

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 31, 2016

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Tone 2

Epistle: Colossians 3:12-16

35th Sunday after Pentecost: Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John. New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia.



**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory
Forever!**

*Wonderworkers and
Unmercenaries Cyrus
and John.*

*You have given us the miracles of Your martyrs, Cyrus and John, as
an invincible rampart; through their prayers, frustrate the plans of
the heathens, and strengthen the faith of the Orthodox Christians, for
You alone are good and love mankind.*

Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints

35th Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 2. Holy Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John, and with them Martyrs Athanasia and her daughters: Theoctiste, Theodotia, and Eudoxia, at Canopus in Egypt (311). Ven. Nikita of the Kiev Caves, Bishop of Novgorod (1108). Martyrs Victorinus, Victor, Nicephorus, Claudius, Diodorus, Serapion, and Papias, of Egypt (251). Martyr Tryphænes at Cyzicus. St. Arsenios of Paros (1877).

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

Holly Dawson, on her birthday, offered by her family.

For Memory of:

Kenneth, beloved father of **Archpriest John Bartholomew**, offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

Liturgical Schedule:

Monday, February 1st

6:30 pm: Meeting of Christ in the Temple

Saturday, February 6th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, February 7th

9:30 am: No School

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General Confession

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 13th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, February 14th

9:30 am: Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General Confession

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 20th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, February 21st

9:30 am: Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General Confession

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, February 27th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Bulletin Sponsors:

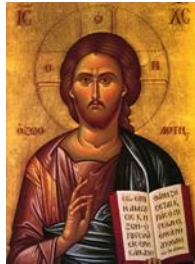
The Dawson Family

Readings:



Epistle: Colossians 3:12-16

Brethren, put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God.



Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

The Lord said this parable: "For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'

Wonderworkers and Unmercenaries Cyrus and John



Saint Cyrus was a noted physician in the city of Alexandria, where he had been born and raised. He was a Christian and he treated the sick without charge, not only curing their bodily afflictions, but also healing their spiritual infirmities. He would say, "Whoever wishes to avoid being ill should refrain from sin, for sin is often the cause of bodily illness." Preaching the Gospel, the holy physician converted many pagans to Christ. During the persecution by Diocletian (284-305), St Cyrus withdrew into Arabia, where he became a monk. He continued to heal people by his prayer, having received

from God the gift to heal every sickness.

In the city of Edessa at this time lived the soldier John, a pious Christian. When the persecution started, he went to Jerusalem and there he heard about St Cyrus. He began to search for him, going first to Alexandria and then to Arabia. When St John finally found St Cyrus, he remained with him and became his faithful follower.

They learned of the arrest of the Christian woman Athanasia and her three young daughters. Theoctiste was fifteen; Theodota, was thirteen; and Eudoxia, was eleven. Sts Cyrus and John hastened to the prison to help them. They were concerned that faced with torture, the women might renounce Christ.

Sts Cyrus and John gave them courage to endure what lay before them. Learning of this, the ruler of the city arrested Sts Cyrus and John, and seeing their steadfast and fearless confession of faith in Christ, he brought Athanasia and her daughters to witness their torture. The tyrant did not refrain from any form of torture against the holy martyrs. The women were not frightened by the sufferings of Sts Cyrus and John, but courageously continued to confess Christ. They were flogged and then beheaded, receiving their crowns of martyrdom.

At the same place they executed the Holy Unmercenaries Cyrus and John. Christians buried their bodies in the church of the holy Evangelist Mark. In the fifth century the relics of Sts Cyrus and John were transferred from Canopis to Manuphin. Later on their relics were transferred to Rome, and from there to Munchen (Munich) (another account is located under June 28).

Sts Cyrus and John are invoked by those who have difficulty in sleeping.



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

"Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Joy of all the Sorrowful" founded in 1966

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 is today 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!

Trudy Ellmore leaves on her mission trip to the Dominican Republic Tuesday, February 16, returning Tuesday, February 23. Please keep her and her team members in your prayers as they travel and minister to those they meet.



