

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 7, 2016

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

Tone 6

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7

7th Sunday after Pentecost; Afterfeast of the Transfiguration of our Lord



**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory
Forever!**

*Afterfeast of the
Transfiguration of our Lord*

*You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God, revealing Your glory to
Your disciples as far as they could bear it. Let Your everlasting Light also shine
Upon us sinners, through the prayers of the Theotokos.*

O Giver of Light, glory to You!

(Troparion – Tone 7)

*On the Mountain You were Transfigured, O Christ God, And Your disciples beheld
Your glory as far as they could see it; So that when they would behold You crucified,
They would understand that Your suffering was voluntary,*

And would proclaim to the world, That You are truly the Radiance of the Father!

(Kontakion – Tone 7)

Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints

7th Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 6. Afterfeast of the Transfiguration. Martyr Dometius of Persia and two disciples (363). Finding of the Relics of St. Mitrophanes, first Bishop of Voronezh (1832). Ven. Pimen (Pömen) the Much-ailing, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—1110). Ven. Pimen, Faster, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves— 13th-14th c.). St. Mercurius, Bishop of Smolensk (Kiev Caves—Near Caves—1239). Martyrs Marinus the soldier and Asterius the Senator, at Cæsarea in Palestine (260). Ven. Hor (Horus) of the Thebaïd (Egypt—ca. 390). Virgin Potamia the Wonderworker. Ven. Dometius of Philotheou on Mt. Athos (16th c.). The “VALAAM” Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos (1897).

Weekly Bulletin Sponsors

For Health of:

Keely Ryan Salcedo, born Aug. 5th, offered by her grandfather Sub-Deacon Vlashi.

William D. Kuzemchak, who is in the hospital, offered by his family.

Godson Mark Dantine, on his birthday, offered by Tammy, Nick & Elizabeth.

Paula, on birthday, offered by her mother Liz.

Kozma (Koz) Prifti, (Home of Hope) on his birthday, offered by Sub-Deacon Vlashi.

In Memory of:

Walter, offered by his sister Liz.

Liturgical Schedule

Sunday, August 7th

9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General
Confession
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy
12:15pm: Sisterhood Mtg.

Saturday, August 13th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 14th

9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 20th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 21st

9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, August 27th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 28th

9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Bulletin Sponsors:

***Tammy, Nick & Elizabeth
Zimmerman; Liz Pastore;
The Kuzemchak Family.***

Readings:

The Prokeimenon in the 6th Tone:

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 11:2*)

Another, Tone 4 (Feast):

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; in wisdom hast Thou made them all!
(*Psalm 103:24*)

Epistle: Romans 15:1-7

Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbour for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Alleluia in the 6th Tone:

He who dwelleth in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the heavenly God. (*Psalm 90:1*)
vs. He will say to the Lord: "My Protector and my Refuge; my God, in Whom I trust."
(*Psalm 90:2*)

Another, Tone 8 (Feast):

The heavens are Thine; the earth also is Thine. (*Psalm 88:12*)

Gospel: Matthew 9:27-35

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marvelled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.



Afterfeast of the Transfiguration of our Lord

On the first day of the Afterfeast of the Transfiguration, the hymns of Vespers speak of the amazement of the Apostles when they saw Christ transfigured before them. The Savior's equality with the Father is also stressed, for He who covers Himself with light as with a garment is now transfigured before His disciples, "shining more brightly than the sun."



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

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

There will be a Sisterhood meeting today after coffer hour.

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; or simply talk to her at church to share your story and pictures!



NY/NJ Diocese News

Diocese of NY & NJ Launches Website for Department of Youth Ministry

The Orthodox Church in America's Diocese of New York & New Jersey is pleased to announce the launch of its new Department of Youth Ministry website. With the blessing of His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, this new platform offers easy access to information about upcoming events within the youth department, features a media gallery full of press releases and photos from past events, and will allow for on-line event registration in the near future.

"It is our hope that the youth in our diocese and beyond, together with their parents, will visit the site often and take advantage of the opportunities we create to grow in our faith, make new friends, and have fun," said Danielle Geeza (Department Assistant and Website Designer). "As His Eminence Archbishop Michael always reminds us, our youth are not only the future of the church, but are also the present!"

Although the activities planned by the Department of Youth Ministry are targeted to youth in the New York and New Jersey diocese, youth from other dioceses and jurisdictions are welcome to participate. The website will be updated regularly and continue to expand over the coming months. Visitors are encouraged to explore the website and sign-up to receive emails announcing future events by submitting their information via Google Forms.

"Our prayer is but one: that through the new website the youth of our church together with the clergy and faithful will become connected to one another and, more so, become connected to the Church and to Our Lord God and Savior, Jesus Christ," said Reverend Jason Vansuch (Chairperson, Department of Youth Ministry).

Website: nynjoca.wixsite.com/nynjocayouth

If parishes within or outside the Diocese of New York & New Jersey would like to have their youth events announced on the website, please contact Father Vansuch at jvansuch@hotmail.com or Danielle Geeza at nynjocayouth@gmail.com

From the Office of the Bishop

Clergy Changes:

Presbyter Thaddeus Franta, is relieved of his responsibilities as Rector of Holy Trinity Church in Rahway, New Jersey, and assigned as Acting Rector of Saints Peter and Paul Church in Herkimer, New York, effective July 30, 2016.

