

*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 27, 2016**

Gospel: Mark 2:1-12

Saint: John 10:9-16

**Tone 2**

Epistle: Hebrews 1:10-2:3

Saint: Hebrews 7:26-8:2

*2nd Sunday of Great Lent: St Gregory Palamas*



**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory  
Forever!**

*2nd Sunday of Great  
Lent: St Gregory  
Palamas*

*O light of Orthodoxy, teacher of the Church, its confirmation, O ideal of monks and invincible champion of theologians, O wonder-working Gregory, glory of Thessalonica and preacher of grace, always intercede before the Lord that our souls may be saved.*

## *Today's Commemorated Feasts and Saints*

**2nd Sunday of Great Lent— Tone 2. St. Gregory Palamas.** Synaxis of the Venerable Fathers of the Kiev Caves Lavra. Martyr Matrona of Thessalonica (3rd-4th c.). Martyrs Manuel and Theodosius (304). Ven. John the Clairvoyant, Anchorite, of Egypt (394-395). The “GLYKOPHYLOUSA” and the “AKATHIST” Icons of the Most-holy Theotokos on Mt. Athos.

## *Weekly Bulletin Sponsors*

### **For Health of:**

**Nicholas Zimmerman** on his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday; offered with love by his family.

**Joshua Turpin** on his 2<sup>nd</sup> birthday; offered with love by his family.

**Christopher Dawson** on his birthday; offered with love by his family.

**Matushka Joanna Bohush**, who is battling breast cancer; offered by the Diocese of NY/NJ.

### **In Memory of:**

**Olga Romanofsky** mother of Andrew.

***Liturgical Schedule:***

**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

**Wednesday, April 13<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

**Saturday, April 16<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

***Bulletin Sponsors:***

*Zimmerman Family, Turpin  
Family, Dawson Family &  
Romanofsky Family*

***Readings:***

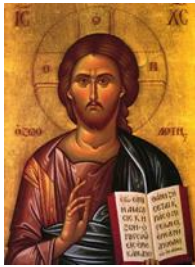


**Epistle:** Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Hebrews 7:26-8:2

**Brethren,** "You O Lord, in the beginning, didst found the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet?" Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him.

**Brethren,** it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners, exalted above the heavens. He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people; he did this once for all when he offered up himself. Indeed, the law appoints men in their weakness as high priests, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son who has been made perfect for ever. Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent which is set up not by man but by the Lord.





**Gospel:** Mark 2:1-12; John 10:9-16

**At that time,** Jesus entered Capernaum and it was reported that he was at home. And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room for them, not even about the door; and he was preaching the word to them. And they came, bringing to him a paralytic carried by four men. And when they could not get near him because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and when they had made an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "My son, your sins are forgiven." Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, "Why does this man speak thus? It is a blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?" And immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they thus questioned within themselves, said to them, "Why do you question thus in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Rise, take up your pallet and walk? But that you may know that the Son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he said to the paralytic-"I say to you, rise, take up your pallet and go home." And he rose, and immediately took up the pallet and went out before them all; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

**The Lord said,** I am the door; if any one enters by me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hireling and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. He flees because he is a hireling and cares nothing for the sheep. I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep, that are not of this fold; I must bring them also, and they will heed my voice. So there shall be one flock, one shepherd.



### *2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Great Lent: St Gregory Palamas*

This Sunday was originally dedicated to St Polycarp of Smyrna (February 23). After his glorification in 1368, a second commemoration of St Gregory Palamas (November 14) was appointed for the Second Sunday of Great Lent as a second "Triumph of Orthodoxy."

Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica, was born in the year 1296 in Constantinople. St Gregory's father became a prominent dignitary at the court of Andronicus II Paleologos (1282-1328), but he soon died, and Andronicus himself took part in the raising and education of the fatherless boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, barely twenty years old, withdrew to Mount Athos in the year 1316 (other sources say 1318) and became a novice in the Vatopedi monastery under the guidance of the monastic Elder St Nicodemus of Vatopedi (July 11). There he was tonsured and began on the path of asceticism. A year later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters also became monastics.