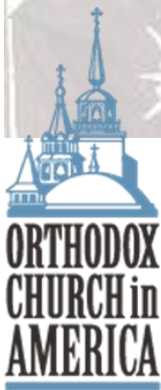
NY/NJ Diocese News

February 7, 2016 is National Scout Sunday

The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America has designated February 7th as Orthodox Scout Sunday. Through the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting (EOCS), the Assembly and its predecessor, SCOPA, have been actively supporting both the Boy Scouts and the Girl Scouts of the United States since the 1960's.

Additional information:

assemblyofbishops.org/news/2016/orthodox-scout-sunday-is-february-7



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

Synaxis of Primates issues communiqué concerning Council
CHAMBÉSY, GENEVA, SWITZERLAND [GOARCH]

At the conclusion of a week-long meeting here January 21-28, 2016, the following communiqué was released by the Synaxis of Primates.

SYNAXIS OF THE PRIMATES OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCHES Chambésy, 21-28, 2016

COMMUNIQUÉ

At the invitation of His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, the Synaxis of Primates of the Orthodox Autocephalous Churches took place at the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Chambésy, Geneva, from 21 to 28 January, 2016. The following Primates attended:

Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew
Patriarch Theodore of Alexandria

Patriarch Theophilos of Jerusalem
Patriarch Kirill of Moscow
Patriarch Irinej of Serbia
Patriarch Daniel of Romania
Patriarch Neophyte of Bulgaria
Patriarch Ilia of Georgia
Archbishop Chrysostomos of Cyprus
Archbishop Anastasios of Albania
Archbishop Rastislav of the Czech Lands and Slovakia

The following Primates were unable to attend: Their Beatitudes Patriarch John X of Antioch and Metropolitan Sawa of Warsaw and All Poland, for health reasons, and Archbishop Ieronymos of Athens and All Greece, for personal reasons. Nevertheless, all three were represented by official delegations of their Churches.

The Primates of the Orthodox Churches convened to finalize the texts for the Holy and Great Council. In the framework of the Synaxis, on Sunday, 24 January, a Divine Liturgy was held at the Holy Stavropegic Church of St. Paul. Along with the Ecumenical Patriarch, who presided, Their Beatitudes and Heads of the delegations of the Orthodox Churches concelebrated the Liturgy, with the exception of the Head of the delegation of the Patriarchate of Antioch.

During the Synaxis, whose sessions were held in the apostolic spirit of “speaking the truth in love” (Eph. 4.15), in concord and understanding, the Primates affirmed their decision to convene the Holy and Great Council. The Council will be held at the Orthodox Academy of Crete from June 16 to 27, 2016. To this end, the Primates humbly invoke the grace and blessing of the Holy Trinity and fervently invite the prayers of the fullness of the Church, clergy and laity, for the period leading to and the sessions of the Holy and Great Council.

The items officially approved for referral to and adoption by the Holy and Great Council are: *The Mission of the Orthodox Church in the Contemporary World*, *The Orthodox Diaspora*, *Autonomy and its Manner of Proclamation*, *The Sacrament of Marriage and its Impediments*, *The Significance of Fasting and its Application Today*, and *Relations of the Orthodox Church with the Rest of the Christian World*. By decision of the Primates, all approved documents will be published.

The Primates also discussed and determined the establishment of a Pan-Orthodox Secretariat, the by-laws of the Council, the participation of non-Orthodox observers in the opening and closing sessions, and the budgetary costs related the Council.

Moreover, the Primates expressed their support for the persecuted Christians of the Middle East and their ongoing concern for the abduction of the two Metropolitans, Paul Yazigi of the Patriarchate of Antioch and Gregorios Yohanna Ibrahim of the Syriac Archdiocese.

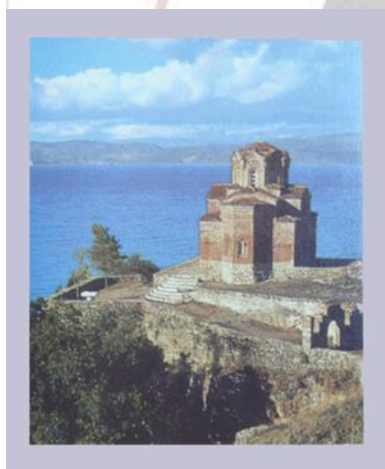
The proceedings of the Synaxis concluded on Wednesday evening, January 27, 2016, with the closing address by its President, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew.

