

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



# ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

## OCA – Diocese of New York & New Jersey

The Most Reverend Michael, Archbishop of NY & the Diocese of NY/NJ

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searforce, Temporary Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson    Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Dean Inferrera

## HYMNS OF THE DAY

### Resurrectional Troparion in the Tone 1

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews, while the soldiers were guarding Your most pure body, You rose on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world. The powers of heaven therefore cried to You, O Giver of Life: “Glory to Your Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your Kingdom! Glory to Your dispensation, O Lover of mankind!”

### Troparion for the Prophet Zephaniah in Tone 2

We celebrate the memory of Your prophet Zephaniah, O Lord; through him we beseech You: “Save our souls!”

### Resurrectional Kontakion in Tone 1

As God, You rose from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Yourself. Human nature praises You as God, for death has vanished. Adam exults, O Master! Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to You: “You are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!”

### Kontakion for the Prophet Zephaniah in Tone 4

You have been revealed by the Spirit of God to be brilliant, Prophet Zephaniah, for you proclaimed the coming of God: “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to save mankind!”

### *Prayer Requests*

#### *For Health of:*

**Nicole Anna Golden**, on her name day, offered by her godmother Trudy.

**Anthony Ciavaglia**, who had surgery on Tuesday, offered by Archbishop Michael & the Diocese of NY/NJ.

#### *In Memory of:*

**Raymond Royer**, who reposed in the Lord on Wednesday, November 22, uncle of Archpriest Sophrony Royer, offered by Archbishop Michael & the Diocese of NY/NJ.

### *Bulletin Sponsors*

*Trudy Ellmore*

***Help make our church beautiful this nativity season! Each church family is asked to please bring in one poinsettia plant to help decorate our church. Thank you!***

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## SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

DECEMBER 3, 2017

26<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST (11<sup>TH</sup> OF LUKE)



### *Prophet Zephaniah*

The Prophet Zephaniah (Sophonias) was a contemporary of the Prophet Jeremiah and the Prophetess Oldama. He was from the tribe of Simeon, and was the ninth of the Twelve Minor Prophets of the Old Testament. The prophet lived at the royal court, where he preached repentance and helped King Josiah eliminate idol-worship.

He prophesied about the calamities that were to come for the people of Judea and the surrounding regions: Gaza, Ascalon, Crete, and against the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Ninevites.



### *Venerable Sava the Abbot of Zvenigorod the Disciple of the Venerable Sergius of Radonezh*

Saint Sava Storozhevsky of Zvenigorod left the world in his early youth, and received the monastic tonsure from Saint Sergius of Radonezh, whose disciple and fellow-ascetic he was.

Saint Sava loved solitude, and avoided conversing with people. He lived in constant toil, lamenting the poverty of his soul, and trembling before the judgment of God. He was a model of simplicity and humility, and he attained to such a depth of spiritual wisdom that "in the monastery of Saint Sergius he was a spiritual confessor to all the brethren, a venerable and exceedingly learned Elder."

When Great Prince Demetrius of the Don built the monastery of the Dormition of the Mother of God at the River Dubenka, in gratitude for the victory over Mamai, Sava became its Igumen, with the blessing of Saint Sergius. Preserving the simple manner of his ascetic lifestyle, he ate plants, wore coarse clothing and slept on the ground.

In 1392 the brethren of the Sergiev Lavra, with the departure of its Igumen Nikon into the wilderness, asked Saint Sava to be the igumen of the monastery. Here he "shepherded well the flock entrusted to him to the best of his ability, helped by the prayers of his spiritual Father, Saint Sergius." According to Tradition, the great well outside the Lavra walls was built when he was igumen.

Prince Yuri Dimitrievich Zvenigorodsky, a godson of Saint Sergius, regarded Saint Sava with great love and esteem. He chose Saint Sava as his spiritual Father and begged him to come and bestow his blessing upon all his household. The saint had hoped to return to his monastery, but the prince begged him to remain and establish a new monastery, "in his fatherland, near Zvenigorod, at a place called Storozhi."

Saint Sava accepted the request of Prince Yuri Dimitrievich, and praying with tears before an icon of the Mother of God, he entreated Her protection for the wilderness place. On Storozhi Hill, he built a small wooden church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, and a small cell for himself nearby. Here in the year 1399 the monk established a monastery, lovingly accepting all who came seeking a life of silence and seclusion.

Saint Sava toiled much at the building up of his monastery. He dug a well at the foot of the hill, from which he carried water on his own shoulders; he encircled the monastery with a wooden palisade, and in a hollow above it, he dug out a cell where he could dwell in solitude.