**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**

***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*

#### **ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL, METROPOLITAN JOSEPH AND THEIR FLOCKS**

On the “Sunday of Orthodoxy” (March 20th), His Eminence, Archbishop Michael hosted His Eminence, Metropolitan Joseph of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America for the Divine Liturgy at Saints Peter & Paul Orthodox Church in South River NJ. The two hierarchs concelebrated with seven priests, among them Father Joseph Lickwar (Chancellor, Diocese of New York & New Jersey) and Father David Garretson (Rector, Saints Peter & Paul Church). They were joined by Archdeacon Michael Suvak. Metropolitan Joseph preached the homily. The responses were sung by the parish choir under the direction of Basil Kozak.

After the morning Liturgy, Metropolitan Joseph and Father Thomas Zain (Vicar-General of the Antiochian Archdiocese) gave a presentation on the situation of Syrian refugees and the continuing war in Syria.

Those in attendance included Mayor John Krenzel of South River NJ, and numerous clergy members from local Coptic, Roman Catholic, Reformed, Episcopal, and Methodist churches. Also present was a group of students from Calvin College in Michigan, visiting the Jersey Shore for a Spring Break service project.

That evening, Metropolitan Joseph presided at the Vespers for the “Sunday of Orthodoxy” joined by Archbishop Michael and more than forty priests and deacons at Brooklyn's Saint Nicholas Cathedral. The homily was delivered by Archbishop Michael. Numerous faithful representing various jurisdictions from throughout the greater New York City area attended the Sunday evening service. A Byzantine choir led by Protopsaltis Rassem El Massih, together with the “Spirit of Orthodoxy” Pan-Orthodox Choir co-directed by Professor Aleksei Shipovalnikov and Protopsaltis Stratos Mandalakis, shared in the responses to the Vespers service.

A delicious Lenten meal was served after Vespers by the faithful of Saint Nicholas Cathedral. The evening culminated in joyous fellowship of hierarchs, clergy and faithful.



#### ***Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News*** **60th Anniversary of St. Nikolai’s repose remembered** *SOUTH CANAAN, PA [STOTS Communications]*

Clergy, faculty, students and administrative team members at Saint Tikhon’s Seminary here recently marked the 60th Anniversary of the repose of Saint Nikolai [Velimirovic] with the celebration of an Akathistos Hymn outside the room in which he had fallen asleep in the Lord on March 18, 1956.

“Saint Nikolai of Zhicha, known internationally for his numerous theological and spiritual writings, including the *Prologue from Ohrid*, *The Life of Saint Sava*, and *A Treasury of Serbian Spirituality*, spent the last five years of his life here at Saint Tikhon’s, where he taught classes, mentored seminarians, and served as the seminary’s Dean and Rector,” said Archpriest Dr. Steven Voytovich, STOTS Dean, who presided at the celebration. “A commemorative photo and short biography hang in the hallway outside his former room, serving as a daily reminder of his presence and protection.”

According to the account of [Saint Nikolai’s life](#), he also had served as a guest lecturer at Saint Vladimir’s Seminary, at that time located in New York, NY, and Holy Trinity Monastery and Seminary, Jordanville, NY.

St. Nikolai, seated fifth from left, with faculty and students of St. Tikhon’s Seminary.

“The Akathistos Hymn, composed on Pascha 1923 by Saint Nikolai, who at the time was Bishop of Ohrid, is dedicated to Jesus, the Conqueror of Death,” Father Steven explained. “One of the prayers from his earlier composition, Prayers by the Lake, focusing on Jesus as King and God, was read at the conclusion before the singing of the Magnification and the veneration of his relics and icon.”

Concelebrating with Father Steven and Archpriest Stephen Kopestonsky were Priest David Gresham and Deacon Basil Ferguson, both students at STOTS.

“We take this opportunity today to prayerfully remember one of our saints who had walked on these grounds, and ask his intercession before Christ our Lord for our ongoing efforts toward pastoral formation, for the faculty, the seminarians, and all who continue to labor here,” Father Steven said at the conclusion of the celebration. “O Venerable Father Hierarch Nikolai, pray unto God for us!”



