeth Theokritoff**, awarded a Diocesan Gramota, in recognition of her outstanding scholarly work in the area of Faith and Ecology, presented on Sunday, August 7, in Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, New Jersey, by Archbishop Michael.

**Dr. George Theokritoff**, of blessed memory, awarded a Diocesan Gramota posthumously, in recognition of his outstanding scholarly work in the area of Faith and Science, presented to his wife on Sunday, August 7, in Holy Trinity Church, Randolph, New Jersey, by Archbishop Michael.

**Upcoming Events:**

- August 20: New Jersey Deanery Church School Teachers Conference, Princeton, NJ
- August 25: ORTHODOX YOUTH DAY, Six Flags Great Adventure, Jackson, NJ
- August 27: New York City Deanery Church School Teachers Conference, Brooklyn, NY
- Aug. 31-Sept. 1: Diocesan Clergy Conference, Assumption Church, Clifton, NJ
- September 4: New York State Deanery Clergy Family Picnic, Lansing, NY
- September 11: New Jersey Deanery Clergy Family Picnic, Brick, NJ
- November 1-2: Diocesan Assembly, Holy Trinity Church, Yonkers, NY
- November 11-13: Diocesan Girls Retreat, Saint Basil Academy, Garrison, NY
- November 18-19: Diocesan Matushki Retreat, Warwick Retreat Center, Warwick, NY



*Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News*

**Fire engulfs Holy Ascension Monastery, Clinton, MI**

The wooden church at the Monastery of the Holy Ascension was destroyed by fire here on Friday, August 12, 2016.

According to Archpriest John Jillions, Chancellor of the Orthodox Church in America, His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate and Priest Dan Hoarste visited the monastery upon learning of the tragedy from His Grace, Bishop Ireneu. Initial reports indicate that seven fire companies battled to contain the fire, which completely destroyed the church.

The cause of the blaze is under investigation. No one was injured.

Upon learning of the fire, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon requested the faithful to keep the monastery brotherhood in their prayers.

Additional information and details will be posted as they are received.



**Mission Projects**

Every year, Orthodox communities, organizations, and individuals offer their prayerful support to fund mission projects that are geared at strengthening the infrastructure of newly emerging, or reemerging, Orthodox Churches around the world. OCMC uses these funds to provide grants for specific mission projects that help the Church offer a loving witness to Her own people. These projects include the establishment and support of philanthropic ministries and the construction of churches, water wells, and housing, to name a few.



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY  
AN AGENCY OF THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS

**Loving someone...because He loved us first!**

Loving someone...because He loved us first! A dear sister in Christ shared the following story with me and gave her permission to share it with you. May we learn to love others, because it is the right thing to do and it is what we are made to do!! Before she shares her story, here is a most excellent quote that puts it all in perspective. With the love of Christ...Fr. Stephen



“We must see to it that our pleasing of others always ministers to their good in some way, edifies them, adds something to their character, and makes them braver, truer and happier. The world is full of discouraged people, and we have the power to say a hopeful word or do a kindness which will drive the discouragement from their hearts and move them again, with strength for brave, victorious and songful living. Love is the greatest thing in the world . . . add something to the life of everyone.”

St. Alexandra, Tsaritsa of Russia (Taken from 2016 Daily Lives, Miracles, and Wisdom of the Saints and Fasting Calendar – The Orthodox Calendar Company)

Dear Fellow Orthodox Christians,

I would like to share an experience I had with a young man who is now in a State Prison.

A friend of ours was staying with us because she came to our town to see her son and daughter-in-law who just had a baby. I spoke with our friend about Faith and Prayer and I was praying for her son and his family.

I had never met this young man before but knew he and his wife and new baby were coming over to bring the baby to their Grandmother (our friend) to watch. I felt led to cook a meal for the new family and give them a baby gift. When they came into our home, I could feel the evil of addictive parents and I felt compassion for them. I hugged them with congratulations. We fed them the dinner and gave gift. As they left, I knew they were quite uncomfortable to be in our home.

Years passed by and this young man ended up in a State Prison as a hardcore criminal. His mother asked us to write to him. I prayed about it and started writing to him with much prayer every day for his protection and salvation. Time has gone by as my husband and I keep in touch with him.