In 1399 Saint Sava blessed his spiritual son, Prince Yuri, to go on a military campaign, and he predicted victory over the enemy. Through the prayers of the holy Elder, the forces of the prince won a speedy victory. Through the efforts of Saint Sava, a stone church of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos was also built to replace the wooden one.

Saint Sava died at an advanced age on December 3, 1406. He appointed his disciple, also named Sava, to succeed him.

Veneration of the God-pleaser by the local people began immediately after his death. The miraculous curative power issuing from the grave of the monk, and his numerous appearances, convinced everyone that Igumen Sava "is truly an unsetting sun of divine light, illumining all with its miraculous rays." In a letter of 1539 Saint Sava is called a wonderworker. Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich had a special veneration for him, repeatedly going to the monastery of

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Saint Sava on foot. Tradition has preserved for us a remarkable account of how Saint Sava once saved him from a ferocious bear.

The Life of Saint Sava, compiled in the sixteenth century, relates how at the end of the fifteenth century (1480-1490), the saint appeared to Dionysius, the fourth igumen of the Saint Sava monastery and said to him: "Dionysius! Wake up and paint my icon." When Dionysius asked who he was, he replied, "I am Sava, the founder of this place."

Now Dionysius had not known the saint personally, so he summoned Elder Habakkuk, who had known Saint Sava in his youth, hoping to convince himself of the truth of the dream. He described the outward appearance of the saint, and Habakkuk assured him that the saint looked exactly as the igumen had seen him in his dream. Then Dionysius fulfilled the command and painted the icon of Saint Sava.

The feastday of Saint Sava was established at the Moscow Council of 1547. The incorrupt relics of the saint were uncovered on January 19, 1652.

### ***St. Theodoulos the Eparch of Constantinople***

Saint Theodoulos was an eparch during the reign of Theodosius the Great. He resigned his position because he did not want to be distracted by vain worldly cares.

After his wife's death, Saint Theodoulos gave his wealth away to the poor and became a monk. He traveled to Edessa and lived on top of a pillar for thirty years, eating only once a week.

Saint Theodoulos the Stylite departed to the Lord around 440.

### ***St. John the Silent of St. Sabbas Monastery***

Saint John the Silent was born around 454 in the city of Nicopolis, Armenia into the family of a military commander named Enkratius and his wife Euphemia. The boy began to study Holy Scripture, and he loved solitude and prayer with all his heart.

With the inheritance his parents left him, John built a church dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos. At eighteen years of age, John became a monk, living an ascetic life of fasting, prayer, and temperance with ten other monks at the church he had founded.

At the request of the citizens of Colonia, the Metropolitan of Sebaste consecrated the twenty-eight-year-old John as Bishop of Colonia. Having assumed the episcopal throne, the saint did not alter his strict ascetic manner of life. Under the influence of the saint his relatives, his brother Pergamios (an associate of the emperors Zeno and Anastasius) and his nephew Theodore (an associate of the emperor Justinian), also lived in a Christian manner.

In John's tenth year as bishop, the governorship of Armenia was assumed by Pazinikos, the husband of the saint's sister, Maria. The new governor began to interfere in spiritual and ecclesiastical matters, and there was unrest in the Church. Saint John then went to Constantinople, and through Archbishop Euthymius, he entreated the emperor Zeno to defend the Armenian Church from the evil Governor.

Overwhelmed by worldly quarrels, John secretly left his diocese and sailed to Jerusalem. With tears he besought God to show him a place where he might live and find salvation. A bright star appeared, which led Saint John to the Lavra of Saint Sava.

John, concealing his episcopal rank, was accepted in the community as a simple novice. Under the guidance of the igumen Saint Sava (December 5), Bishop John toiled obediently for more than four years at every task he was assigned. When a guesthouse was built at the Lavra, Saint John served the workers, serving their food and assisting in the construction of the building. When a cenobitic monastery for novices was being built, John was once again assigned to help the workers.

Seeing Saint John's humility and love of labor, Saint Sava deemed him worthy of ordination to presbyter. Saint John was forced to reveal his rank to Patriarch Elias of Jerusalem (494-517), who told Saint Sava that John could not be ordained. Moreover, he said that John was to live in silence, and that no one should trouble him. Soon the Lord also revealed Saint John's secret to Saint Sava. Saint John spent four years in his cell, receiving no one and not going out even for church.