Presbyter Theodore Gregory, newly ordained, is assigned as Acting Rector of Holy Trinity Church in Rahway, New Jersey, effective July 30, 2016.

Sub-Deacon John (Russell) Komline was ordained to the Holy Diaconate by His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, in the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Church in Princeton, New Jersey, on Sunday, July 31, 2016.

Deacon John (Russell) Komline, newly ordained, is attached to the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Church in Princeton, New Jersey, effective July 31, 2016.

Congratulations:

Archpriest Peter Baktis, was awarded the Synodal Gramota for 30 years of outstanding priestly service to the Orthodox Church in America. The award was presented at the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Church in Princeton, New Jersey, on Sunday, July 31, 2016, by Archbishop Michael on behalf of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and the entire Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America.

Hospitalized:

Presbyter John Nightingale, of the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania, who suffered a tragic fall and serious spinal cord injury, has been transferred to the VA Hospital in the Bronx for rehabilitation for at least the next six weeks. His address is James J. Peters Medical Center, Spinal Cord Injury Ward 1E 08, 130 West Kingsbridge Road, Bronx, New York 10468. If you are able to visit, he would greatly appreciate it. His cell number is (570) 815-7411.

Upcoming Events:

- August 13: New York State Deanery Church School Teachers Conference, Rochester, NY
- 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

St. Tikhon's Monastery site of women's retreat August 20

Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of Saint Tikhon's Monastery here, will be the keynote speaker at a retreat for women sponsored by the Department of Curriculum and Education of the Diocese of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania at the monastery on Saturday, August 20, 2016.

Father Sergius' topic will be "Spirituality in Our Daily Lives."

Following the celebration of the Divine Liturgy in the monastery church at 8:00 a.m., registration and a continental breakfast will be available. The first retreat session will begin at 10:00 a.m. The retreat will conclude at 2:30 p.m.

The registration deadline is August 15. The \$10.00 registration fee includes lunch. A detailed schedule and registration forms are available on-line. For further information please contact Maria Proch at 570-587-3097, 570-466-6554 or smile9561@juno.com.



OCMC News - Fr. Maximos from Nigeria Speaks about the Blessing of Orthodox Theological Education

Fr. Maximos is an Orthodox priest in Nigeria who was the recipient of a scholarship granted to him through OCMC. The scholarship allowed him to study theology through the Saint Stephen's Certificate Program and to gain a top-notch theological education while studying in his own country, all with the blessing of his metropolitan.

Sara Staff, Marketing Coordinator for the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, recently had the opportunity to speak with Fr. Maximos about his experiences. He expressed how thankful he was to receive a theological education. He mentioned the difficulty of defending truth in a world with so many opinions. He stressed that this is why knowing the traditions of the Orthodox Church is so important. To teach truth, you must know what has been passed down, even with all the ups and downs of the Church. He acknowledged the blessing of being able to learn

about Orthodox history, tradition, and theology so that he is better equipped to share those truths with people in his own country.

He was honest about some of the challenges his people face that make it difficult for them to accept Orthodox Christianity. There are deep roots in other faith traditions, many people are uneducated, and it is often hard to relay the necessity of going to church services when it interferes with other impending daily tasks. Fr. Maximos now has a greater ability to confront these challenges knowing the mindset and teaching of the Orthodox Faith through the education he has received. He is passionate about sharing the truths of Orthodoxy with the Nigerian people.

Fr. Maximos will soon begin work on a Master’s Degree and hopes to one day acquire a Ph.D. He is very thankful for the opportunity that the OCMC has given him to learn about Orthodox theology. It has enabled him to more effectively teach the people of his country and understand their spiritual needs. OCMC is humbled to be a part of his story.

Over the past month, OCMC has raised almost \$20,000 to support theological training abroad! We are grateful for the generous hearts of those who have helped this effort through prayer and/or financial means. The funds will go to support theological training institutions like the Makarios III Seminary in Kenya and the Resurrection of Christ Orthodox Seminary in Albania. We pray that the Lord continues to bless Orthodox seminaries across the globe as they train future priests for the service of Christ’s Church.



ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN PRISON MINISTRY
AN AGENCY OF THE ASSEMBLY OF BISHOPS

Prisoners Among Us

You don’t need to be behind bars to be imprisoned... In this reflection, our brother in Christ Fr George Tsahakis reminds us that at some point in our lives, we all find ourselves in chains—prisoners to things that bind and enslave us. If we are to truly help others be set free, we may need to first free ourselves.

Imagine walking in the forest and seeing four men chained to trees in the darkened woods. These prisoners appear to be hungry, heartsick, and discouraged.

Now, visualize yourself springing to their rescue.... Indeed, you possess the means to free them. You realize you know the combination to their locks which bind together their chains, and you now call upon your talents to set the prisoners free.

You unlock the chains of the first man, and then he goes to the second man and frees him. In turn, the second man cares for the third man, but to his dismay, the third man fails to be able to loosen the bonds of the fourth captive.