The other day, my husband visited him in prison and had quite a soulful and revealing conversation. The young man revealed to my husband that after coming to our home, he was thinking about robbing us and maybe having to harm us. However, because of the meal of love, etc. that we gave him and his family, he could not follow through with it. We are now in a blessed friendship with him, still in much prayer, and he knows that we love him by the Grace of our Lord.

May the love of God that dwells in us overflow to others to know the depth of God’s unconditional love for them and save them!!!



**International Orthodox Christian Charities**

### **Help Save Lives with Emergency Supplies**

Emergency kits are small packages of essential supplies assembled in the United States and shipped to people in need around the world.

Imagine being so poor that soap, washcloths, and school supplies are considered luxury items. Or being a refugee who has fled your home with only the items you carry in your hand. Or being the victim of a natural disaster. Many parishes, youth groups, and individuals want to do something tangible to help others. Assembling and sending emergency kits is a practical way to make life a bit better for someone in need.

#### **Types of Kits**

1. **Health / Hygiene Kits** - Curb the spread of disease by donating basic hygiene items.
2. **School Kits** - Give a child the tools needed to succeed at school.
3. **Clean-up Buckets** - Help people clean up after a natural disaster.

#### **Assembling and Sending Emergency Kits:**

1. Choose which type of kit (or kits) you wish to assemble and only include items specified on each list.
2. **Download the IOCC Emergency Kits Shipping Label** to fill out and include one on the outside of each box.

3. You can plan on \$2-\$3 per kit to cover the cost of shipping to the warehouse. Mail all kits to IOCC / Church World Service Brethren Service Center Annex, 601 Main St., P.O. Box 188, New Windsor, MD 21776-0188



### **Saint Katherine the Great – Our Patron Saint**

In 2002, the OCF Student Advisory Board was challenged to find out who was to be the patron saint of our beloved OCF, to watch over the work of our ministry, as well as our beloved students. After much prayer, reflection and discussion, it was revealed to the SAB that OCF's patron saint would be St. Katherine. The students were moved by prayer and discernment that she was the ideal role model for college-aged young adults. She herself was in her late-teens to early-twenties when she was martyred. She was highly educated and used her knowledge of the Orthodox Christian faith to defend the Orthodox faith, often to those who were much older and considered more educated than she. St. Katherine held firm to the truth of the Orthodox Church through the substance of her convictions. Her firm conviction in the faith, revealed by her words and deeds, converted many to the faith. Thus, it has been revealed that St. Katherine was to be the

patron saint of OCF.

### **The Life of Saint Katherine the Great of Alexandria**

Saint Katherine, who was from Alexandria, was the daughter of Constat (or Cestus). She was an exceedingly beautiful maiden, most chaste, and illustrious in wealth, lineage, and learning. By her steadfast understanding, she utterly vanquished the passionate and unbridled soul of Maximinus, the tyrant of Alexandria; and by her eloquence, she stopped the mouths of the so-called philosophers who had been gathered to dispute with her. She was crowned with the crown of martyrdom in the year 305. Her holy relics were taken by Angels to the holy mountain of Sinai, where they were discovered many years later; the famous monastery of Saint Katherine was originally dedicated to the Holy Transfiguration of the Lord and the Burning Bush, but later was dedicated to Saint Katherine. According to the ancient usage, Saints Katherine and Mercurius were celebrated on the 24th of this month, whereas the holy Hieromartyrs Clement of Rome and Peter of Alexandria were celebrated on the 25th. The dates of the feasts of these Saints were interchanged at the request of the Church and Monastery of Mount Sinai, so that the festival of Saint Katherine, their patron, might be celebrated more festively together with the Apodosis of the Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos. The Slavic Churches, however, commemorate these Saints on their original dates.

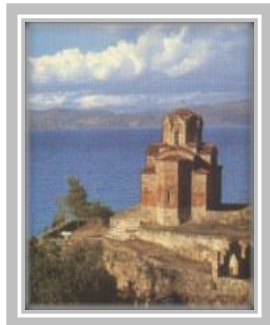
### **Apolytikion in the Plagal of the First Mode**

Let us praise the most auspicious bride of Christ, the divine Katherine, protectress of Sinai, our aid and our help. For, she brilliantly silenced the eloquence of the impious by the sword of the spirit, and now, crowned as a martyr, she asks great mercy for all.

