

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: Trudy Ellmore Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



Sunday, January 10, 2016

Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17

Tone 7

Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13

32nd Sunday after Pentecost: Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.



**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory
Forever!**

*Afterfeast of the
Theophany of our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ*

Of old, the river Jordan turned back before Elisha's mantle at Elijah's Ascension. The waters were parted in two and the waterway became a dry path. This is truly a symbol of baptism by which we pass through this mortal life. Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters!

Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints

32nd Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 7. Afterfeast of the Theophany. Sunday after Theophany. St. Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa (4th c.). St. Dometian, Bishop of Melitene (601). St. Marcian, Presbyter, of Constantinople (5th c.). Ven. Paul, Abbot of Obnora (Vologdá—1429). Ven. Macarius, Abbot, of Pisma (14th c.). Bl. Theosebia the Deaconess, sister of Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa (385). Ven. Antipas the Athonite (1882). St. Theophan the Recluse, Bishop of Tambov (1894).

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

Fr John Udics, has been moved to the ICU (January 8th) at the University of PA Hospital where he had the surgery. He had developed a fever and then pneumonia. He experienced breathing difficulties last night (January 7th) and was given a breathing tube, offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

Jesse Hartnett, Philadelphia Police Officer who was recently shot.

For Memory of:

Olga Romanofsky, mother of Andrew.

Archpriest Demetrius Edwards, 68, Rector of Saint Gregory Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on January 7, 2016, offered by OCA.

Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, January 10th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 16th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, January 17th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 23rd

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, January 24th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, January 30th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, January 31st

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy
12:15 pm: Council Meeting

Bulletin Sponsors:

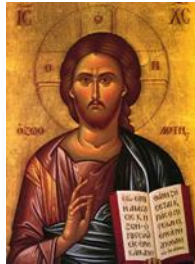
*Andrew and Maribeth
Romanofsky and family*

Readings:



Epistle: Ephesians 4:7-13

Brethren, grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, "When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men." (In saying, "He ascended," what does it mean but that he had also descended into the lower parts of the earth? He who descended is he who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.) And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.



Gospel: Matthew 4:12-17

At that time, Jesus heard that John had been arrested, He withdrew into Galilee; and leaving Nazareth He went and dwelt in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, that what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: "The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, toward the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles, the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."



Afterfeast of the Theophany of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ

The fourth day of the Afterfeast of Theophany falls on January 10. Some of the hymns of this period compare the streams of the Jordan to the life-giving waters of Baptism.



Bulletin Sponsors/Prayer Requests: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend, for a donation of \$10. Bulletin Sponsors/Prayer Requests will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Candles/Memorial Candles: Candles may be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one and \$2 for a small one.

Private Confessions: Can be heard a half hour before any service. See Father Matthew for other times and **General Confession:** Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

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

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:
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

Next Council meeting will be January 31, 2016 at 12:15 pm

The Annual Parish Meeting will be held Sunday, February 14, 2016 at 12:15 pm. Please attend. Your voice counts!

NY/NJ Diocese News



Congratulations and thanks to our DDBs! - 01/07/16

The ambitious goal of the **2015 Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors** initiative was to fully fund three essential ministries: support for our seminarians, support to mission parishes, and support to parishes in need of revitalization. With some contributions still being processed, **295 individual DDBs and 59 parish/organizational DDBs** provided **\$159,000 during 2015**. *Thank-you to all who helped us meet the challenge!*

Syracuse NY: Christmas Retreat and Blessings - 01/05/16

Archbishop Michael presented a wonderful and enlightening Christmas Retreat entitled "*Christ in the Old Testament*" at **Saints Peter and Paul Church in Syracuse NY** on 12 December 2015. The day-long retreat began with an Akathist to Saint Herman of Alaska followed by the presentation, luncheon, second presentation and Vespers. At the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy the next day (Sunday, 13 December), His Eminence blessed a beautiful new sign at the church entrance.

Clergy News

We welcome **Father Vasil Dubee and his family** into our diocese and the New York State Deanery, with assignment to Saint Innocent Mission in Oneonta NY. An announcement will be featured on the diocesan website beginning on Monday, 11 January.