### **Support a Mission Priest (SAMP)**

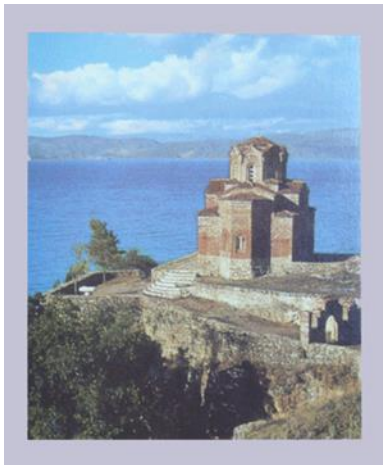
Support a Mission Priest (SAMP) is a development program of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center that offers monthly financial assistance to indigenous priests in extremely poor areas around the world. Through SAMP donations, the priest is able to apply himself more fully to the needs of the parish, and hierarchs are able to ordain more clergy to meet the growing needs of their flock.

**Who are SAMP Priests?** SAMP priests follow in the footsteps of the apostles, spreading the message of Christ’s love to areas of the world where people hunger for the peace and truth of the Orthodox Faith. Many priests are responsible for several communities, as the Church is growing faster than clergy can be trained. Since buses are very costly, travel among the communities is accomplished mainly by foot or bicycle. It is an arduous life, one dedicated to sharing the Good News of Christ with all people.

**Why SAMP?** SAMP makes it possible for us to help our brothers around the world who are spreading the Gospel. Your donation to the SAMP Program will provide the basic needs of the recipients and their families as they nurture the growing number of Orthodox communities in these poorer areas of the world. By connecting donors in North America with mission priests abroad, indigenous leaders know that other Orthodox Christians are beside them in their ministry. This solidarity is the essence of the SAMP Program.

**How does SAMP Work?** Individuals or groups in the United States and Canada pledge to give \$600.00 annually to support a priest, deacon, or catechist. Donations will be forwarded to one of the 18 countries OCMC is serving through the SAMP Program. Partial-year donations are gratefully appreciated as well. Those who choose to make a \$600 commitment may make donations on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or annual basis. Those who support a priest for a full year will receive a picture and biography of the priest which includes information about his calling to the Orthodox faith and the history of Orthodoxy in his country.

**Where is SAMP?** Currently, the SAMP program is supporting mission priests in Cameroon (7), Chad (3), Congo, Democratic Republic of the (45), Cote d'Ivoire (1), Ghana (17), India (9), Indonesia (7), Kenya (166), Madagascar (20), Nigeria (8), Philippines (1), South Africa (4), Tanzania (14), Uganda (27), Zimbabwe (2).



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

*In the sluggish carriage of the body my Soul journeys through this world of illusions, which are trying to prove their existence by means of their sluggishness and massiveness.*

O Light-bearing Lord, how dreadfully and drunkenly stuck to this sluggish carriage my soul has become! In her blindness she thinks that, if she were to fall from this carriage, she would be able to fall down lower still--as though she were not standing on the same ashes whether on the wood or beneath the wood!

In her fear and ignorance my soul has entirely surrendered herself to the body, merely in order for the body to convey her as slowly and sluggishly as possible on the road to a disastrous end. Her own lordship, her own reality--the only reality in this world--the soul has handed over to the body out of fear and ignorance. She has handed over a mirror to a blind man, and the blind man has shattered it into pieces.

Remember your beginning, O soul, when you were like a sunbeam and the body was like moonlight. Back then you were as piercing and translucent as sunlight, and your carriage was as swift as moonlight. At that time you used to know that essence was within you, and that your carriage was merely your shadow and something loaned to you. And you knew nothing of fear, for you had your sight and saw yourself borne aloft on the wings of power and immortality.

The sluggish carriage in which you are now riding, is what you yourself wanted of your own free will, according to your own fear and your own ignorance, and you yourself created it.

God did not wish to make you the way you are now, nor your body the way it is now. In order to rid yourself of some slight darkness, into which you were tossed by your desire, you plunged into denser and denser darkness, until you became altogether dark, became heavy, and made a garment for yourself--until you eventually surrendered all your dignity to your corpulent garment, just to rid yourself of fear.