### **Kontakion in the Second Mode**

O friends of martyrs, now divinely raise up a renewed chorus, praising the all-wise Katherine. For, she proclaimed Christ in the arena, trampled on the serpent, and spat upon the knowledge of the orators.





***Prayers by the Laker, St. Velimirovich, LXIX:***

*"Unprofitable servants!"* Thus speaks the Lord of life and Vanquisher of death:

"Can you increase your stature by a single cubit? Can you make a hair turn white or black? And when you cannot do what is least, why do you worry about the rest?"

"The master of a house, who hires servants, gives them a field and tools and food. Even so does the Heavenly Father provide for His servants!"

"Unprofitable servants, God gives you the strength to serve; and it is not even you who serve, but God who serves through you.

"If you could perform a single good service without God, you would be gods, and God would not exist.

"If you could take a single life, and resurrect a single dead man, without God's presence, you would be gods and God would not exist.

"When you perform all your service, it is God who has performed the service, and it is you who are the unprofitable servants."

I said to my feet: "You do not walk by your own power;" and to my hands: "You do not create by your own power;" and to my nerves: "You do not sense by your own power;" and I said to my mind: "You do not reason by your own power."

Nor can all my caution lead me through a single night alive. Nor can all my toil add a single installment to my lifetime.

And to bread I said: "It is not you who nourish me, but the One who invisibly enters into me with you." And to light I said: "It is not you who illuminate me, but the One from whom even you have borrowed luminosity."

Sons of men, you are all unprofitable servants. Elements of nature, you are all unprofitable servants. Suns, stars and moons, you are all unprofitable servants.

All your service is in vain, unless someone stronger than you provides it.

All your promises are illusions, unless someone wealthier fulfills them.

All your cares are like thorns, that you sow in your way. They do not bring down rain, but make a drought more severe. They do not increase life, but amass weakness.

Unprofitable servants, convert your cares into prayers, just as ice is converted into flowing water, and you will reap an unexpected harvest. Pray to the Lord of the harvest, and then you will understand how vain and ruinous your cares were.

What does it profit for a shepherd's pipe to worry about how it will play? All its worries will not produce a single sound until a player places his mouth on it.

Look upon yourself as nothing; lay claim to nothing -- and everything will be given to you.

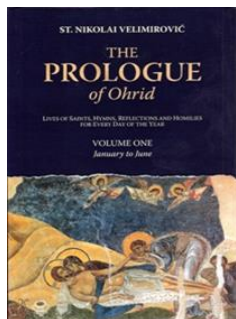
And after you will have done so, you will sense that you are ceasing to be unprofitable servants and that you are becoming sons and heirs of a father. And the Father will clothe you in the gold and purple of His glory.

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

**II. The Realities of the Spiritual World  
The Church of Christ**

One should not seek among others the truth that can be easily gotten from the Church. For in her, as in a rich treasury, the apostles have placed all that pertains to truth, so that everyone can drink this beverage of life. She is the door of life.

+ St. Irenaeus of Lyons, Against Heresies, III.4



***The Prologue of Ohrid: Lives of Saints, Hymns, Reflections and Homilies  
for Every Day of the Year***

**1. The Holy Prophet Micah the Second**

Micah was of the tribe of Judah and from the village of Morasth, for which he is called the "Morasthite." He was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea, and of the Jewish kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Micah rebuked the people for their vices, and rebuked the false prophets who prophesied of wine and of strong drink (Micah 2:11). He