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

Third webinar on parish council ministry to be held January 12

On Tuesday, January 12, 2016 at 8:00 p.m. EST, the [Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania](#) of the Orthodox Church in America will offer the third in a series of free webinars devoted to the ministry of the parish council.

Titled "Good Practices for Effective and Efficient Parish Council Meetings," the webinar will be facilitated by Joseph Kormos, the Archdiocese's Parish Development Ministry leader. Members of all dioceses and jurisdictions are invited to participate. There is no charge to participate in the webinar, but [participants must register in advance on-line](#).

"Clergy and laity leadership collaboration is critical in preparing parishes to build a brighter future and to present Orthodox Christianity to Americans and America," says Mr.

Kormos. "This webinar series explores and rethinks how to establish the parish council as a respected shared leadership body that cooperates with the priest to discover possibilities, discern priorities, drive change and enliven vital parish ministries."

The first two sessions in this series attracted large on-line audiences to review the fundamentals of parish governance based on Orthodox ecclesiology and to explore expectations of parish councils and council members.

"The third session will specifically focus on energizing council meetings to generate fruitful discussions and confront important parish issues," Mr. Kormos explained. "Specific topics will include good meeting practices and etiquette, understanding 'consensus,' preparing for a healthy meeting, facilitation and chairing skills, and wise use of agenda time."

The series is useful for clergy looking to strengthen their parish councils, parish council veterans desiring to make their service more meaningful, and persons new to parish council service who seek to learn how to contribute quickly.

Further information may be obtained by contacting joekormos1@gmail.com.



OCMC Executive Director Fr. Martin Ritsi Meets with the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness Bartholomew by Alex Goodwin (1/7/2016)

On Friday, December 11th, 2015, following a lunch hosted at the Patriarchate, OCMC Executive Director Fr. Martin Ritsi had a private meeting with the Ecumenical Patriarch, His All-Holiness Bartholomew.

Fr. Martin, on behalf of the Mission Center's board, staff, missionaries, volunteers, and supporters thanked the Ecumenical Patriarch for his support, encouragement, and prayers for OCMC's mission ministries around the world. His All-Holiness expressed his appreciation for the Mission Center's work over the years, noting that it has been a substantial effort.

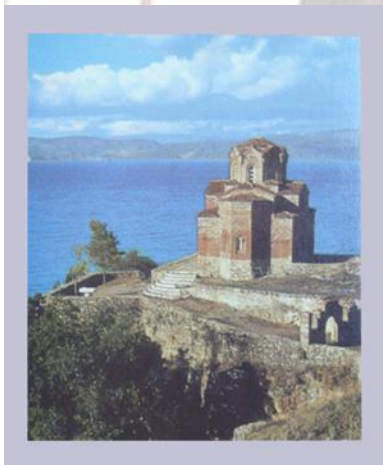
Following a brief overview of OCMC's 30-year history, Fr. Martin shared recent developments in the

countries where OCMC is actively involved in sharing the Orthodox Faith. He detailed the significant resources that are being applied to these efforts. Fr. Martin underscored the harmonious pan-Orthodox nature of the mission work being undertaken and its importance in witnessing to the Gospel.

With deep pastoral care and concern, the Ecumenical Patriarch encouraged the OCMC to see what more it could do for the many struggling missions around the world that have been affected by the global financial crisis.

On Saturday, December 12th, Fr. Martin was invited to attend the celebration of the Liturgy at St. Spyridon the Wonderworker on Halki on the Saint’s Feast Day. As His All-Holiness addressed the faithful, he again expressed his gratitude for all that the OCMC does.

The Orthodox Christian Mission Center prays for the continued strength of His All-Holiness Bartholomew and thanks the Ecumenical Patriarch for his continuous prayers and support.



Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, XXXIX:

Do you know, my child why the clouds are closed when the fields are thirsty for rain, and why they open, when the fields have no desire for rain?

Nature has been confused by the wickedness of men, and has abandoned its order.

Do you know, my child, why the fields produce heavy fruit in the springtime, and yield a barren harvest in the summer?

Because the daughters of men have hated the fruit of their womb, and kill it while it is still in blossom.