At the Orthodox Center of the Ecumenical Patriarchate
in Chambésy-Geneva, 27 January, 2016
from the Secretariat of the Sacred Synaxis



Urgent Request for Doctors to Serve on Medical Mission Trips

OCMC is in urgent need of a physician and/or a physician's assistant to join Medical Mission Trips to Uganda (May 9-21) and Guatemala (April 8-17 and August 26-September 4). Medical personnel are needed to conduct medical clinics and offer health instruction. OCMC invites you to join these opportunities to offer physical and spiritual care to people for whom medical care is virtually unattainable. For more information, please visit www.ocmc.org, e-mail teams@ocmc.org, or call 1-877 GO FORTH (ext. 141).



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

My love keeps vigil and through vigil it never grows weary. The One, whom I love and whom I await, is coming to me surrounded by a heavenly retinue. How could I be sleeping, and how could vigil make me weary?

I keep vigil over the stories of men and the stories of things, in case I can discern some secret message of my Love. No story interests me by virtue of the story itself or because of the story-teller, but only on account of You.

I do so in the manner that a singer, who loses his own note, begins to listen attentively to everyone else's part, and attempts to recognize his own part. And everywhere he finds some note similar to his part, but nowhere his part completely. I do so in the manner that a man, who shatters a glass mirror, then proceeds to see his own face in the faces of people, in the faces of animals, and in the faces of all things. And everywhere he finds some feature similar to his own face, but nowhere his face in its entirety.

Thus I too keep vigil over the innumerable voices of the entire universe. And I keep vigil over the innumerable faces in the universe, from the face of the white pebbles by the lake to the starry face of the Big and Little Dippers, to see whether I can recognize the face of my Love. And no one deceives me, rather each tells me whatever little he can of what he knows about You.

When I pose questions to people, I await answers from You. When things speak, I listen to You. When I look at nature, I am looking for You.

When people see me pensive, they suppose that I am thinking about them, while I am actually thinking about You. When they see me loving to labor, they think that I am laboring for people, but I am laboring for You.

When nature hears its name on my lips, it thinks that I am lauding it, but I am lauding You. When I feed a dove, I am offering it to You. When I hug a lamb, I am hugging You. When I smile at the sun, my smile penetrates through all the stars until it meets with Your smile. When I bow down to kiss the white lily, I am dropping my kiss through seven realms onto the footstool of Your feet.

The vigilance of my love goes side by side with the prayer of my faith and the fasting of my hope. And none of them rises

All the activity of my mind serves my faith.

All the activity of my heart serves my hope.

All the activity of my soul serves my love.

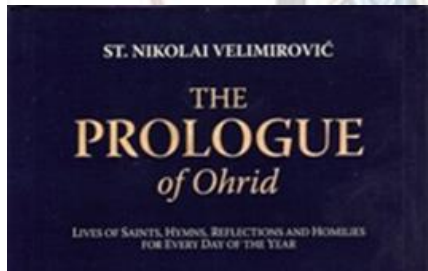
When I feed a dove, I am offering it to You, my Love.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XLI:

II. The Realities of the Spiritual World
Sin and Evil

God and the devil are found at opposite poles. No one can turn his face to God who has not first turned his back on sin. When a man turns his face to God, all of his paths lead to God. When a man turns his face away from God, all of his paths lead to perdition. When a man finally rejects God by word and in his heart, he is no longer fit to do anything that does not serve for his complete destruction, both of his soul and of his body.