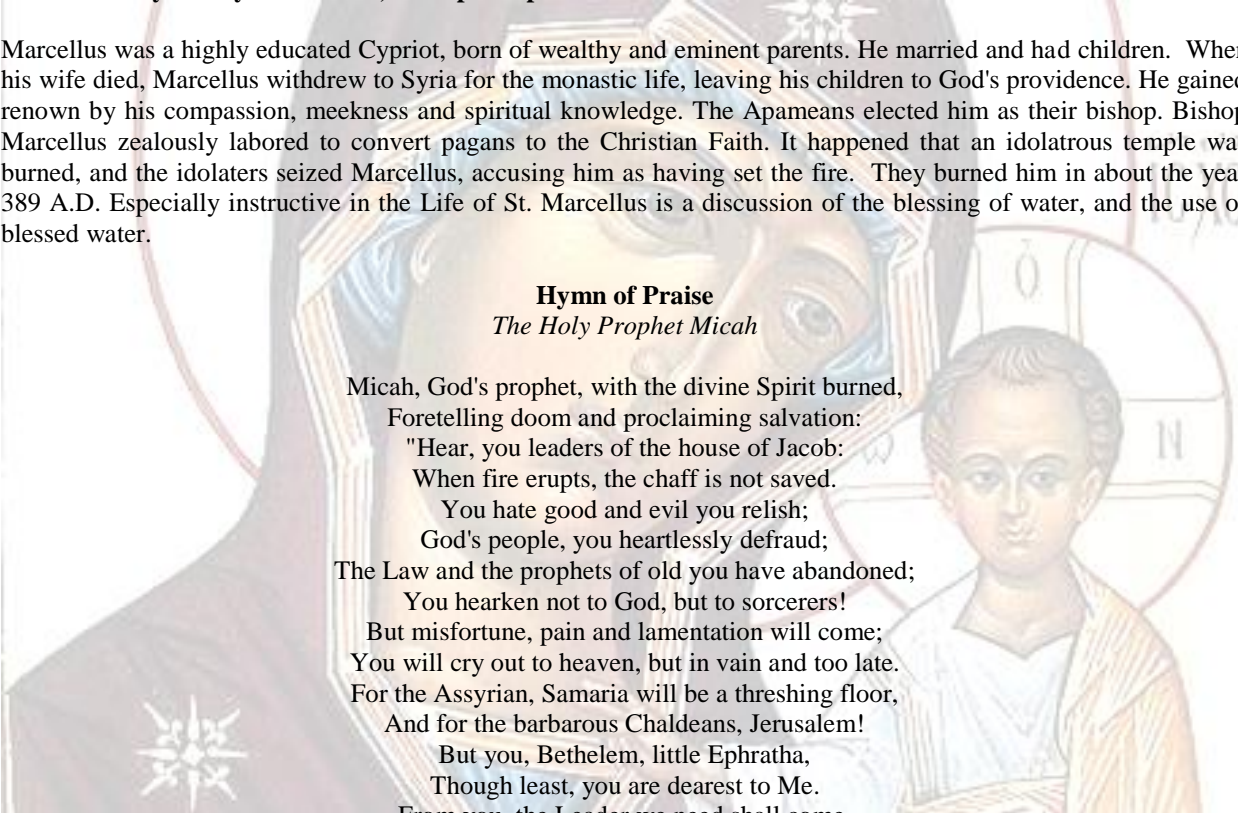


foretold the destruction of Samaria. He also foretold the destruction of Jerusalem, which would come because its leaders accepted bribes, its priests taught for hire, and its prophets told fortunes for money. Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field and Jerusalem shall become as heaps (Micah 3:12). But, of all his prophecies, the most important prophecy is that of Bethlehem as the place of the birth of the Messiah, Whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting (Micah 5:2). It is not known exactly whether this prophet was slain by the Jews or whether he died a peaceful death. [Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah king of Judah and spoke to all the people of Judah saying, Thus said the Lord of hosts; Zion shall be plowed like a field and Jerusalem shall become heaps and the mountain of the house as the high places of a forest. Did Hezekiah king of Judah and all Judah put him at all to death? Did he not fear the Lord and besought the Lord and the Lord repented him of the evil which he had pronounced against them? Thus might we procure great evil against our souls] (Jeremiah 26:18-19). However, it is known that he was buried in his village. During the reign of Emperor Theodosius the Great, Bishop Zevin of Eleutheropolis had a mystical vision that led to the finding of Micah's relics, together with those of the Prophet Habakkuk.

