

*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 and the Diocese of NY & NJ  
V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson  
Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Sub-Deacon Vlashi  
Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



**Sunday, March 20, 2016**

Gospel: John 1:43-51

**Tone 1**

Epistle: Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

*1st Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy*



**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory  
Forever!**

*1st Sunday of Great  
Lent: Sunday of  
Orthodoxy*

*We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One, and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God. Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh to deliver Your creatures from bondage to the enemy. Therefore with thanksgiving we cry aloud to You: You have filled all with joy, O our Savior, by coming to save the world.*

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

**1st Sunday of Great Lent— Tone 1. Sunday of Orthodoxy.** The Holy Fathers who were slain at the Monastery of St. Sabbas: Ven. John, Sergius, Patrick, and others (796). Monk Martyr Euphrosynus of Sinozérsk (Novgorod—1612). Martyr Photina (Svetlana, Fatíma), the Samaritan woman, and her sons: Martyrs Victor and Joses, and two others (ca. 66). Virgin Martyrs Alexandra, Claudia, Euphrasia, Matrona, Juliana, Euphemia and Theodosia, of Amisus (310). St. Nicetas the Confessor, Archbishop of Apollonias in Bithynia (ca. 813-820).



***Liturgical Schedule:***

**Sunday, March 20<sup>th</sup>**

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

**Wednesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

6:30 pm: Holy Day of the  
Annunciation/Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

**Saturday, March 26<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, March 27<sup>th</sup>**

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

**Wednesday, March 30<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

**Saturday, April 2<sup>nd</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>**

9:30 am: No Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

**Wednesday, April 6<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

**Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, April 10<sup>th</sup>**

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

***Bulletin Sponsors:***

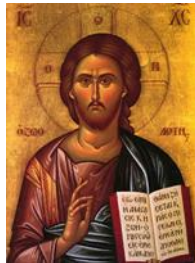
*No Sponsors*

***Readings:***



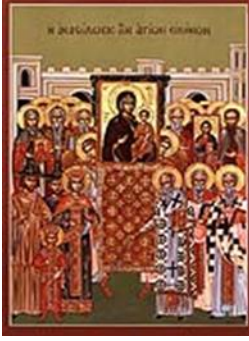
**Epistle:** Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

**Brethren**, by faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to share ill-treatment with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets -- who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign enemies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated -- of whom the world was not worthy -- wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.



**Gospel:** John 1:43-51

**At that time**, Jesus decided to go to Galilee. And he found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael, and he said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered him, "Because I said to you, I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You shall see greater things than these." And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."



### *1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Great Lent: Sunday of Orthodoxy*

Our fasting should not be a negative thing, a mere abstention from certain foods. It is an opportunity to free ourselves from the sinful desires and urges of our fallen nature, and to nourish our souls with prayer, repentance, to participate in church services, and partake of the life-giving Mysteries of Christ.

At Forgiveness Vespers we sing: "Let us begin the time of fasting in light, preparing ourselves for spiritual efforts. Let us purify our soul, let us purify our body. As we abstain from food, let us abstain from all passion and enjoy the virtues of the spirit..."



**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:

[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 Study 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*

**Choir practice will be every Sunday during Lent at 9:30**

*The next Parish Council meeting will be today March 20<sup>th</sup>, (Sunday of Orthodoxy), after coffee hour. It has been changed from March 27<sup>th</sup>. All Parish Council meetings are open to any parish member and may speak on any issue of the Parish. All Parish Council members should attend or be excused by the Rector or President. Trustees of the parish. and, of course, the Rector and other clergy should attend.*



***Dues and assessments are being collected for the year 2016.*** The total Parish Membership Fee is \$200. Partial payments are gladly accepted. Please note, in the memo of your check, the amount that will go to membership.