St. Nicholas of Serbia, Thoughts on Good and Evil



1. Cyrus and John, the Unmercenary Saints and Miracle-Workers

These charitable and glorious saints were not blood brothers but were brothers in the spirit. At first, Cyrus lived in Alexandria, and as a physician he healed people by the power of Christ and by his knowledge of medicine. Learning that sickness mostly befalls man because of sin, Cyrus always directed the sick to purify their souls

from sin through repentance and prayer and, thereby restore health to the body. When Diocletion's persecution against Christians began, Cyrus withdrew to Arabia where he received the monastic tonsure. He became as famous in Arabia as he was in Alexandria, so that people there also resorted to him for assistance. Hearing about Cyrus, John, then a Roman officer in Edessa, came to Arabia to see him. Upon meeting, they loved one another as a brother loves a brother and remained together to live a life of asceticism. At that time, a certain Christian woman named Anastasia, together with her three daughters, was tortured by the persecutors in the town of Canopus. Hearing of this, Cyrus and John came to Canopus to encourage the mother and her daughters not to abandon the Faith. And truly, thanks to the counsel of these saints, Anastasia endured all tortures and, with her daughters, was martyred for Christ. The daughters of Anastasia were named: St. Theoctista, age 15; St. Theodota, age 13; and St. Eudocia, age 11. The tormentors then captured Cyrus and John, who, after imprisonment and torture were beheaded in the year 311 A.D. Numerous miracles were wrought by these martyrs, both during their lives and after their deaths. Their relics were translated to Rome during the reign of Emperor Arcadius. These saints are invoked for assistance during the Blessing of Water, in the Sacrament of Holy Unction and especially by those suffering from insomnia.

2. The Female Martyr Tryphaena

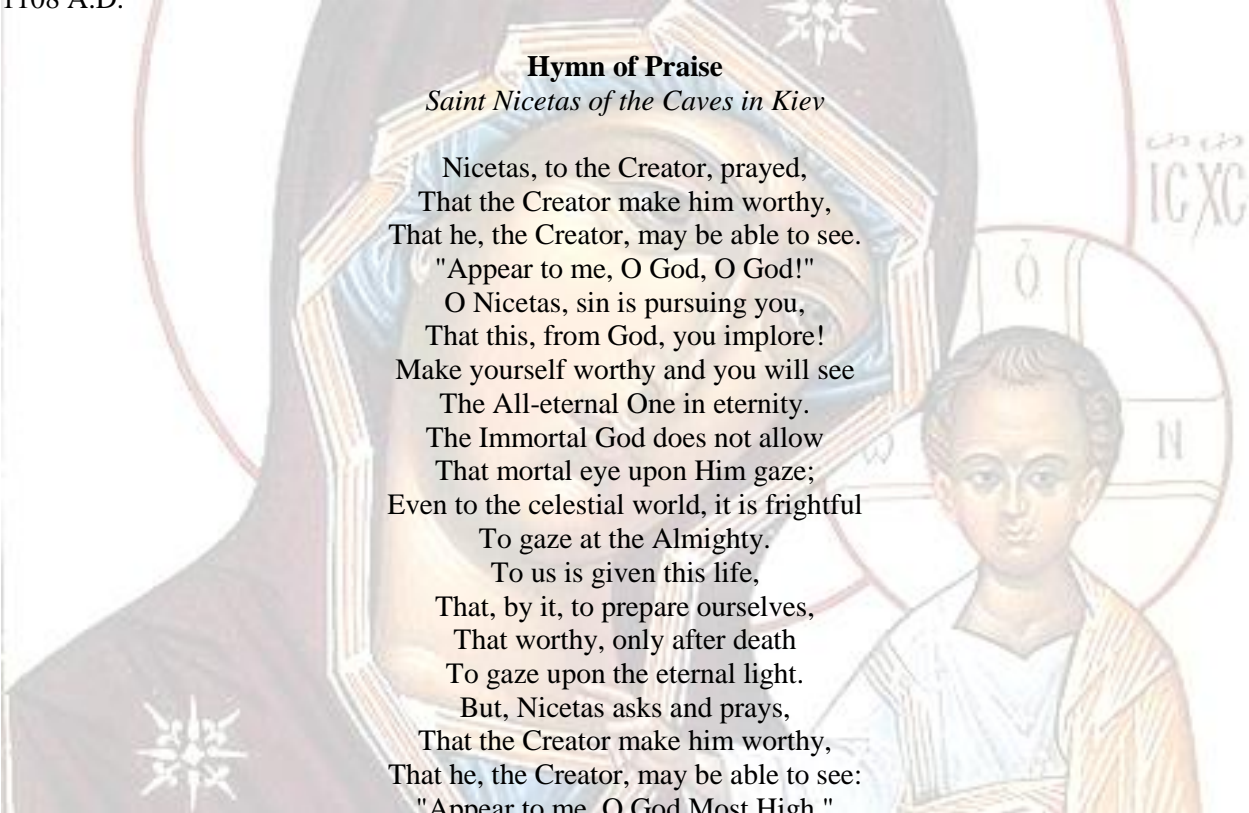
Tryphaena willingly and courageously endured many tortures for Christ. Because she did not want to deny her Faith, a wild ox was released which gored her to death. This occurred in the first century. St. Tryphaena is invoked by mothers who are unable to breast-feed their children.