Do you know, my child, why the springs have gone dry, and why the

fruits of the earth no longer have the sweetness that they used to have?

Because of the sin of man, from which infirmity has invaded all of nature.

Do you know, my child, why a victorious nation suffers defeats as a result of its own disunity and discord, and eats bread made bitter by tears and malice?

Because it conquered the bloodthirsty enemies around itself, but failed to conquer those within itself.

Do you know, my child, how a mother can feed her children without nourishing them?

By not singing a song of love to them while nursing them, but a song of hatred towards a neighbor.

Do you know, my child, why people have become ugly and have lost the beauty of their ancestors?

Because they have cast away the image of God, which fashions the beauty of that image out of the soul within, and removes the mask of earth.

Do you know, my child, why diseases and dreadful epidemics have multiplied?

Because men have begun to look upon good health as an abduction of nature and not as a gift from God.

And what is abducted with difficulty must with double difficulty be protected.

Do you know, my child, why people fight over earthly territory, and are not ashamed to be on the same level as moles?

Because the world has sprouted through their heart, and their eyes see only what is growing in the heart; and because, my child, their sin has made them too weak to struggle for heaven.

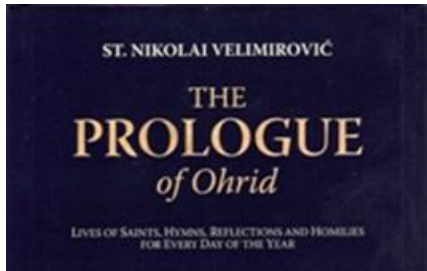
Do not cry, my child, the Lord will soon return and set everything right.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XXXVIII:

Sin and Evil

A lie is a delusion of the mind, while evil is a delusion of the will. The sign by which one is distinguished from the other is the judgement of God Himself ... that which he teaches a man: Truth is that which leads a man to will the good. But whatever contradicts this is entirely false, entirely evil.

St. Nicholas Cabasilas, Seven Sermons on the Life in Christ, 7



1. Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa

Gregory was the brother of Basil the Great. At first, he was only a presbyter since he was married; but when his wife Blessed Theosevia died, Gregory was chosen and consecrated as bishop of Nyssa. He was distinguished by his great secular learning and spiritual experience. He participated at the Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople, 381 A.D). It is thought that he composed the second half of the Symbol of Faith [The Creed]. He was a great orator, an exegete of Holy Scripture and a theologian. Because of their defeat, the Arians especially attacked him as their worst enemy, so that, during the reign of Emperor Valens, their ally of the same mind, succeeded in ousting Gregory from the episcopal throne and banished him into exile. This Holy Father spent eight years in exile, patiently enduring all miseries and all humiliations. He finally died in old age toward the end of the fourth century and was translated into the Kingdom of God remaining on earth throughout the ages as a great beacon of the Church.

2. The Venerable Ammon, Egyptian Ascetic

For fourteen years, Ammon prayed to God and struggled to conquer anger within himself. He attained such perfection of goodness, that he was not even conscious that evil existed in the world. He was particularly knowledgeable in Holy Scripture. He died at the beginning of the fifth century.

3. Saint Marcian

Marcian was born in Rome. As a presbyter, he lived the remainder of his life in Constantinople during the greater part of the reign of Emperor Marcian and Empress Plucheria. Inheriting enormous wealth from his parents, Marcian generally spent it on two goals: either on building or restoring churches or on charity for the poor. He built two new churches in Constantinople, St. Anastasia and St. Irene, both famous for their beauty and sacredness. When he was asked, "Why do you spend so much on churches?" He replied, "If I had a daughter and wanted to marry her to a nobleman, would I not spend much gold in order to adorn her as a worthy bride? And, here I am adorning the Church, the Bride of Christ." As much as this wonderful man was generous toward the churches and the indigent; so much was he austere, very austere toward himself following the apostolic exhortation: *If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that* (1 Timothy 6:8). It is written about him: "He was totally in God and God in him, and presented himself to God in fullness of years and good works," in the year 471 A.D.