You gave your essence to one who could not bear it, and thus you lost it in both ways; and you became a nonessential and frightful shadow like your body. For essence is a sacred object, and as soon as it is brought out into the bazaar to be bought and sold, it leaves both the buyer and the seller and drifts away from both to an equal extent.

Therefore even the great wise man of India has denied you essence, O soul--to you no less than to your bodily raiment. However, if God descends into you, and is born within you, you will gladden the saddened Hindu sage, who sits in lotus position and meditates, for you will have restored the lost essence. Truly, all essence lies in God, and outside God there is no essence, not even so much as a mustard seed.

Behold, I see within you, my soul, a tiny nook, like a candle-illuminated cave in a massive mountain overladen with darkness. The more deeply I peer into the light concealed within you, the more it seems to me to resemble your virginal beauty, your pristine beauty, my soul. Since my peering the dim light has been growing brighter, and more and more clearly one can distinguish in it the wondrous face of a virgin--like a sunbeam arrayed in moonlight. Here is your salvation, my frightened soul. Here is your life--everything else is a sepulchre. If only you would make this dim light burst into ablaze, and bring this blazing bonfire into my mind and into my heart.

Come to your senses, my soul, and fix your gaze on the little cave where the youthful virgin dwells. Lo, out of this cave deliverance will come to you. Within it even now you will find all your remaining strength, your unblemished beauty, and your unsold immortality. Outside the cave, outside my soul, where a virgin gives birth to God, everything is shadow and ash, including the sluggish carriage of the body.

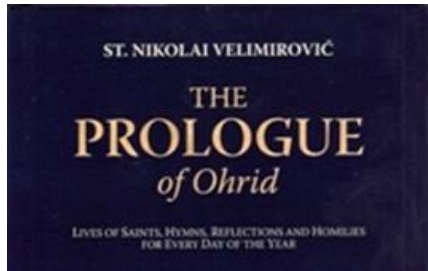
***Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XLIX:***

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

**The Saints**

The humble soul is blessed. The Lord loves her. The Mother of God is higher than all in humility, and therefore all races bless her on earth, while the heavenly powers serve her. And the Lord has given us this blessed Mother of His as a defender and helper.

+ *St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings III.14*



**1. The Holy Martyr Matrona**

An orphan, Matrona was a servant in the home of a Jew in Thessalonica. The wife of the Jew continually mocked Matrona for her faith in Christ. She tried to persuade her to deny Christ and attend the synagogue. But the meek Matrona went about her work conscientiously and said nothing to her mistress. In secret she prayed to Christ the Lord. On one occasion the Jewess discovered that Matrona was attending church unbeknownst to her. In anger, she asked her why she did not attend the synagogue rather than the church. To this Matrona replied: "Because God lives in the Christian churches, and He withdraws from the Jewish synagogues." Furious at this bold reply, the Jewess beat Matrona, locked her up in a dark room, and bound her hands. The next day as Matrona was kneeling in prayer and glorifying God, her ropes fell off by the power of God. On two more occasions she was locked up again. In the end she died of starvation. This evil Jewish woman then took the body of the holy maiden and hurled it to the ground from the roof of her home. Christians took the martyr's body and buried it with honor. Bishop Alexander, learning of the many miraculous works of this holy martyr, erected a church over her grave. The evil Jewess received her just punishment: when standing at the same spot from which she had hurled Matrona's body down, she slipped, fell to the pavement, and was smashed to death.