3. The Venerable Nicetas of the Monastery of the Caves in Kiev

As a monk Nicetas was disobedient to his superior, left the monastery and closed himself in a cell. Because of his disobedience, God permitted great temptations to befall him. Once, when Nicetas was at prayer, the devil appeared to him under the guise of a radiant angel and said to him: "Do not pray anymore; rather read books and I will pray for you!" Nicetas obeyed and ceased to pray and began to read books. He only read the Old Testament. He was unable even to open the Book of the New Testament, for the power of the devil prevented him from doing so. With the help of the devil, Nicetas prophesied only crimes, thefts, arson and other evil deeds which are known to the devil and in which he [the devil] participates. Finally, the holy fathers of the Caves realized that Nicetas had succumbed to the temptation of the devil, and they began to pray to God for him. Nicetas returned to the monastery, realized the destruction which plagued him, and directed himself on the right path. After prolonged repentance and many tears, God forgave him and bestowed upon him the gift of miracle-working. He died in the year 1108 A.D.

Hymn of Praise

Saint Nicetas of the Caves in Kiev



Nicetas, to the Creator, prayed,
That the Creator make him worthy,
That he, the Creator, may be able to see.
"Appear to me, O God, O God!"
O Nicetas, sin is pursuing you,
That this, from God, you implore!
Make yourself worthy and you will see
The All-eternal One in eternity.
The Immortal God does not allow
That mortal eye upon Him gaze;
Even to the celestial world, it is frightful
To gaze at the Almighty.
To us is given this life,
That, by it, to prepare ourselves,
That worthy, only after death
To gaze upon the eternal light.
But, Nicetas asks and prays,
That the Creator make him worthy,
That he, the Creator, may be able to see:
"Appear to me, O God Most High."
Then, to him the devil appeared:
"Bow down before me!" said he,
And Nicetas, the faster, the better,
Before him, on his knees he knelt!
For he thought it was an angel:
It was the devil all in glow,
With the glow of falsehood,
Filled Nicetas's entire cell.
O, my brother, God, do not tempt;
This age is the age of preparation;
In this age is faith;
In that age however, is vision;

First the battle, then the victory;
First the pain, then satisfaction;
All occurs in its own time.

Reflection

Although the Holy Fathers praised monasticism as the angelic state, and although many of the greatest saints lived their lives and attained perfection in the deaf and lifeless desert, nevertheless, the Orthodox Church does not recommend tonsuring to all the faithful. "Neither all those in the desert were saved nor all those in the world were lost," said one saint. To a city dweller who, with no inclination for monasticism, desired to enter the monastery, St. Niphon said: "My child, a place neither saves nor destroys a man, but deeds save or destroy. For him who does not fulfill all the commandments of the Lord, there is no benefit from a sacred place or from a sacred rank. King Saul lived in the midst of royal luxury and he perished. King David lived in the same kind of luxury and he received a wreath. Lot lived among the lawless Sodomites and he was saved. Judas was numbered among the apostles and he went to Hades. Whoever says that it is impossible to be saved with a wife and children deceives himself. Abraham had a wife and children, three-hundred-eighteen servants and handmaidens, much gold and silver but, nevertheless, he was called the Friend of God. Oh, how many servants of the Church and lovers of the desert have been saved! How many aristocrats and soldiers! How many artisans and field-workers! Be pious and be a lover of men and you will be saved!"