Sadly, the fourth prisoner is left in chains with the combination to his lock unknown.

Upon your return home, everyone rejoices at your heroic rescue, but deep inside, you remain unsatisfied that the fourth man continued to be a prisoner.

Now let’s ask several questions: Why were these men prisoners? Who had chained them? What had brought them freedom from bondage?

The first man’s chains were caused by terror of God, and up until his release, he had sought to deny any religion or any relationship to God. The sins of fear and doubt kept him chained in the forest of hate and ignorance.

The second man’s chains were made up of prejudice, and he thought himself superior to those of another color or race. He was imprisoned in the forest of hate and ignorance.

The third man was chained with a self-righteous attitude, thinking he could do no wrong, that he was superior to others, and he didn’t need to offer mercy. He was lost through his self-imposed loneliness and chained in the forest of hate and ignorance.

As the rescuer of these three men, let me recap how positively you offered to them God’s Word as the means to set these prisoners free. In speaking with the first prisoner, you offered him the encouragement found in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life.” With the second captive, you witnessed to him the testimony found in Acts 17:24-26: “The God who made the world and everything in it, He who is Lord of heaven and earth, ... From one ancestor He made all nations to inhabit the whole earth...” And your choice of Holy Scripture to free the third prisoner was St. Paul’s counsel in 1 Corinthians 8:8: “Food will not bring us close to God.” We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do.”

You and for that matter, others, cannot liberate the fourth prisoner from his chains and home in darkness, for he has no faith, and he continues to not believe you, me, or God.

For those reading this parable, let me ask, “Have you any chains? Are you in a forest? Would you like to hear the ‘Good News’ to free you from your bondage and live life as God intended for all of us?”

If the answer is yes, after you finish reading these words, open your Bible and read God’s plan for your life. It’s yours for the taking.

“For this purpose He called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Thessalonians 2:14)



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



Orthodox College Prep: Things to Consider **Categories: Student Reflection by Benjamin Solak**

You’ve finished the application process. Take a moment, breathe a sigh of relief.

Applying for colleges is rough. The process can be grueling and unpleasant. And then, after all that work, you receive a rejection? That hurts. Wait-listed? Still hurts, totally different way.

But you got accepted somewhere (I’m pretty sure), and that’s awesome. Now it’s time to make what can be a life-altering choice: which of the schools to which you’ve been accepted should you attend?

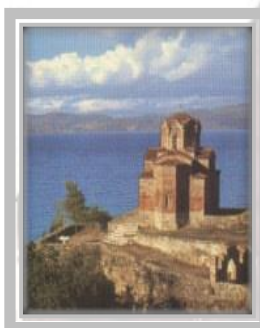
I had to face that decision once, so I know that it's a doozy. I'd like to share with you some ideas I think are crucial in these, the waning stages of your college application process—these recommendations come solely from my experience, and are likely a tad subjective, but you can glean from them what you will.

We aren't all called to work for the Church, but we are all called to love God, and love others because they, too, are created in the image and likeness of Him. We become successful accountants, lawyers, marketers, and historians so that we can use our living to benefit others, starting with our family and branching out to the poor and needy. We work as scientists to discover more hidden wonders in this world created for us by God. While in the office we express love and kindness to our coworkers. We go to the local watering hole with the intention of having a fun night out with our friends, not to get blackout drunk and make irresponsible and irreversible decisions.

Too many students compartmentalize their faith, and put it into a box (one usually too small). But in reality, what we are is, "a Christian who likes soccer," or "a Christian who is a bio major," or "a Christian who is interning." We are first and foremost Christians; that is our most important full-time job. And if we dare to call ourselves Christians, then why would we not be focusing on our faith as much as we can? That means attending Liturgy, that means connecting with students in a loving way, both in OCF and not. That means helping the community around us. That means having and active prayer life.

Do not be lukewarm, or you will be spat out. Do not be the student that only goes to church on holidays when home. Do not be the student that is too busy studying to make it to OCF or a volunteering event once in a while. Do not be the student that is too lazy to pray daily. Remember that we must take ownership and responsibility of our faith. We are not only Christians on Sunday. At every moment, and in every action we are representing our Christian faith to others. It is expected that we struggle, and with struggle comes sin. But in the wake of sin must come repentance. If we are truly Orthodox Christians, we aren't ever passive. We believe in constant salvation, and an ongoing attempt to join Christ in the afterlife. So as a graduating senior, my advice to college students is to own your faith, and own it now. I didn't make many true friends in my OCF until later on in college. Now, I never go to church alone. Find those who take the faith seriously, and stick by them. Your fellowship and steadfast nature will draw others to you.

Benjamin Solak is an undeclared first-year at the University of Chicago. He's a fan of football, priests who dish out communion really fast, and brightly-colored pants. He invites you to check out his personal blog on Christian living and personal development at benjaminsolak.wordpress.com



Prayers by the Laker, St. Velimirovich, LXVIII:

The Hindu curses karma. The Moslem curses kismet. The Christian curses sin.

They all curse their accursedness; truly, all forms of accursedness are a deprivation of freedom.

They all curse their accursedness -- the only blessed curse. They all grumble against the ash, which has bound them to it-self and is certain of its victory.