Hymn of Praise

Saint Gregory – Saint Marcian

The Spirit possesses the gifts, the Spirit imparts the gifts,
To some, blessed mercy; to some, bold understanding,
To some, a special virgin's purity,
To some, a living love or a correct mind.
According to the strength of one's faith, a new gift, the Spirit adds:
If the faith grows, which moves mountains,
The treasury of the Spirit, then opened is
And, gift upon gift, as rain, descends upon the faithful one.
St. Gregory, because of his great faith,
To spiritual heights, like an eagle soared.
St. Marcian, because of his great faith,
With heavenly mercy was illuminated.
The light of theology, to Gregory was imparted.
To Marcian was given grace; the chrism of praising.
O Heavenly Spirit, Lord and King,
Your wondrous gifts, from us, do not withhold,
But through the prayers of Your chosen vessels
In the day of the Dreadful Judgment, from condemnation, save us.

Reflection

Vanity because of clothing occupies special momentum in our time. He who has nothing else of which to be proud becomes proud of his attire. He who would have something more costly than clothes of which to be proud, does he not become proud? Just as gold, which does not come out from the surface of the earth, so it is that neither the spiritual values of a man not show outwardly. It is said, that a certain distinguished philosopher saw a young man who displayed pride in his clothing. He approached the young man and whispered in his ear: "The same fleece was previously worn by a ram, but, nevertheless, he was still a ram!" To be a Christian and to display pride in clothing is more insane than to be an emperor and to be proud of the dust under his feet. While St. Arsenius wore cloth of gold in the royal court, no one called him great. He was called Great only then when he unselfishly gave himself over completely to God and dressed in rags.

Contemplation

To contemplate the lowliness of the Lord Jesus:

1. The lowliness of the King Who was born in a cave;
2. The lowliness of the most wealthy One, Who hungered and thirsted;
3. The lowliness of the Almighty in relationship with the lowly on earth.

Homily:

About contentment with that which is most necessary to us

"If we have food and clothing, we shall be content with that" (1 Timothy 6:8).

The apostles of God taught others that which they themselves fulfilled in their own lives. When they had food and clothing they were content. Even when it occurred that they had neither food nor clothing they were content. For their contentment did not emanate from the outside but emanated from within. Their

contentment was not so cheap as the contentment of an animal, but costly, more costly and more rare. Internal contentment, the contentment of peace and love of God in the heart, that is the contentment of greater men, that was the apostolic contentment. In great battles, generals are dressed and fed as ordinary soldiers and they do not seek contentment in food nor in clothes but in victory. Victory is the primary principle of contentment of those who battle. Brethren, Christians are constantly in battle, in battle for the victory of the spirit over the material, in battle for conquest of the higher over the lower, man over beast. Is it not, therefore, absurd to engage in battle and not to worry about victory but to concern oneself with external decorations and ornaments? Is it not foolish to give to one's enemies the marks of identification? Our invisible enemy [Satan] rejoices at our vanity and supports us in every vain thought. The invisible enemy occupies us with every possible unreasonable pettiness and idleness only to impose upon our minds the heavy forgetfulness relative to that for which we are here on earth. The invisible enemy [Satan] presents to us the worthless as important, the irrelevant as essential and that which is detrimental as beneficial only in order to achieve victory and to destroy us forever. O Lord, Holy, Mighty and Immortal, Who created us from the mud and breathed a living soul into mud, do not allow, O Lord, that the mud overwhelms! Help our spirit that it always be stronger than the earth.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration with Abbott Tryphon

Arrow Prayers

Short prayers used in personal devotion

Many Church Fathers taught the use of the “arrow prayer”, deliberately short prayers for personal devotion that were easily remembered, and could communicate one’s love for God, while seeking His help. They were like arrows being shot into the air, wholeheartedly demonstrating our sincerity in asking God’s help. One of my personal favorites is an arrow prayer attributed to Saint Gregory Palamas.

Lord enlighten my darkness, Lord enlighten my darkness, Lord enlighten my darkness.....

This is the perfect prayer when seeking God’s help in keeping His commandments, and doing battle with habitual sins. By this prayer we are asking that grace abound and transformation take place. It is a prayerful plea for God’s mercy, and that He make us holy by coming quickly to our aid.