## **2. The Priestly-Martyr Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea**

Marcellus was a highly educated Cypriot, born of wealthy and eminent parents. He married and had children. When his wife died, Marcellus withdrew to Syria for the monastic life, leaving his children to God's providence. He gained renown by his compassion, meekness and spiritual knowledge. The Apameans elected him as their bishop. Bishop Marcellus zealously labored to convert pagans to the Christian Faith. It happened that an idolatrous temple was burned, and the idolaters seized Marcellus, accusing him as having set the fire. They burned him in about the year 389 A.D. Especially instructive in the Life of St. Marcellus is a discussion of the blessing of water, and the use of blessed water.

### **Hymn of Praise** *The Holy Prophet Micah*



Micah, God's prophet, with the divine Spirit burned,  
Foretelling doom and proclaiming salvation:  
"Hear, you leaders of the house of Jacob:  
When fire erupts, the chaff is not saved.  
You hate good and evil you relish;  
God's people, you heartlessly defraud;  
The Law and the prophets of old you have abandoned;  
You hearken not to God, but to sorcerers!  
But misfortune, pain and lamentation will come;  
You will cry out to heaven, but in vain and too late.  
For the Assyrian, Samaria will be a threshing floor,  
And for the barbarous Chaldeans, Jerusalem!  
But you, Bethel, little Ephratha,  
Though least, you are dearest to Me.  
From you, the Leader we need shall come.  
His descent shall be from the heart of heaven;  
Out of His fervent love He will come with eagerness.  
With His mighty staff, His flock He will tend.  
He shall be great unto the ends of the earth.  
The earth and the heavens, of His mercy, shall sing,  
And peace will reign--He shall be that peace.  
In Himself, He will glorify the race of man.

### **Reflection**

Beware of a parent's curse, for a parental curse is a dreadful thing. Value, and seek, a parental blessing--for it will be with you throughout your entire life. The all-wise Sirach speaks: For the blessing of the father establisheth the houses of children; but the curse of the mother rooteth out foundations (Sirach 3:9 [Ecclesiasticus 3:9]). The curse by which Noah cursed the descendants of Ham continued to follow the unfortunate Hamites, but the sons of Jacob

have had blessing in their lives, by the grace of their father's blessing. As a young man, St. Sergius begged his parents for their blessing to become a monk. His aged parents begged their son to wait awhile and abide with them until their death, and then be tonsured a monk. Sergius obeyed his parents, and was blessed throughout his life. Bishop Hermogenes relates that a man mistreated his wife. When his mother tearfully scolded him because of it, the son attacked his mother, beat her, and smashed her head against a wall. The sorrowful mother cried out: "Lord, may my son be cursed, and may he not have my blessing nor Your blessing." That same day, the son began to tremble throughout his entire body, and for thirteen years he trembled so badly that he was not even able to raise a spoon to his mouth. He finally made his confession and received the Sacrament of Holy Communion--which eased his suffering a little. Soon afterward he died.

### **Contemplation**

To contemplate God's wondrous assistance of Saul, in battle with the Ammonites (1 Samuel 11 [also known as 1 Kings 11]):

1. How the powerful Nahash [Naas], the leader of the Ammonites, threatened to pluck out the right eyes of all the Israelites;
2. How the people of Israel wept before the Lord;
3. How God helped Saul and Samuel destroy the Ammonites, for the Spirit of God was upon them.

### **Homily** **About the prophecy of light in darkness**

*"The people that walked in the darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined" (Isaiah 9:2).*

The prophet foretold that, where it was darkest, the light-bearing Messiah would appear. The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali were considered to be the darkest lands. There the pagans intermingled with the Jews; the yoke of external and internal slavery was the heaviest; the darkness of the pagans and the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees covered the people with the shadow of death. The Light of Heaven shone first in Bethlehem when Christ the Lord was born there. That Light was seen from afar by eastern Magi, and from nearby by the shepherds of Bethlehem. But that Light was driven out of Bethlehem by the bloody sword of Herod, and the Light withdrew to Egypt. After that, the Light shone in full radiance in the land of darkness and the shadow of death--the land of Zebulun and Naphtali. Beside the lake in that region, there lived fishermen whom our Lord chose for His disciples. Also in that land is to be found the Mount of the Beatitudes, from whose slopes the Lord proclaimed His first great sermon. There, also, is Cana of Galilee, where the Lord worked His first miracle. There He began His work for the salvation of mankind by His powerful words and deeds. Men saw this great Light and were astonished. Many were scandalized by the Lord, and many mocked Him. But these men of darkness did not kill Him. There was another, darker place in the land of the Jews, whose people rose up against the Creator and slew Him. It was the same place from which Herod, thirty-three years earlier, had raised his bloody sword to extinguish the Great Light by blood. This place was Jerusalem. Of all the darkness, the darkness of Jerusalem was the blackest--ironically, since the name Jerusalem means "light."