Truly, gamblers do not like one whose victory is assured in a game with people who are more inept.

The Hindu does not curse the deprivation of freedom, but his vassalage to what is worse than himself. Nor does the Moslem curse the deprivation of freedom, but his vassalage to what is worse than himself. Nor does the Christian curse the deprivation of freedom, but his vassalage to what is worse than himself. None of them grumbles against their master as though he were their master, but as though he were a master inferior to themselves.

The world seeks masters. In tasting masters it falls beneath the heel of servants and, feeding on ashes, it tries to preserve its dignity only by grumbling.

I took counsel with myself and asked myself: "Can you cast karma behind you -- this towering mountain, as ancient as the world, and as weighty as the world -- can you cast it behind you?"

"Can a drop of water really find its way into the light? Can the fire in the heart of the mountain bore its way through and break out on top, where the sun awaits it?"

Again I took counsel with myself and asked myself: "Can you develop a kismet for kismet? Can a cameleer save both himself and his camel from a sandstorm, and return on time from a route without oases?"

"Can a son enter into his patrimony from a plenipotentiary father?"

"Can the law-fulfiller become the law-giver?"

Again I took counsel with myself and asked myself: "Can you escape from this field of sins, where a single seed yields a hundred harvests?"

"Can one, who has found a better field, really abandon the one that is worse?"

"Can one, who has found out that his fellow wayfarer is a malefactor, really turn around and run away from him?"

But the fright within me retorts: "What if there is no other field? What if there is no other fellow-wayfarer?"

But the more courageous I within me replies: "When I speak of Brahma, am I not speaking of the other field? When I speak of Allah, am I not speaking of the other, fel-low-wayfarer? When I speak of Christ, am I not speaking of salvation?"

O Heavenly Master, accept my soul as Your handmaiden. Lo, my only freedom is to serve one better than myself.

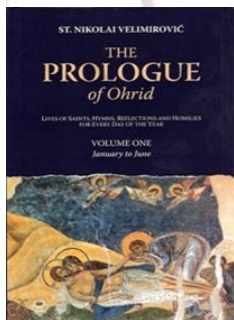
Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, LXVIII:

II. The Realities of the Spiritual World

The Church of Christ

We know and are convinced that falling away from the Church, whether into schism, heresy, or sectarianism, is complete perdition and spiritual death. For us there is no Christianity outside of the Church. If Christ established the Church, and the Church is His Body, then to be cut off from His Body is to die.

+ St. Hilarion Troitsky, On Life in the Church



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

1. The Venerable Martyr Dometius

Dometius was born in Persia as a pagan during the reign of Emperor Constantine. He became acquainted with the Christian Faith as a young man, abandoned paganism, and was baptized. So much did Dometius love the True Faith that he left every worldly thing and was tonsured a monk in a monastery near the town of Nisibis. He lived for some time among the brethren, and then withdrew to a life of silence with the elder, Archmandrite Urbel (who is said to have not eaten only cooked food for sixty years). Elder Urbel ordained Dometius a deacon, and when he wanted to compel him to receive the rank of a priest, Dometius withdrew to an isolated mountain and settled in a cave. He attained such a high degree of perfection through fasting, prayer, all night vigils and godly-thoughts that he miraculously cured the sick. When Julian the Apostate came to those regions, he heard of Dometius and sent men to seal him up alive in a cave, with two of his disciples. Thus, this saint of God died and took up his habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 363 A.D.

2. The Venerable Or, Hermit of the Thebaid

Or attained great perfection through the greatest asceticism. When he firmly established himself and attained holiness in solitude, he gradually established several monasteries, and was a superb spiritual leader and teacher of many monks. Rufinus, who visited him, describes Or in the following way: "In appearance, he resembled an angel of God--a ninety-year old elder with a long beard, as white as snow. His outward aspect was wonderful. His gaze shone with superhuman radiance." Often he saw the angels of God. He especially endeavored never to speak an untruth. He had great temptations from the demons but overpowered them all, soberly and courageously. He received Holy Communion daily. On one occasion, one of his disciples reminded him that the Feast of the Resurrection had come, and that it should be celebrated. Hearing this, Or came out, raised his hands to heaven and spent three days in prayer without rest. He explained to his disciple: "For the monk, this is the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ: to elevate his mind and to unite it with God." He rested in deep old age in about the year 390 A.D.

3. The Holy Martyrs Marinus and Asterius

Marinus was a soldier and Asterius was a Roman senator. At the time of Emperor Gallienus, St. Marinus served as a soldier in Caesarea in Palestine. Marinus was beheaded for the sake of the Christian Faith. Asterius, the senator, also a Christian, was present at his martyrdom. He removed his toga [dolman] and wrapped the body of the martyr in it. He then carried the body on his shoulders and honorably buried it. Seeing this, the pagans beheaded him also. They both died honorably for Christ in about the year 260 A.D.