Desiring ever greater solitude and increased abstinence, Saint John quit the Lavra and withdrew into the desert, where he spent more than nine years, eating plants and grass. He survived a devastating incursion of the Saracens and did not perish, only because the Lord sent him a defender: a ferocious lion. When the enemy tried to harm the saint, the lion attacked them and they scattered in fright. Tradition speaks of many miracles Saint John performed during this time in the desert.

When Saint Sava returned after an extended stay in Scythopolis, he persuaded Saint John to forsake the wilderness and to live at the monastery. After this, the Lord, in a miraculous way, revealed to everyone at the Lavra that the monk John was actually a bishop.

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When Saint John reached age seventy, his holy and God-bearing spiritual Father Saint Sava died. The saint grieved deeply over this, since he was not present at the time. Saint Sava appeared to him in a vision, and having consoled him, he foretold that there would be much toil ahead in the struggle against heresy. Saint John even had to leave his solitude to strengthen the brethren in the struggle with the Origenists.

Saint John the Silent spent sixty-six years at the Lavra of Saint Sava the Sanctified. Through his constant ascetic efforts, by his untiring prayer and humble wisdom, Saint John acquired the grace of the Holy Spirit. At his prayers, many miracles took place, and he was able to discern the secret thoughts of people. He healed the sick and those possessed by demons. Even during his lifetime he saved those who invoked his name from certain destruction. Once, he scattered fig seeds on barren rock, and a beautiful and fruitful tree sprang up. In time, the tree grew so much that it overshadowed the saint's cell.

Saint John the Silent departed to the Lord in peace at the age of 104.



### ***Hieromartyr Theodore the Archbishop of Alexandria***

The Hieromartyr Theodore, Bishop of Alexandria, was born in Egypt in the city of Alexandria. This city was famous for its many martyrs and confessors: from the holy Evangelist Mark, Protomartyr of Alexandria (April 25), to Saint Athanasius the Great (January 18 and May 2), a pillar and confessor of Orthodoxy.

Regrettably, historical records do not give us precise details of Saint Theodore's life and deeds, but the Church of Christ has preserved the name of the hieromartyr in its diptychs for all time.

A fiery preacher, powerful of word and church activity, Bishop Theodore evoked an angry hatred in the boisterous pagans of Alexandria, who did not like his preaching. During one of his sermons they surrounded and seized the saint. They beat him and jeered at him, but he did not offer resistance. They placed a crown of thorns on his head, and led

him through the city.

Then they led him to the seacoast and threw him from a cliff into the sea, but the wind and the waves carried him back to dry land. The astonished pagans brought Saint Theodore to the prefect of the city, who commanded that he be subjected to harsh tortures. Not a word did the torturers hear from the tortured confessor, except his prayer to the Lord. Then the holy martyr was handed over to Roman soldiers and executed in the manner of the Apostle Paul, he was beheaded with a sword.

### ***Monkmartyr Cosmas of St Anne Skete, Mt Athos***

Saint Cosmas was a monk of Saint Anne's Skete on Mount Athos. He was executed in Constantinople on December 3, 1760 when he refused to convert to Islam. The specific details of his martyrdom are not known.

### ***St. George of Cernica and Caldarushani***

Saint George was born in 1730, and became a monk on Mount Athos when he was a young man. He was a disciple of Saint Paisius Velichkovsky (November 15) who was then the igumen of Vatopedi Monastery.

Since the skete at Cernica had been deserted for almost thirty years, Metropolitan Gregory II of Wallachia asked Elder George to revive monastic life there according to the Athonite Typikon.

Saint George's efforts at Cernica were so successful that Metropolitan Philaret II also entrusted him with leading the Caldarushani Monastery, which he guided until his death. Life at both monasteries followed the Athonite-Paisian hesychastic tradition.

Saint George was glorified by the Romanian Orthodox Church in 2005. His holy relics are in the Cernica Monastery, where they are venerated by the faithful.



### ***New Martyr Angelos of Chios***

No information available at this time.

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## GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

### Epistle Reading

#### The Prokeimenon in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tone:

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us / as we have set our hope on Thee! (*Psalms 32:22*)  
vs. Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous! Praise befits the just! (*Psalms 32:1*)

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#### The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Ephesians 5:9-19

**Brethren**, the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

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#### Alleluia in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tone:

God giveth vengeance unto me, and subdues people under me. (*Psalms 17:48*)  
vs. He magnifies the salvation of the King and deals mercifully with David, His anointed, and his seed forever.  
*(Psalms 17:51)*

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### Gospel Reading

#### 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke

#### The Reading is from Luke 18:18-27

**At that time** a ruler asked him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: 'Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honor your father and mother.'" And he said, "All these I have observed from my youth." And when Jesus heard it, he said to him, "One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when he heard this he became sad, for he was very rich. Jesus looking at him said, "How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." Those who heard it said, "Then who can be saved?" But he said, "What is impossible with men is possible with God."

## PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Upcoming St. Nicholas Day/Nativity celebrations:

[On Sunday Dec. 3rd, the children of our parish are invited to help decorate our Christmas tree in the community room downstairs.](#) This will occur immediately after coffee hour.

[On Sunday Dec. 10th, our annual St. Nicholas Day celebration will be held during and after coffee hour.](#) We are looking forward to a visit from St. Nicholas again! If you would like to have your child participate in the festivities, please bring a wrapped gift with their name on it, to be delivered by St. Nicholas Prayer.

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## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

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

9:30 am: No Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy  
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K -  
Grade 3  
12:30 pm: Council Meeting

### **Saturday, December 4<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

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

9:30 am: Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy  
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K -  
Grade 3

### **Saturday, December 11<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

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

9:30 am: Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy  
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K -  
Grade 3

### **Saturday, December 18<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Request & Bulletin Sponsor:** Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

**Memorial Candles:** Candles can be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

**Private Confessions:** **Can be heard a half hour before any service.** See Father Matthew for other times.

**General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

**Receiving Holy Communion:** Holy Communion is offered to those baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the reception of the Sacrament by prayer and fasting. Blessed Bread is available for all our visitors at the very end of the Divine Liturgy.

**Pannikhida Service:** The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

**Special Announcements** for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail: [OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com](mailto:OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com)

**The Living Clean Group** of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

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

### *Orthodox Quote of the Day*

Strive as well as you can to enter deeply with the heart into the church reading and singing and to imprint these on the tablets of the heart.

**Abbot Nazarius**

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

#### **Faith**

*Am I a real believer?*

“Believe” is for me a sort of loaded word, since it usually means for a western-formed person a mainly intellectual activity. It seems to me that it more properly means a combination of love and trust. Perhaps the real sign that we are a believer is demonstrated in how we proclaim our love and mercy for those whom we come in contact with. In that context, everything good we do for others proclaims belief. And the fruits of that are evident around us all the time.

Is it not possible that those moments when we are struggling with belief are simply brought on when we are feeling numb from the pain, attacks and betrayals that we’ve endured, sometimes even within the life of the Church? Can it perhaps be that what we feel when alone is the result of this, rather than disbelief? I would venture to suggest that this is a time when we are being carried in the Saviour’s Arms.

I recall Metropolitan Philip’s saying that “Orthodoxy is the right Faith for the wrong people. Ironically, when we come to the Church, it is easy to become the wrong people!”



### *Daily Reflection*

#### **When God Doesn’t Answer**

*“One day, as he was teaching the people in the temple and preaching the gospel, the chief priests and the scribes with the elders came up and said to him, ‘Tell us by what authority you do these things, or who it is that gave you this authority.’ He answered them, ‘I also will ask you a question; now tell me, Was the baptism of John from heaven or from men?’ And they discussed it with one another, saying, ‘If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will say, ‘Why did you not believe him?’ But if we say, ‘From men,’ all the people will stone us; for they are convinced that John was a prophet.’ So they answered that they did not know whence it was. And Jesus said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.’” (Lk 20: 1-8)*



Some teachers like to say, There is no such thing as a bad question, undeserving of a response. But there is, as we can see above. The question of the chief priests, scribes and elders to Christ is a “bad” one, because they do not believe or trust the One they are asking; they rather believe themselves already to have all the answers. So, instead of offering them a response, our Lord presents them with another question. And this question compels them, reluctantly and disingenuously, to say publicly what those who “know it all” hate to say: We do not know. Thus our Lord skillfully nudges them to humble themselves, albeit reluctantly and disingenuously, leaving them with their own “We do not know” as food for thought.

When it comes to my own unanswered questions to God, I’m reminded today that it’s better to walk around with a humbled “I do not know,” rather than with my own, ultimately dissatisfying, suspicions of God’s benevolent authority. God does reveal more to me, as life goes on, when I am willing to listen, in His Spirit, “Who blows where He wishes” (Jn 3: 8). Sometimes, as Bob Dylan reminds me, “The answer, my friend, is blowing in the wind; the answer is blowing in the wind.” And that’s OK with me today, Lord. Glory be to You.

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

#### **St John Chrysostom: I am a Christian...**

“I am a Christian. He who answers thus has declared everything at once-his country, profession, family; the believer belongs to no city on earth but to the heavenly Jerusalem.”