O Lord, our Great and All-powerful Light, encompass us by Your light in our fleeting lives, and receive us, when we pass from this earth, into Your glorious, immortal Light.

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



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

#### **Facing Martyrdom**

*Encountering the resurrected Christ in times of persecution*

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 give 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, for they were preparing 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, much as we are witnessing today, in the Middle East.

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 Christians experience, even in this renewed period of persecution and martyrdom throughout the Middle East, is tempered with the knowledge that Christ conquered the permanency of death by His death, and that His resurrection will be 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* **Do You Wash My Feet**

*“...Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, rose from supper, laid aside his garments, and girded himself with a towel. Then he poured water into*

*a basin, and began to wash the disciples’ feet, and to wipe them with the towel with which he was girded. He came to Simon Peter; and Peter said to him, ‘Lord, do you wash my feet?’ Jesus answered him, ‘What I am doing you do not know now, but afterward you will understand.’ Peter said to him, ‘You shall never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered him, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no part in me.’ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!’” (Jn 13: 3-9)*

It is indeed awkward, having Christ Himself, girded with a towel, kneel and wash our feet, – isn’t it? At least I think so. Because I tend to forget, as Peter did in the moment, that it is He, not I, Who first and foremost serves me and cares for me, so that I can walk, with “washed feet,” to His end, in His kind of usefulness to myself and others. If I let Him do this.

Today let me let Him love me to His “end,” as it says in the beginning of the above-quoted chapter: He “loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end (εις τέλος)” (Jn 13: 1). Let me receive the abundant love,





help, and ministry He has on offer in His One Body, which continues to serve me, so that I may serve, those who are “in the world.” This morning I open up to His help in prayer, and am willing to receive whatever help I need from others, that “not my feet only” may be washed, “but also my hands and my head.” O Lord, may I walk, and act, and think as You did, today. Glory be to You.

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***Holy Orthodox Quotes***

“Let us love silence till the world is made to die in our hearts.” – St. Isaac the Syrian

**Psalms 45:11-12**

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us, The God of Jacob is our protector.

**1 Kings 19:11-12**

And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

**Habakkuk 2:20**

But the LORD is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him.

**1 John 2:15-17**

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.

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***The Philokalia: Daily Readings***

A lamp cannot be kept burning without oil; nor can the light of spiritual gifts continue to shine unless one inwardly sustains it with actions and thoughts consonant with it. For every spiritual gift requires a corresponding inner quality in the recipient to feed it spiritually as though with oil, thus preserving its presence.

+ *St Maximus the Confessor, 500 Various Texts*

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

**"Humility and Innocence" by St. Bede the Venerable**

Better a stupid and unlettered brother who, working the good things he knows, merits life in Heaven than one who though being distinguished for his learning in the Scriptures, or even holding the place of a doctor, lacks the bread of love.

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***Through the Grace of God – Orthodox Christianity***

**St John Chrysostom: Happiness**

“Happiness can only be achieved by looking inward and learning to enjoy whatever life has and this requires transforming greed into gratitude.”

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***Collected Sayings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica***

One of the God-bearing Fathers, St. Nilus the Myrrh-gusher (he appeared to Monk Theophanes, who dwelt in St. Nilus’ cave in the eighteenth century), has explained to us many of the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. He

said that envy was the seal of the Antichrist on the heart of man. Do you now see what terrible thing envy is? But alas, we often envy our neighbor, even our closest kin. We do not care to attempt to heal ourselves from this affliction and come to our senses.