4. The Venerable Poemen, the Much-Ailing

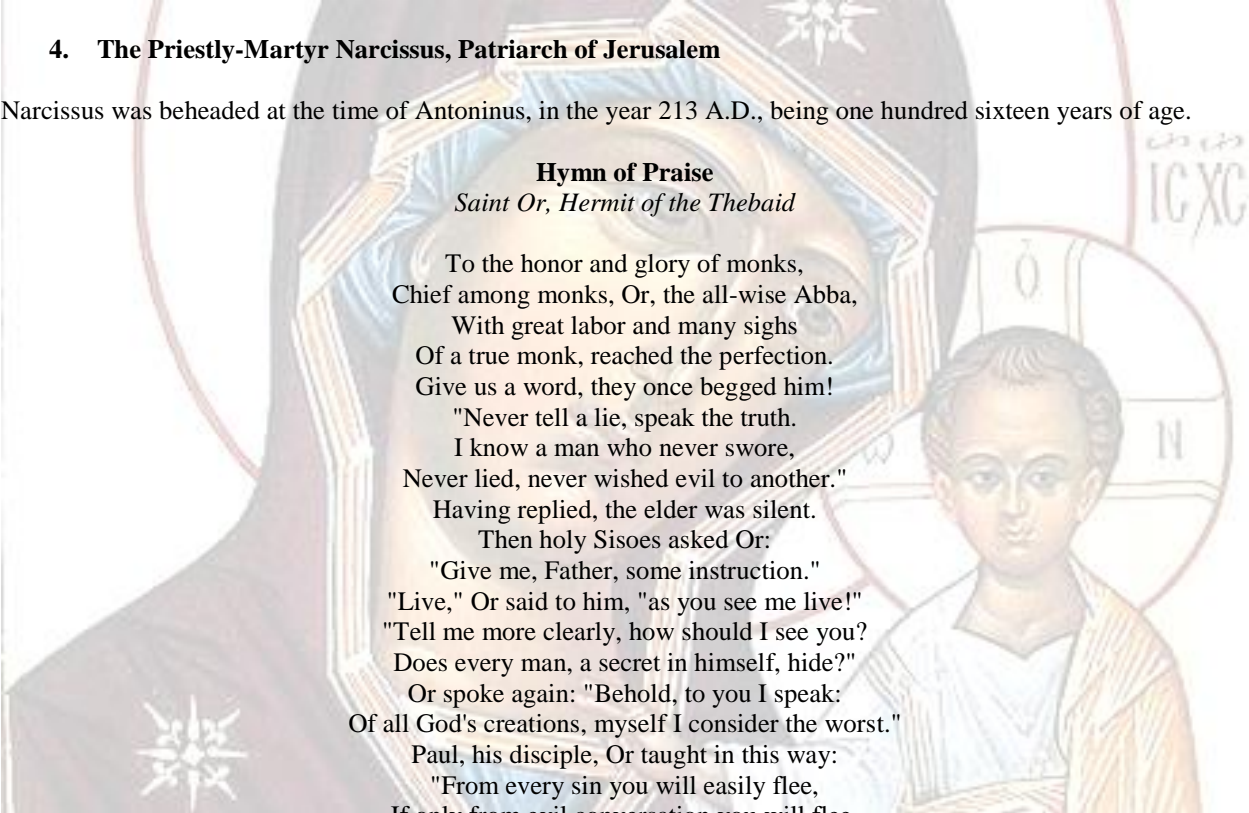
Since his youth, Poemen was both sickly and desirous of the monastic life. Brought to the Lavra of the Caves in Kiev for healing, he remained there until his death. Poemen prayed to God more for sickness than for health. At night, angels appeared to him and tonsured him a monk. They also informed him that he would be ill until his death and that just before his death he would become healthy. And so it was. Poemen was bedridden for twenty years. He worked miracles during his lifetime, and possessed a rare gift of clairvoyance. Just prior to his death, he rose from the bed completely whole, and immediately prepared a grave for himself. He rested in the Lord in the year 1110 A.D.

4. The Priestly-Martyr Narcissus, Patriarch of Jerusalem

Narcissus was beheaded at the time of Antoninus, in the year 213 A.D., being one hundred sixteen years of age.

Hymn of Praise

Saint Or, Hermit of the Thebaid



To the honor and glory of monks,
Chief among monks, Or, the all-wise Abba,
With great labor and many sighs
Of a true monk, reached the perfection.
Give us a word, they once begged him!
"Never tell a lie, speak the truth.
I know a man who never swore,
Never lied, never wished evil to another."
Having replied, the elder was silent.
Then holy Sisoës asked Or:
"Give me, Father, some instruction."
"Live," Or said to him, "as you see me live!"
"Tell me more clearly, how should I see you?
Does every man, a secret in himself, hide?"
Or spoke again: "Behold, to you I speak:
Of all God's creations, myself I consider the worst."
Paul, his disciple, Or taught in this way:
"From every sin you will easily flee,
If only from evil conversation you will flee,
For, from this evil, every other sin sprouts.
To the soul of man, evil conversation is death;
Every good seed in the heart, it smothers.
One more thing will I say, and let it be enough:
All vain thoughts, repel; iniquitous desires, repel;
From material cares, distance yourself,
And, my son, the immaterial you will attain."