***Presanctified Liturgies will begin on Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, followed by a potluck meal.***

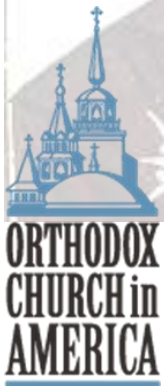
***From The Treasurer***

1. 2016 membership/dues/assessment: \$200 per person over 18 years of age. If there is a financial hardship, please speak to Fr. Matthew. All discussions are completely confidential.
2. Scraps of paper with notes and no name get lost in the offering basket. Please do NOT do this.
3. If you want your donation designated for a certain fund or purpose (Building Fund, Membership, bulletin sponsorship, etc.), please clearly write the amount and purpose on the memo line of your check. Otherwise the full amount of the check will go into the general offering fund. OR you may use an envelope for the same purpose. Blank envelopes are available at the Candle Desk.
4. Questions? Please speak to Trudy Ellmore. Email: [trellmore@gmail.com](mailto:trellmore@gmail.com). Cell: 610-393-9897.



***NY/NJ Diocese News***

***The Lenten Spring has come!*** We embark on our journey to PASCHA: Great Lent. Parishes will have a host of services to lead and guide us on this spiritual sojourn in worship; calling us to fasting, acts of mercy in charity, and increased fervor in prayer. ***"Awake, O my soul! The end is drawing near. Why do you remain idle? Why do you refrain from preparing yourself for the day of the Lord? The time is growing short. Rise! The Judge is near, He stands at the doors. Your life will pass like a dream, like a flower the time of this life passes. Why do you care about foolish things and toil in vain?"*** [Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete]



***Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News***

**Metropolitan Tikhon accepts Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew's invitation to serve at Sunday of Orthodoxy Liturgy  
ISTANBUL, TURKEY [OCA]**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon has accepted an invitation from His All-Holiness, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople to concelebrate the Divine Liturgy of the Sunday of Orthodoxy at the Patriarchal Church of Saint George in Istanbul's Phanar district on March 20, 2016. Also concelebrating with the Ecumenical Patriarch will be the members of the Sacred and Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.

While preparing for his departure for Istanbul, Metropolitan Tikhon expressed feelings of joy in anticipation of the celebration.

"The path toward Orthodox unity in mission and witness that has been taken in the United States by the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA will bear fruit at the forthcoming Great and Holy Synod on the island of Crete in June 2016," said Metropolitan Tikhon. "The core commitment of the Orthodox Church in America to Orthodox unity is unwavering. For us, the concelebration with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the Sunday of Orthodoxy is an expression of this commitment and

an affirmation of this vision.” Metropolitan Tikhon is being accompanied by Archpriest John Jillions, OCA Chancellor.

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**Updated Orthodox Faith series honors Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko’s memory**

*YONKERS, NY [SVOTS Communications]*

Saint Vladimir’s Seminary Press (SVS Press) is pleased to announce an updated and expanded edition of The Orthodox Faith series, popularly known as “The Rainbow series,” originally authored by Protopresbyter Thomas Hopko in 1971.

Father Thomas, who reposed in the Lord one year ago today—March 18, 2015—was Dean Emeritus of Saint Vladimir’s Seminary.

The new edition, published as a memorial to Father Thomas, was made possible in part through a grant from the Ganister Orthodox Foundation Fund at the First Community Foundation Partnership of Pennsylvania.

“It is difficult to overestimate the importance of the series ‘The Orthodox Faith,’” writes His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, in his Preface to the new edition. “This deceptively labeled ‘elementary handbook’ on the Orthodox Church has been used by thousands, from casual enquirers to catechumens to lifelong Church members, as both a catechesis and a basic reference tool on Orthodox Christianity.”

Originally consisting of four volumes—*Doctrine, Worship, Bible and Church History*, and *Spirituality*—The Orthodox Faith series was written to provide comprehensive information on the Orthodox Christian Church and practical instruction in how to live the faith. The updated series includes cover redesign; new illustrations by seminary alumnus, Archpriest Andrew Tregubov; updated and expanded content to the Church history volume; and the placement of scriptural content from Volume Three on Church History to Volume One on Church doctrine, in order to accommodate the expanded historical content.