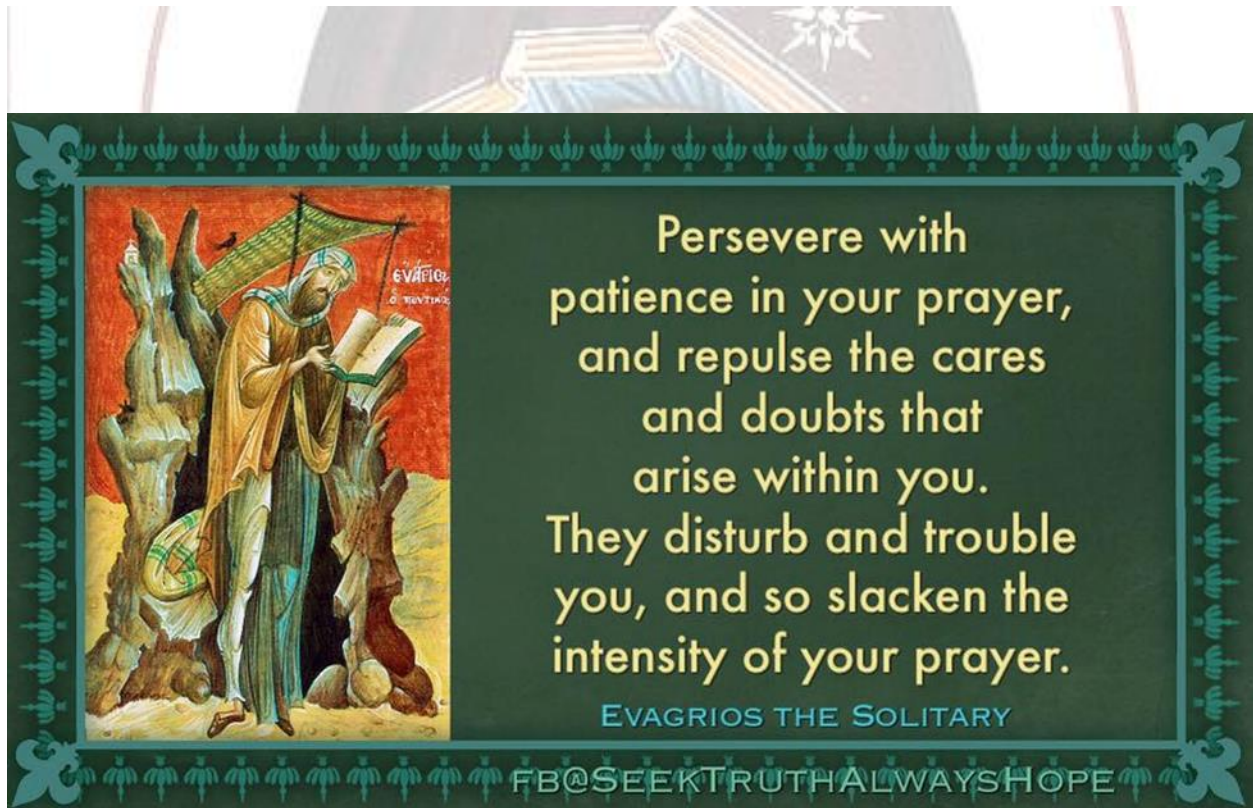
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*Ancient Christian Wisdom*

We should not despair when we struggle but see no progress, remaining continuously at zero. All people earn zeros with their human strength, some more and some less. Christ, seeing our small human effort, places the number one before our zeros, and thus they acquire value and we can detect some improvement. Thus, we must not despair, but hope in God.