Reflection

Neither concern yourself about the righteous nor envy the sinner. Always remember that the Lord Jesus Christ, by His Resurrection, triumphed over a shameful death--and that Herod, Judas, Nero, Julian the Apostate, Valerian, Leo the Armenian, and other opponents of Christ destroyed their own successes and victories forever, by their shameful deaths. Envious ones slandered St. Narcissus the patriarch, spreading rumors that he had lost his chastity. The

innocent Narcissus withdrew into the wilderness. He spent many years in silence and patiently waited for God to do His will. Three patriarchs succeeded him before witnesses came forward to clearly prove his innocence. Then everyone forced him to return from the wilderness to the patriarchal throne. Thus, God justifies the righteous. The bloody Emperor Valerian, with satanic passion, murdered Christians throughout the entire civilized world [Roman Empire]. How did he end his days? He was defeated in battle and enslaved by the Persian king, Sapor. Sapor did not desire to kill him immediately, but used him as a mounting block whenever he mounted a horse. Every day, King Sapor's servants brought Valerian along with the horses, and Sapor enjoyed placing his foot on the neck of the Roman emperor in order to make it easier for him to mount the horse. He who sows evil seed reaps an evil harvest.

Contemplation

To contemplate the mercy of God toward the barren Hannah, the mother of Samuel (1 Samuel 1 [also known as 1 Kings 1]):

1. How Hannah was barren, and in her sorrow implored God that she be enabled to bear a son, promising to dedicate him to God;
2. How God heard the prayers of Hannah, and she gave bore a son, and named him Samuel (bidden of God)
3. How Hannah brought Samuel to the Temple and dedicated him to God.

Homily

About the new Law from Zion

"For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3).

The prophet speaks of a new Law and of a new Word. The old Law was given on Sinai; the new Law would come from Zion. The old Law was given through Moses; the new Law would be brought by the Lord Christ Himself. The former was intended in the beginning only for the Jews, and the latter would be for all people--all of mankind. Even though these words of the prophet are clear to us, the Jews could not understand them; nor do they understand them today. The meaning of these words is closed to them because of their stony hearts. To whom do they [the Jews] apply these words? To no one. How do they interpret these words? They do not. They pass by these words as a blind man passes by an open door. If they were able to comprehend these words, would they have acted in the manner they did with the prophet and the prophesied One [Christ]? Would they have sawn Isaiah asunder, and crucified Christ on the Cross?

The Jews considered the Law of Moses to be the one, final Law of God. That is why they were unable to comprehend the prophecy of the new Law from Zion, from the House of David, for David glorified Zion. But if the Jews did not know that the new Law would be revealed through the old Law, we Christians know that we comprehend the old Law through the new. The Jews had a tree without fruit, but we have the tree and the fruit. They had an image without reality, but we have both image and reality. They adhered only to promises (and those they understood incorrectly), but we have the promises and their fulfillment.

O most wealthy Lord, Who has enriched us with Your spiritual Law and Your life-giving Word, You only do we worship, and to You only do we pray. Grant us wisdom and power to live according to Your Law and to uphold Your holy Word, so that we may not become poor before You, Who has made us rich!

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration by Abbott Tryphon

The After Life

All creation will come into the presence of God in the afterlife

The Ancient Church taught that all creation will come into the presence of God in the afterlife. Some will bask in eternal joy because of the infinite love that is Almighty God. Yet those who will cower in fear will be in the same presence of God, because of the “great gulf” that will separate them from the believers. This will not be because they’ve been sent to “hell”, but because they will experience God’s energies as torment and darkness. For those who’ve chosen to respond to God’s love, a state of constant communion with the Holy Spirit begins in this life, and extends

into the afterlife, which is for all eternity. It is not about getting to “heaven”, but about communing for all eternity with God.

The images of Orthodox icons as “windows” into the eternal realm, depict the saints dwelling in a place filled with the golden, uncreated divine light of God. It is this God Who rescues all of humanity, as represented in the Resurrectional icons, depicting Christ pulling Adam and Eve from the tomb, and all of creation with them, from the beginning of time to the end of time.

When we are in harmony with God, we bask in His presence in this life, and in all eternity. But if we desire our own will and are in disharmony with God, we will suffer for eternity after God reclaims the world at the end of this age, and fills all with His presence. Then there will be nowhere to escape God, for both demons and evildoers will spend eternity with God, just as will believers. Hell, for such people, will not be a place, but a condition they’ve allowed themselves to be in, not because this God wishes to harm them, but because His love is unconditional, and extends to the utter far reaches of His creation.

The torment some will experience will be the result of coming into the presence of God’s pure love, while being in an impure condition. It will be not unlike the white skinned person who has rarely seen the sunlight, spending a day on a sun drenched beach, and heading home with a really bad sunburn. Had he worked up a tan, with little doses of sunshine over a period of weeks, all would be well, and he’d return at the end of a day looking healthy and fit. The same sunshine that burns one person will bring warmth and pleasure to another.