Contemplation

To contemplate the Lord Jesus as Host in His house:

1. How He walks about this world as One Who has authority: commanding nature and expelling demons;
2. How He diligently labors over each man with whom He encounters as a Host over the members of His household;
3. How He acts in the Temple as a Host in His house cleansing the Temple of the money-changers.

Homily:

Against mediocrity and about fulfilling all the laws of God

"These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone" (St. Luke 11:42).

The law and mercy are referred to in this text. In the souls of the Pharisees and sectarians, the law and mercy do not stand together, i.e., they are unable to fulfill the regulations of the law and to show mercy, but they argue about which is more important of these two; one, they omit and the other they adhere to. The Pharisees literally observed the letter of the Law, but they completely abandoned mercy and love for men. Sectarians flatter themselves that they adhere to God's justice but totally reject the prescriptions of Church Laws.

Orthodoxy represents the fullness of the Faith. The Church commands that we do this and not omit that. The Church is careful toward external prescriptions of the Faith, like a man when he walks among clay vessels and is careful not to break them. The Church is even more careful about the justice and mercy of God as a man who, walking among the clay vessels, values them and protects them, not because of the earth from which the vessels are made, but because of their priceless contents which are contained in them. Empty vessels that are never filled with any drink, are as worthless as is the empty legal formalisms of the Pharisees. A drink, however, when it is poured into the wind is spilled and wasted because it is not poured into the vessels designated for it.

And, so, in Orthodoxy, there is no one-sidedness as there was not in the Lord Jesus. The Lord speaks to John the Baptist, who breathes with the justice and mercy of God, that it is necessary to fulfill the Law; but to the Pharisees, empty paragraphists without the justice and mercy of God, He says, "For it is mercy that I desire, not sacrifice!" (Hosea 6:6). It is evident that it is more important to do that which is necessary to do than that which must not be left undone. But it does not mean that, that which is less important is unnecessary. In the human organism, there are many important organs and many lesser important organs, but together they constitute the body of man.

O Lord, all encompassing, do not allow us to become one-sided, but assist us to fulfill Your entire will.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration with Abbott Tryphon

Freewill

We were created with freewill

One of the primary differences between Islam and Christianity has to do with the basic view of the nature of God. Islam teaches total surrender to a god who demands submission. There is no invitation to enter into a relationship, freely, nor is there room for an individual to choose, or not choose, to love his Creator, for the god of the Muslims is far above his creation, and there is no real possibility of having a personal relationship with this god.

By contrast, the God of Christianity is one Who invites us into a relationship that is personal, and like all relationships based on love, we are free to choose, or not, to commune with a God Who is, by His very nature, in relationship. The God worshiped in Trinity, and this image of the Trinity is the basis of the image of the Church, one of mutual love. The God we worship in Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is One God, and our response to the invitation from this One God, is to enter into communion with our nous, soul, and body (our own triune nature).

There is no force behind this invitation, for we are free to choose, or not, just as any relationship based on love requires both parties to be free to choose, or not. Our obedience is a religious act that must be free, and it must be based on love.

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught using parables, precisely because he was inviting us to freely choose to follow him, and to keep the commandments. He showed us the way to eternal life, not by giving commands as the Son of God, but as a loving teacher Whose wisdom was imparted in a way that left the choice up to us. His Apostle Peter demonstrated this same style of teaching when he told his fellow disciples that he was going fishing. Peter didn't say they were going fishing, but only that he was going fishing, thus leaving his friends with a choice. They were free to go fishing, or not.

Muhammad, by contrast, gave his followers specific laws that must be followed, including total submission to god, and should they ever renounce Islam, they would face a penalty of death. This lack of freedom in the teachings of Muhammad has its roots in his failure to teach about the notion of person.