+ St. Paisios

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## AUGUST – 2016

Sunday Resurrection	Monday Holy Angels	Tuesday St. John the Baptist	Wednesday Most-Holy Theotokos	Thursday Holy Apostles	Friday Life-giving Cross	Saturday Departed
<i>I am only because Thou art.</i>	<b>1 Wine &amp; Oil</b>  Begin Dormition Fast Blessing of Waters  <b>PROCESSION OF THE LIFEGIVING CROSS</b>  7 Maccabean Martyrs	<b>2</b>  Relics Protomartyr Stephen Righteous Gamaliel  <b>7:00-8:00pm</b> The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg	<b>3</b>  Ven. Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus	<b>4</b>  Seven Sleepers of Ephesus Martyr Eudoxia	<b>5 Forefeast Transfiguration</b>  Martyr Eusignius Righteous Nonna  <b>8:00-9:15pm</b> Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	<b>6 Fish, Wine &amp; Oil</b>  <b>TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST</b>  <b>6:30pm Vespers</b>
<b>7 Wine &amp; Oil</b>  <b>Valaam Icon</b>  Martyr Dometius Relics St. Mitrophan, First Bp. of Voronezh  <b>9:40am Hours</b> <b>9:45am Gen'l Confession</b> <b>10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social</b>	<b>8 Tolga Icon</b>  St. Emilian, Confessor Ven. Zosima and Sawatii of Solovki	<b>9 Fish, Wine &amp; Oil</b>  <b>VEN. HERMAN OF ALASKA, WONDER-WORKER OF ALL AMERICA</b>  <b>7:00-8:00pm</b> The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	<b>10</b>  Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Lawrence of Rome	<b>11</b>  Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Euplus of Catania	<b>12</b>  Martyrs Anicletus and Photius  <b>8:00-9:15pm</b> Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	<b>13 Fish, Wine &amp; Oil</b>  Leave Transfiguration The “Passion” Icon  <b>ST. TIKHON, WONDERWORKER OF ZADONSK</b>  <b>6:30pm Vespers</b>
<b>14 Forefeast Dormition</b> <i>1 Aug. O.S. Begin Dormition Fast</i>  Prophet Micah St. Theodosius-Caves  <b>9:40am Hours</b> <b>10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social</b>	<b>15</b>  <b>DORMITION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS</b>	<b>16 Fedorovskaya Icon</b>  Image of Christ “Not Made by Hands”  <b>7:00-8:00pm</b> The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	<b>17</b>  Martyr Myron Bl. Theodoretus, Enlightener of Lapps	<b>18</b>  Martyrs Florus and Laurus Ven. John of Rila	<b>19 Donskaya Icon</b>  Martyr Andrew Stratelates and His Companions  <b>8:00-9:15pm</b> Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	<b>20</b>  Prophet Samuel Hieromartyr Philip, Bishop of Heraclius  <b>6:30pm Vespers</b>
<b>21</b>  Apostle of the 70 Thaddeus Ven. Avramii of Smolensk  <b>9:40 Hours</b> <b>10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social</b>	<b>22 Georgian Icon</b>  Martyr Agathonicus and His Companions	<b>23 Leavetaking Dormition</b>  Martyr Lupus Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons  <b>7:00-8:00pm</b> The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	<b>24 Petrovskaya Icon</b>  Hieromartyr Eutychius St. Kozma of Berat St. Cosmas of Aetolia	<b>25</b>  Relics of the Apostle Bartholomew Apostle Titus of the 70	<b>26 Vladmir Icon</b>  Martyrs Andrian and Natalia  <b>8:00-9:15pm</b> Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	<b>27</b>  Ven. Poemen the Great Hieromartyr Kuksha  <b>6:30pm Vespers</b>
<b>28 Wine &amp; Oil</b> <i>15 Aug. O.S. Dormition</i>  <b>VEN. JOB OF POCHAEV</b>  <b>9:40am Hours</b> <b>10:00am Divine Liturgy/ Social</b> <b>12:15pm Council Mtg.</b>	<b>29 Strict Fast Wine &amp; Oil</b>  <b>BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST</b>	<b>30</b>  Ss. Alexander, John and Paul, Patrs. Of Constantinople  <b>7:00-8:00pm</b> The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	<b>31</b>  Sash of the Theotokos Hieromartyr Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage	<i>In what ways in my life am I holding others at a distance until I am good enough/ How do I judge others as not being good enough? What effect does this have on my life? How does God see me? Who and when in my life has someone noticed me so carefully that I have felt beloved? What change resulted from this? Do I notice others in that way/ How do I celebrated and acknowledge the gift each one is/ On a daily basis am I growing more toward being wondrously grateful or toward being critically hateful?— Dn Stephen Muse, “Being bread.”</i>		