Spending our earthly journey perusing communion with God, prepares us for eternity in the presence of God’s burning fire. The Divine Services are like dress rehearsals for the Eternal Banquet that is taking place before the Throne of God. If we are not immersed in the liturgical celebrations that are taking place in the temples here on earth, we will not be prepared to spend eternity in the heavenly temple. If we have not participated in the Eucharistic banquet here on earth, we will be ill prepared to participate in the Heavenly Banquet, which will last for all eternity.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon



Daily Reflection **Rise and Have No Fear**

“And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain apart. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his garments became white

as light. And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. And Peter said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is well that we are here; if you wish, I will make three booths here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah. He was still speaking, when lo, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, ‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.’ When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces, and were filled with fear (ἐφοβήθησαν σφόδρα). But Jesus came and touched them, saying, ‘Rise, and have no fear (μὴ φοβεῖσθε).’ And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.” (Mt 17: 1-8)



Christ’s transfiguration in our human body, before human eye-witnesses, fills us with fear. Because in Him, it can be ours. We are called to be “imitators of God, as beloved children” (Eph 5: 1), and on the mountain He shows us our great potential for transfiguration, in His light. But our reaction is fear, because His kind of light is not in the realm of what we understand, taking us out of our “comfort-zone.” So God’s voice, telling us to “listen to Him,” makes us want to fall on our faces and hug the ground, to which we are accustomed.

Today, when those of us on the “new” calendar celebrate our Lord’s Transfiguration, let me hear His reassuring voice, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” He does lead me to strange and uncomfortable places, where ancient prophets speak and crowds of haters cry “Crucify him!” But then I lift up my eyes, as the disciples did on the mountain, and see “no one but Jesus only.” Glory be to Him, and to His, and our, holy transfiguration.

Holy Orthodox Quotes

“Anyone who comes hating his brother to the font of life where he is to be reborn, to the cup of that precious blood whereby he is to be redeemed, even though he may think he is enlightened by the Lord, is still in darkness. He

cannot in any way have put off the darkness of his sins when he did not take care to put on the fundamentals of love.” (The Venerable Bede).

James 2:14-19

What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?† If a brother or sister is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, “Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,” but you do not give them the things which are needed for the body, what does it profit? Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!†

Matthew 25:34-46

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world:† for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ “Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’† “Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:† for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’ “Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

1 John 2:9-11

He who says he is in the light, and hates his brother, is in darkness until now. He who loves his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes.

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

By a single infinitely powerful act of will God in His goodness will gather all together, angels and men, the good and the evil. But, although God pervades all things absolutely, not all will participate in Him equally: they will participate in Him according to what they are.

+ St Maximus the Confessor, 500 Various Texts

Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers

"Judging Your Neighbor" by St. Basil

If you see your neighbor in sin, don't look only at this, but also think about what he has done or does that is good, and infrequently trying this in general, while not partially judging, you will find that he is better than you.

Through the Grace of God – Orthodox Christianity

St Justin Popovich: Evil In The World Today

“Why is there so much evil in the world today? Because people have thrown away their most reliable weapon, the all-victorious weapon with which every evil, every sin, and every demon are assuredly vanquished on all battlefields. And this weapon is prayer and fasting. It is the most reliable weaponry, because it is God's weaponry; the most reliable, all-victorious weaponry because it is Christ's weaponry – the weaponry of the only true God in all realms.”

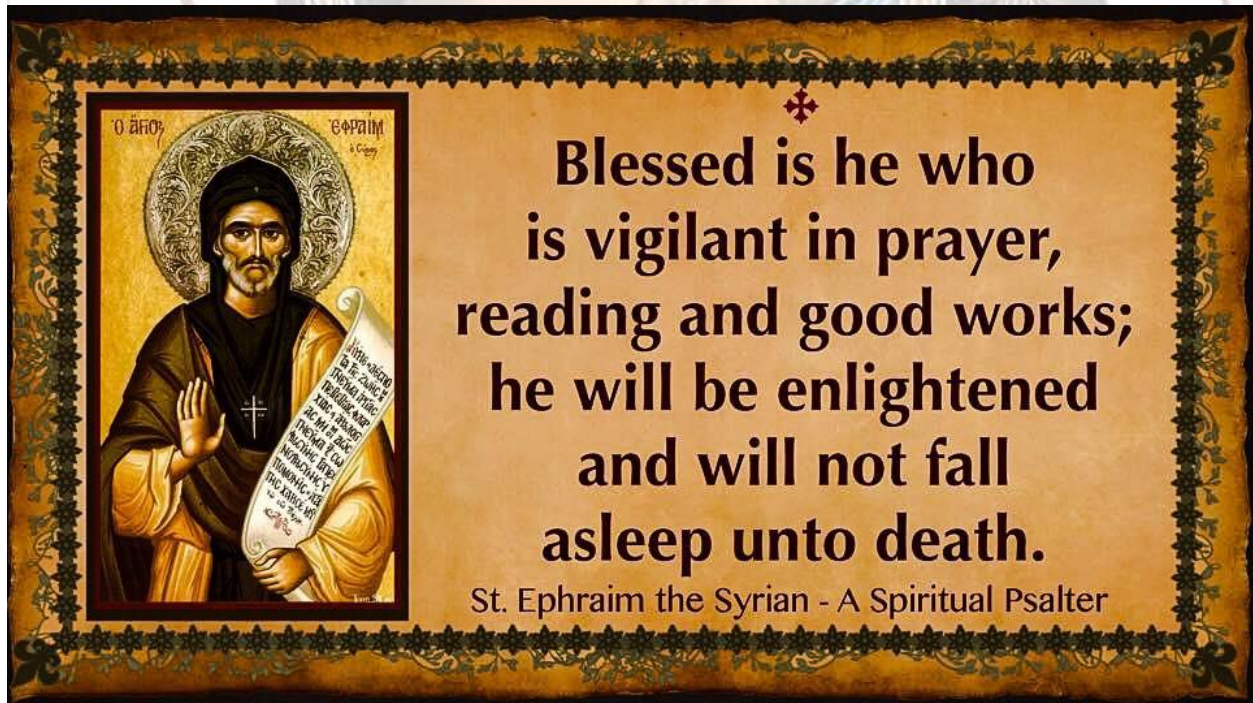
Collected Sayings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