“The reformatted Volume One now includes Father Thomas’s original content on Church doctrine and Scripture, and treats them as a unified body of knowledge,” said Michael Soroka, Associate Editor at SVS Press. “In the original series, the scriptural content appeared in Volume Three and was combined with content on Church history,” he explained. “But, because we significantly expanded our Church history content, and because Father Thomas himself always insisted upon the unity of doctrine and Scripture, we reorganized the series in this manner.”

Dr. David C. Ford, professor of Church History at Saint Tikhon’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, South Canaan, PA, authored the new material in Volume Three, now simply titled Church History. Designing it as an introductory textbook on a high school reading level, he devotes each chapter to one century of Church history and thus provides concise, essential bases for understanding the broad contours of Orthodox Christian history.

“Father Thomas was a gifted theologian who had a way with words,” remembers the Archpriest Dr. John Behr, Dean of Saint Vladimir’s. “The number of people he inspired and formed, influenced and touched, both as priest and teacher at Saint Vladimir’s and throughout the world, is incalculable. I can think of no greater way to honor his legacy than to share his words with a new generation.”

SVS Press Marketing Director, Deacon Gregory Hatrak, further remarked, “We are humbled to be part of helping Father Tom’s words live on and, to reach a wider audience, we’ve made all four volumes available for download in digital format. Additionally, the OCA’s Department of Christian Education has developed materials for discussion and reflection on The Orthodox Series, accessible on the OCA’s website. These study aids can be used by book clubs, catechesis classes, and individual readers alike, and we hope that by using the series in this manner, many people and parishes will reignite their Orthodox Christian faith, a hope shared by Father Thomas when he wrote the original series.”

Father Thomas, who began teaching Doctrine and Pastoral Theology at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary in 1968, eventually became a full Professor of Dogmatic Theology in 1991–1992. He rose to the position of Dean in 1992—a post that he held until his retirement one decade later. He was a beloved



pastor, preeminent preacher, outstanding teacher, sought-after speaker, and prolific writer. The Orthodox Faith was his best-known publication. It may be purchased as a complete set for \$55.00 or purchased individually. Orders can be placed by contacting the Saint Vladimir's Seminary Bookstore online or by calling 1-800-204-BOOK.



**A Growing Missionary Family: The Patitsas Family, OCMC's Newest Missionaries to New Zealand**  
by Alex Goodwin

Thanks be to God, the Church is reaching out all over the world!

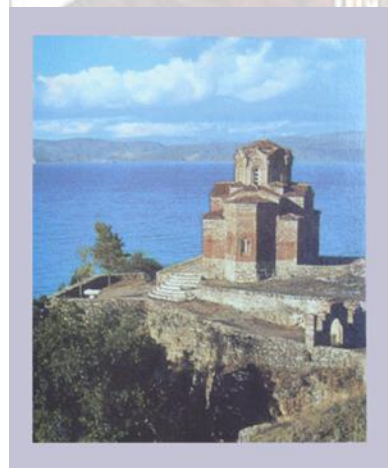
OCMC is blessed to have so many missionaries to count as part of our growing family. The newest additions to this family are Fr. Paul and Pres. Katerina Patitsas along with their children. They are missionaries serving with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Amphilochios of the Holy Archdiocese of New Zealand and Exarchate of Oceania.

Fr. Paul is parish priest of the Church of the Holy Trinity in Auckland, New Zealand, where he and Pres. Katerina have been serving for 6 years, but he has also been called upon by His Eminence to help with evangelization and church planting on the islands of Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa. Fr. Paul has been a priest for 24 years and has mission experience in Kenya and India.