In Christ we have the image of the Pantocrator, a fresco that is traditionally the primary focus in the dome of an Orthodox temple. The Pantocrator is He Who holds all things in His hands, through His love and forbearance. This God of Christianity does not punish, He educates, just as Christ educated his disciples through the use of parables.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon



Daily Reflection
To Share or Not to Share

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits." (Proverbs 18: 21)



Ouch! Yes, my words can spread "life," or my words can spread "death." Not only by way *"of the tongue,"* as it was when Proverbs were written. Today my sharing of words happens increasingly online, in what I choose to "forward" or "share" via text-message, tweet, email, or otherwise. I'm thinking about this today, because yesterday I received a nasty email, and then forwarded it to a close friend, saying something to the effect of, Look, she's at it again, this one. I shouldn't have done that. I could have "stopped the madness," so to say, by just keeping it to myself. Simple abstinence in forwarding, and wise use of "DELETE" would have been a beneficial exercise in compassion and withholding of judgment.

So today let me be a bit more abstinent with "the power of the tongue," which nowadays is magnified through the abundance of words I can choose to share, or not to share, online. If I happen to come across damaging or death-bringing information, let it stop with me, rather than be spread by me, so that others are not subjected to *"eating its fruits."* And let me be grateful today for lessons learned yesterday, in light of God's always life-giving Word.

Daily Readings with Early Church Fathers and Mothers

"Sharing in Suffering" by Theodoret

The greatest comfort for those who suffer from false accusations is given by the words of Scripture. When sufferers are wounded by the lying words of an unbridled tongue, and feel the sharp stings of distress, they can remember the story of Joseph. For Joseph was an example of righteousness while suffering under a slanderous charge. He was imprisoned for invading another man's bed and spent a long time in dungeon. When they look at Joseph's model of purity, their pain is eased by the remedy the story provides. They find the same thing when they look at David, who Saul hunted like a tyrant. When David caught his enemy and let him go unharmed, he received comfort in his distress. Then there is the story of the Lord Christ Himself, Maker of the ages, Creator of all things, very God, and Son of the very God. Yet He was called a gluttonous man and a drunkard by the wicked Jews. Christ's suffering is not only comforting but provides great joy to those who suffer. For they are counted worthy of sharing the sufferings of the Lord.

From Hudson, CD, Sharrer, JA, and Vanker, L. Day by Day with the Early Church Fathers. Hendrickson: MA, 1999. Pg. 15.

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

He who has been granted the grace of spiritual knowledge and yet harbors resentment, rancor or hatred for anybody, is like someone who lacerates his eyes with thorns and thistles. Hence knowledge must be accompanied by love.

- St Maximus the Confessor, 400 Chapters on Love

Spiritual and physical passions.(Saint Ephraim the Syrian)

The following are spiritual passions: forgetting God, laziness and ignorance (of the Christian faith). These three passions obscure the spiritual eye — reason, and the person succumbs to the rule of other passions, namely: impiety, heresy, blasphemy, irritability, anger, sorrow, irascibility, hatred, maliciousness, slander, judging others, illogical sorrow, fear, dissension, jealousy, envy, vainglory, hypocrisy, lies, unbelief, foolishness, indiscrimination, short-sightedness, insatiability, love of acquiring things, laziness, passion for the earthly things, depression, faintheartedness, ingratitude, grumbling, presumptuousness, conceit, vehemence, haughtiness, love of power, flattery, slyness, shamelessness, indifference, effeminacy, dissimulation, mockery, two-facedness, assenting to sin, continuous thoughts of sin, meandering thoughts, self-love (mother of everything evil), love of money (root of all iniquities and passions), evil nature and deceit.

February – 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:30 Meeting of Christ in the Temple	2	3	4	5 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	6 6:30 Vespers
7 9:30 No School 9:40 Hours 9:45 Gen'l Confession 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	8	9 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	10	11	12 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	13 6:30 Vespers
14 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	15	16 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	17	18	19 7:30-9:30pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg. 2 yr. Anniversary	20 6:30 Vespers
21 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	22	23 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	24	25	26 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	27 6:30 Vespers
28 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy/ Social	29					