How does envy act? Envy is a spirit from hades. It battles unceasingly against righteousness and God. God is Love, and envy cannot bear it when we do good to our neighbor. When the Lord, Who is Love, healed the old woman who had been bent over for eighteen years, evil showed its face at once and immediately began to rebel, for envy cannot bear it when good is done to anyone (cf. Luke 13:11-17). Envy never stops; the spirit of hades envies all men for all things.

Ancient Christian Wisdom

In order not to be in daily bondage to the passions and the devil, you must set yourself an object to aim at, have this object constantly in view, and endeavor to attain it, conquering all obstacles by the name of the Lord. What is this object? The Kingdom of God, the Divine palace of glory, prepared for believers from the creation of the world. But as this object can only be attained by certain means, it also is necessary to have such means at one's disposal. And what are these means? Faith, hope, and love, especially the last. Believe, hope, and love, especially love, disregarding all obstacles; love God above everything and your neighbor as yourself. If you have not sufficient strength to preserve in your heart these inestimable treasures, fall down more often at the feet of the God of Love. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek and ye shall find; knock and it shall be opened unto you," for He Who has promised is true. Walking, sitting, lying down, conversing, or working, at every time, pray with your whole heart that faith and love may be given to you. You have not yet asked for them as you should ask - fervently and instantly - with the firm purpose of obtaining them. Say now, "I will begin to do so henceforth."

. + St. John of Kronstadt



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>	1 Wine & Oil Begin Dormition Fast Blessing of Waters PROCESSION OF THE LIFEGIVING CROSS 7 Maccabean Martyrs	2 Relics Protomartyr Stephen Righteous Gamaliel 7:00-8:00pm The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg	3 Ven. Isaac, Dalmatus and Faustus	4 Seven Sleepers of Ephesus Martyr Eudoxia	5 Forefeast Transfiguration Martyr Eusignius Righteous Nonna 8:00-9:15pm Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	6 Fish, Wine & Oil TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST 6:30pm Vespers
7 Wine & Oil Valaam Icon Martyr Dometius Relics St. Mitrophan, First Bp. of Voronezh 9:40am Hours 9:45am Gen'l Confession 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	8 Tolga Icon St. Emilian, Confessor Ven. Zosima and Sawatii of Solovki	9 Fish, Wine & Oil VEN. HERMAN OF ALASKA, WONDER-WORKER OF ALL AMERICA 7:00-8:00pm The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	10 Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Lawrence of Rome	11 Holy Martyr and Archdeacon Euplus of Catania	12 Martyrs Anicletus and Photius 8:00-9:15pm Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	13 Fish, Wine & Oil Leave Transfiguration The “Passion” Icon ST. TIKHON, WONDERWORKER OF ZADONSK 6:30pm Vespers
14 Forefeast Dormition <i>1 Aug. O.S. Begin Dormition Fast</i> Prophet Micah St. Theodosius-Caves 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	15 DORMITION OF THE MOST-HOLY THEOTOKOS	16 Fedorovskaya Icon Image of Christ “Not Made by Hands” 7:00-8:00pm The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	17 Martyr Myron Bl. Theodoretus, Enlightener of Lapps	18 Martyrs Florus and Laurus Ven. John of Rila	19 Donskaya Icon Martyr Andrew Stratelates and His Companions 8:00-9:15pm Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	20 Prophet Samuel Hieromartyr Philip, Bishop of Heraclius 6:30pm Vespers
21 Apostle of the 70 Thaddeus Ven. Avramii of Smolensk 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	22 Georgian Icon Martyr Agathonicus and His Companions	23 Leavetaking Dormition Martyr Lupus Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons 7:00-8:00pm The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	24 Petrovskaya Icon Hieromartyr Eutychius St. Kozma of Berat St. Cosmas of Aetolia	25 Relics of the Apostle Bartholomew Apostle Titus of the 70	26 Vladmir Icon Martyrs Andrian and Natalia 8:00-9:15pm Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	27 Ven. Poemen the Great Hieromartyr Kuksha 6:30pm Vespers
28 Wine & Oil <i>15 Aug. O.S. Dormition</i> VEN. JOB OF POCHAEV 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy/ Social	29 Strict Fast Wine & Oil BEHEADING OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST	30 Ss. Alexander, John and Paul, Patrs. Of Constantinople 7:00-8:00pm The Grey Book Study NA Grp Mtg.	31 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>		