The Church is growing on the islands thanks to the efforts of His Eminence and the dedicated clergy that serve under him. In a few short years, Fiji alone has become home to four clergy, four churches, two nuns, missionary coworkers from Australia, Greece, New Zealand, and the US, many baptized faithful, an orphanage, and a women's shelter.

It is hoped that in partnering with the OCMC, the Patitsas family will be able to enhance their ability to serve and grow the Church and provide the outreach that is needed throughout the Metropolis. To do this they need your prayers and support. Please prayerfully consider making a gift to their ministry by visiting <http://www.ocmc.org/ThePatitsasFamily>.

*To learn more about, or support the work of, the Patitsas family please visit:*  
<http://www.ocmc.org/ThePatitsasFamily>.



***Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai Velimirovich, XLIX:***

*Conceal my soul from evil eyes, O God, when she gives birth to Your wisdom. Isolate me from people, in a shepherd's cave. Let no one among mortals accompany me except the shadow of one righteous man. In the grotto of Bethlehem, in the cave of stone that has never blasphemed Your name, let my pregnant soul seclude herself here.*

*Let the innocent lambs and calves keep her company, for from birth they are intended to be food for those who are less pure than they themselves are.*

*Let the heavenly fires burn silently, and let them fearfully gaze upon a humble corner of the universe, upon the black earth, and upon the most precious part of that corner, upon the grotto that is giving birth to God.*

*Let earthly kings go far away, and let philosophizing town squabblers not draw near.*

The humble herders of lambs and calves will stand around my cave, and will watch as Heaven opens; and they will sing with heavenly angels, when my soul gives birth to my Saviour. Let all others move further away who live by means of fleeting saviors and salvations.

With your light, O Lord, guide the wise men of the East, and the prophets, and the saints to the grotto of my soul, so that they may bring to her the three most precious gifts of mankind from the East.

The first gift is a clairvoyant knowledge of You, which surpasses all other types of knowledge. Let the bearer of this gift cense his precious goods with the prayers of all the prophets of the East and of all the altars of the eastern prophets.

The second gift is the clairvoyant expectation of Your birth in the purity of virginity: let the bearer of this gift keep fasting for the entire journey, lest his eye be confounded by the fat of the earth, and so that he may not lose sight of the guiding star.

The third gift is a clairvoyant love for You. Let the bearer of this gift keep vigil over his gift over the course of his journey, lest his heart stumble over some earthly allurement and be tardy for the adoration of the newborn Infant.

Truly all my mind, and all the consciousness of my mind will accompany one of the three. All my heart, and all the desires of my heart, will accompany another. And my soul, filled with grace and love, will await the third.

Nevertheless the priestly wayfarers will make their journey carefully, making stops along their route to ask the way, which will endanger my soul and the first-born of my soul. As naive as doves, they will ask the way!

But You are infinitely compassionate and infinitely wise. For over fifty centuries You have been amassing precious gifts in the East. And You have not permitted the bearers of these gifts to fall into the hands of thieves.

From before eternity You have been preparing the birth of the Son in the virgin soul. You will not permit Him to be slain by Herod, someone whom the earth bore and crowned in the Egyptianized city of Jerusalem.

Conceal my soul, O God, from the many evil eyes.

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### *Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XLVIII:*

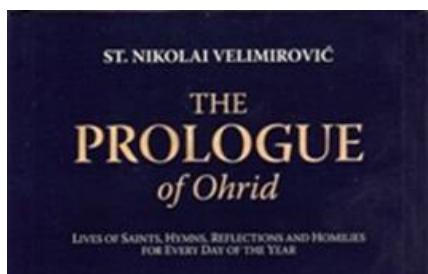
#### **II. The Realities of the Spiritual World**

##### **The Purpose of Life**

Just as people do not enter a war in order to enjoy war, but in order to be saved from war, so we do not enter this world in order to enjoy this world, but in order to be saved from it. People go to war for the sake of something greater than war. So we also enter this temporal life for the sake of something greater: for eternal life. And as soldiers think with joy about returning home, so also Christians constantly remember the end of their lives and their return to their heavenly fatherland.