It is the perfect prayer to utter at the very moment we are receiving the Holy Mysteries of Christ’s Body and Blood, the hot coals that burn within and bring about healing of body and soul, and illumine our heart. It is a prayer in which we confess before God that we are living in a state of darkness, and asking Him to dispel all that darkness which keeps us from attaining holiness, and communing with Him.

“There is no need at all to make long discourses; it is enough to stretch out one’s hands and say, “Lord, as you will, and as you know, have mercy.” And if the conflict grows fiercer say, “Lord, help!” He knows very well what we need and he shews us his mercy (Saint Macarius the Great).”

With love in Christ,

Abbot Tryphon



Daily Reflection

Shining in Darkness



"In him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the

darkness did not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. He was the true light that enlightens everyone coming into the world." (Jn 1: 4-9)

Today I am reminded that Jesus Christ, "the light of all people," does indeed "*shine in the darkness.*" This is why I need not hesitate to approach Him, in prayer, despite the shortcomings and "dark spots" in my understanding of Him. I do not understand Him perfectly, and yet this lack of understanding is no obstacle to communion and enlightenment in Him. It is also no obstacle to testifying to Him, as John the Baptist did, although John did not "know" the Son of God, Whom "*no one knows except the Father*" (Mt 11: 27). It is not entirely different in our human relationships: our dedication and love for one another "functions" despite the fact that we don't perfectly "know" one another or any human being, including ourselves.

Only God knows us as we are, and we are only given to know Him when enlightened by His true light, His Son, Who "*enlightens everyone*" who steps into His light. Let me not hesitate to do that today, taking some time for heartfelt prayer and a bit of reading of His word. "*In Him was life,*" says the Gospel of John, "*and the life was the light of all people,*" – of all people, yesterday and today, with no exceptions.

Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers

"Complete Work" by Gregory of Nyssa

Soldiers don't arm themselves partially, leaving the rest of their bodies unprotected. For if they received their death wounds in the unprotected area, what would be the point of their partial armor? Again, who would consider some feature flawless when in an accident it lost something essential to beauty? The disfigurement of the mutilated part destroys the grace of the untouched part. The gospel implies that those who try to build a tower, but spend all their time on the foundation and never finish are ridiculous. From the Parable of the Tower, we also learn to work hard and finish every lofty goal, to complete the work of God through the varied structures of His commandments. Of course, one stone doesn't make an entire tower any more than obeying one commandment lifts the soul to the required height of perfection. By all means, the foundation must be laid first. But, as the Apostle Paul says, the structure of gold and precious gems must be built over it. For the psalmist cries, "I have loved Thy commandment above gold and many a precious stone."

From Hudson, CD, Sharrer, JA, and Vanker, L. Day by Day with the Early Church Fathers. Hendrickson: MA, 1999. Pg. 2.

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

The long-suffering man is one who waits patiently for his trial to end and hopes that his perseverance will be rewarded.


Do not lightly discard spiritual love: for men there is no other road to salvation.

First the intellect marvels when it reflects on the absolute infinity of God, that boundless sea for which it longs so much. Then it is amazed at how God has brought things into existence out of nothing. But just as "His magnificence is without limit" (Ps 145:3), so "there is no penetrating His purposes" (Isa 40:28).

- St Maximus the Confessor, 400 Chapters on Love

VILLANOVA
UNIVERSITY

Art Gallery
ALASKAN ART EXHIBIT



RUSSIAN AMERICA
THE ALASKAN NATIVE SPIRITUAL LEGACY

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Holy Trinity
Greek Orthodox Church

GREEK
Winter Feast

January 29, 30, 31

Friday 5 to 10pm
Saturday 12 to 11pm
Sunday 12 to 8pm

Authentic Greek Food
Homemade
Greek Pastries

Dine in or Take out
Delivery is also Available



7004 Ridge Avenue, Egg Harbor Twp., New Jersey
609-653-8092 Ext 5
www.HolyTrinityEggHarbor.com

January – 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	2 6:30 Vespers
3 9:30 No School 9:40 Hours 9:45 Gen'l Confession 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	4	5 6:30 Theophany 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	6	7	8 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	9 6:30 Vespers
10 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	11	12 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	13	14	15 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	16 6:30 Vespers
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