*+ St. Nicholas of Serbia, Thoughts on Good and Evil*

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#### **1. The Venerable Martyrs, John and Others from the Monastic Brotherhood of Saint Sabas the Sanctified near Jerusalem**

This glorious monastery, which still exists today, was visited by our own Serbian St. Sava and endowed by several Serbian rulers. Many times it was attacked by brutal Arabs, pillaged and laid waste. But, by the Divine Providence of God, it was always restored and is preserved until today. During the reign of Constantine and Irene, it

was attacked and pillaged by the Arabs. The monks did not want to flee, but taking counsel with their



abbot Thomas, they said, "We have fled from the world into this wilderness for the sake of our love for Christ, and it would be shameful if we fled from the wilderness out of fear of men. If we are slain here, we will be slain because of our love for Christ, for Whose sake we came to live here." Having decided this, they awaited the armed Arabs, unarmed as lambs before wolves. Some of the monks the Arabs killed with arrows and some they sealed off in the cave of St. Sabas. Then the Arabs lit a fire at the entrance of the cave, and all were suffocated by the smoke. Thus many of them died as martyrs for the sake of Christ and were translated into the Kingdom of Him Whom they loved and for Whose love they perished. They suffered honorably prior to the Feast of the Resurrection in 796 A.D., during the reign of Constantine and Irene, and Elijah, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. A just punishment quickly befell these savage attackers. Returning to their tents, they began to quarrel among themselves and in mutual combat all were slain. This occurred in the year 796 A.D.

## **2. The Holy Martyr Photina**

This was the Samaritan woman who had the rare fortune to converse with the Lord Christ Himself at the Well of Jacob, near Sychar (St. John 4:4-31). Believing in the Lord, Photina afterward went to preach His Gospel with Victor and Josiah her two sons, and with her five sisters, Anatolia, Phota, Photida, Parasceve and Cyriaca. They had gone to Carthage in Africa. There they were arrested, taken to Rome during the reign of Emperor Nero and were thrown into prison. By God's Divine Providence, Domnina, the daughter of Nero, came into contact with St. Photina, who converted her to the Faith of Christ. After imprisonment they all suffered for the sake of Christ. Photina, who for the first time was enlightened with the light of truth at the well of Sychar, was now thrown into a well where she died and entered into the eternal kingdom of Christ.

### **Hymn of Praise**

*Saint Photina, the Samaritan Woman*

The Samaritan Woman met Christ at the well,  
And was enlightened with the light of Christ Himself.  
Under Nero her life she ended in another well,  
And her spirit she gave to Christ God, her Lord.  
Her glorious sons were Victor and Josiah:  
Both, the saintly mother enlightened with holiness.  
Five sisters suffered for the Name of Christ,  
And with her were translated to heaven, their reward to receive.  
O penitent Photina, wonderful sufferer,  
How your countenance with eternal light now glows!  
At one time, not even water did you give to the Savior;  
Finally, even your blood, for Him, you shed.  
Your soul at one time had been darkened, while yet a Samaritan you were;  
When you became a Christian, more brightly than the sun's rays, you shone.  
In Sychar you proclaimed Christ with fear;  
In the center of Rome, by your death, you witnessed to Him.  
Love, every fear, destroys, and makes one a hero--  
O Photina, love forever glorifies you.  
Two or three Rome's can Nero burn down,  
But the soul of Christians cannot burn.  
The vessels of clay, Nero can smash,  
But over the spirit of Photina, did he not have any power.  
O immortal saint, help us now,  
By your prayers, before the Throne of Christ the Savior.



### **Reflection**

God does not punish a sinner because it gives Him gratification to destroy men. If that gave Him gratification, He would not have created man out of nothing. He punishes a sinner for more important and constructive reasons, of which two are most apparent to us: First, that by punishment, He corrects him and leads him on the true path of salvation; second, to frighten others from sinning. St. Isaac also thinks this when he says, "The just wise man is similar to God--for he punishes man, not to reproach him for his sin but either to correct man or to instil fear in others." One recalcitrant young man, who ridiculed God and his parents, suddenly went insane. The entire city in which this young man lived saw in this the punishment of God and was terrified with the fear of God. The young man was held bound and isolated for three years. His mother wept bitterly and prayed to God for her son. One year, on the Feast of Pentecost, the mother brought her insane son to the monastery of St. Basil in Ostrog. After prayers, the insane youth was cured and became himself again. After that he repented and became an exemplary person and a true Christian.

### **Contemplation**

To contemplate the Lord Jesus crucified on the cross:

1. How blood flowed from His hands and dripped to the ground;
2. How blood flowed from His feet and dripped to the ground;
3. How blood flowed from beneath His ribs and dripped to the ground.

### **Homily:**

#### **About the battle of the Lamb with the beasts**

*"They will fight with the Lamb, but the Lamb will conquer them, for He is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings" (Revelation 17:14).*

Who speaks these marvelous words? John, who saw God. Who is this Lamb? Christ the Lord. Who is this Lord of lords and King of kings? Christ the Lord. With whom will He wage war and whom will He defeat? He will defeat the beast which has seven heads and all those whom receive authority, honor and riches from the unclean beast. The Lamb among the beasts! St. John also saw the Lamb as the Victor over all the beasts. Christ among the demons! One would say, "They will devour Him!" Nevertheless, the terrified demons cry out to Him for mercy and flee from Him without turning back. Christ among His tormentors! One would say, "They will destroy Him forever." Nevertheless, He resurrects and conquers, and they flee from Him in terror and perish. The Church among the heathens! One would say, "They will flood her [The Church] like the waves over a small island." Nevertheless, the pagan kingdoms sank and fell apart and the Church still exists, flourishes and advances. The Faith of Christ among the pungent philosophers and theoreticians! One would say, "They will out-smart it [The Faith] and banish it [The Faith] from the world." Nevertheless, they steer one another into lies and persecutions, but the Faith of Christ saves men. Reverence among the blasphemers of God and apostates from God! One would say, "They will soil it!" Nevertheless, they are smothered in their own filth, and reverence preserves itself in unsoiled purity. Christian meekness and tearfulness in the of midst of tyrants and abductors! One would say, "It will die of hunger!" Nevertheless, they live and are satiated, while the tyrants and abductors suffer from starvation. The Lamb among the beasts! Nevertheless, the Lamb is the Victor. O Lord, Meek and Good, Lamb of God, all-gentle, imbue us with Your meekness and goodness, so that even we may share in Your victory.

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



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

### **The Journey**

#### *Transformation through the Lenten Journey*

The Byzantine Court was filled with sycophants, busying themselves with building alliances that would help them rise in status and influence. During the thousand years of the empire a few emperors were tricked into believing these sycophants were truly their friends and could be trusted, when in actuality they were being played, and these flatterers were not their friends. These sycophants were quick to change allegiances should a better opportunity arise, and many an emperor was in the end, betrayed by those whom they'd thought could be trusted.

These flatterers lacked courage, and in their dishonesty faked loyalty to the Emperor, and in the end, the whole of the Empire would suffer. Had these people been true citizens of the Empire, and not focused on their own advancement, the Emperor would have enjoyed the loyalty of a citizen who put the Empire before self. In the end, the Emperor would be betrayed, and the Empire would have suffered yet another round of intrigue.

As we continue on this Lenten journey, let us reexamine our own relationships. Are we sycophants, or do we speak from the heart, without thought for self-promotion? Are we true friends to those with whom we share our lives, or are we always thinking only of ourselves? Do we really desire to serve those who are over us, or do we think only of our own advancement? Do we really desire to grow in the Faith, or are we only focused on the here and now? Are we like the emperor, only surrounding ourselves with flatterers, people who tell us what we want to hear, or are we ready to receive the feedback that would actually help us grown spiritually?

Let us in all humility beseech the Lord, during this Great and Holy Fast, seeking the transformation that is ours through His grace, offering ourselves as a living sacrifice, expecting, because of His loving kindness, to be made whole. Finally, let us not be flatters and betrayers of others, but true friends who always putting ourselves last. Let us love God above all else, and let us love others as ourselves. With God's help, this Lenten journey will be the most spiritually profitable of them all.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon



### *Daily Reflection* **As Incense**

*“Let my prayer be set before you  
as incense, the lifting up of my  
hands as the evening sacrifice.”*  
(Ps 140/141: 2, chanted solemnly

at Byzantine Vespers & Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts)



The visible burning of incense is an instructive reminder of the invisible “burning” of the heart in prayer, which rises up as an offering, as our self-giving at this evening service. The “lifting up of my hands,” a physical gesture we don't practice all that much (not in my church, anyway), is also referred to here, because from ancient times the body, not only the “soul,” is involved in the whole business of prayer.



Today let me "see" this intertwining of the visible and invisible; let me "see" more biblically. As Lent involves my whole being, body and soul, in its salvific traditions, let me gratefully participate in its wholesome vision, whether I'm at work or at church on this sunny, Lenten day. If I'm at work, let my fasting (in deed, word, and thought) be "set before" the Lord, as He draws me in, both in and out of church, to His way of "seeing," as I journey toward the vision of His resurrection. Glory be to Him.

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

#### **"Shame and Repentance" by St. John Chrysostom**

Pay attention carefully. After the sin comes the shame; courage follows repentance. Did you pay attention to what I said? Satan upsets the order; he gives the courage to sin and the shame to repentance....Do not be ashamed to enter again into the Church. Be ashamed when you sin. Do not be ashamed when you repent. Pay attention to what the devil did to you. These are two things: sin and repentance. Sin is a wound; repentance is a medicine. Just as there are for the body wounds and medicines, so for the soul are sins and repentance. However, sin has the shame and repentance possesses the courage.

*From "Homily 8: On Repentance and Almsgiving (Fathers of the Church Patristics Series)"*

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### ***The Philokalia: Daily Readings***

When the Word (Logos) of God becomes manifest and radiant in us, and His face shines like the sun, then His clothes will also look white (Matt 17:2). That is to say, the words of the Gospels will then be clear and distinct, with nothing concealed. And Moses and Elijah - the more spiritual principles of the Law and the Prophets - will also be present with Him.

Just as the result of disobedience is sin so the result of obedience is virtue. And just as disobedience leads to breaking the commandments and to separation from Him who gave them, so obedience leads to keeping the commandments and to union with Him who gave them. Thus he who through obedience has kept the commandments has achieved righteousness and, moreover, he has not cut himself off from union in love with Him who gave them; and the opposite is equally true.

*- + St Maximus the Confessor, 200 Chapters on the Knowledge of God*

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"He's not in there! Oh, wait - he's changed his status to 'risen' "



## March – 2016

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	5 6:30pm Vespers
6 9:30am No School 9:40am Hours 9:45am Gen'l Confession 10:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Meatfare Luncheon	7	8 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	9	10	11 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	12 6:30pm Vespers
13 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy 12:00pm Cheesefare Luncheon	14 6:30pm The Canon of St. Andrew of Crete Service	15 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	16 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	17	18 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	19 6:30pm Vespers
20 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	21	22 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	23 6:30pm Holy Day of Annunciation/Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	24	25 8:00-9:15pm –Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	26 6:30pm Vespers
27 9:30am Sunday School 9:40am Hours 10:00am Divine Liturgy / Social	28	29 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Study Mtg. NA Grp	30 6:30pm Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	31		