**2. The Venerable John the Clairvoyant**

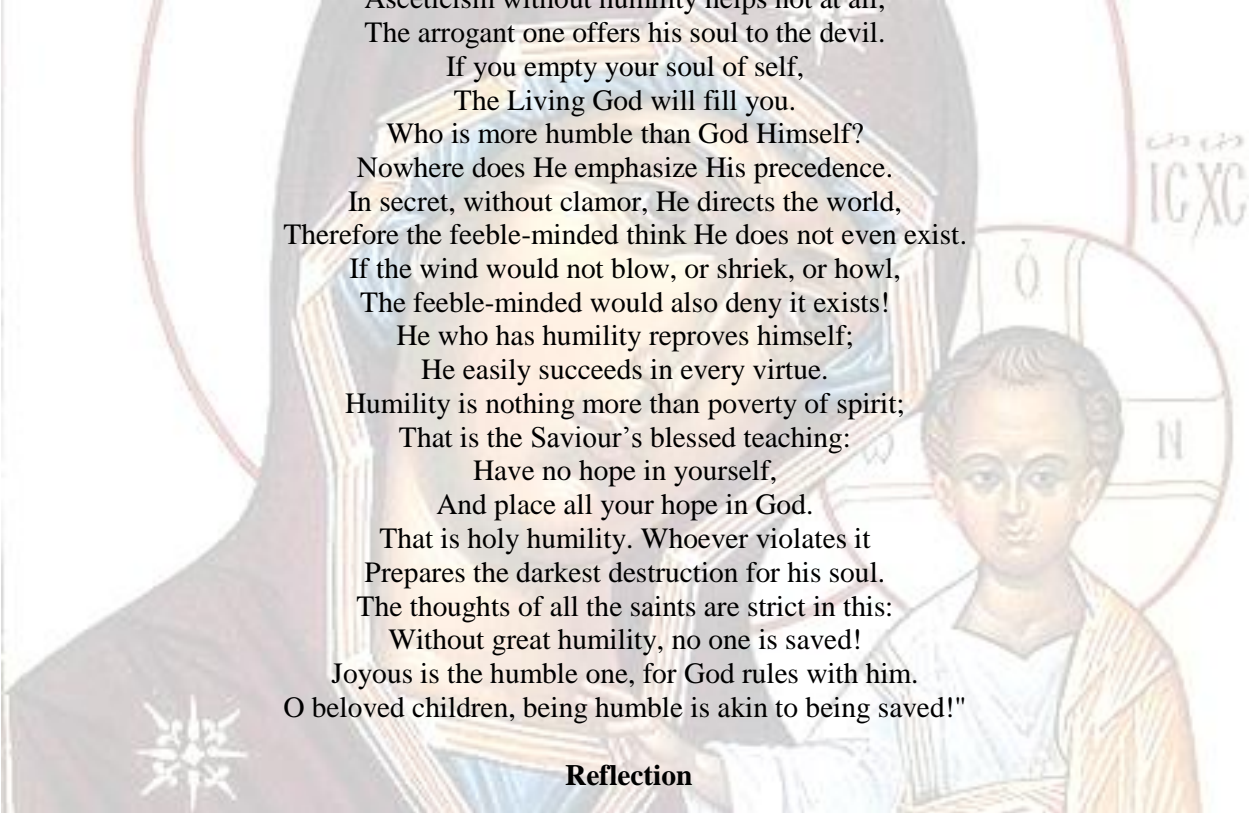
John was a carpenter until his twenty-fifth year and then, driven by an insatiable desire for constant prayer, he withdrew into the wilderness. There he lived until his death at age ninety. He was a corporeal man but lived as an incorporeal being. He discerned the heart of every person who came to him and knew his name, his desires, and his thoughts. He prophesied the outcome of his battles to Emperor Theodosius. He prophesied for generals, monastics, and for all who found it necessary to know what was hidden for them in the darkness of future days. A prince once begged John to receive his wife, who especially wanted to meet him. The saint refused to satisfy idle curiosity but appeared to the wife of the prince in a dream, showing her his appearance. When the woman described her vision to her husband, he confirmed that, indeed, this was the likeness of the saint. To every visitor, he taught humility as the basis of the virtues, always citing examples from life of how pride has brought many exalted men down to the dust and led them into serious sins. He endured many assaults of evil spirits. On one occasion, Satan appeared to him with a myriad of demons under the guise of shining angels. They pressured him to worship Satan, whom they represented as Christ. But John answered wisely, "I bow down and worship my King, Jesus Christ, every day. If that were He, He would not demand me to do so now, especially since I already worship Him." Following these words, the evil powers vanished like smoke. He reposed peacefully, kneeling in prayer, in his ninetieth year.

### **3. The Venerable Paphnutius**

Paphnutius was a disciple of St. Anthony the Great. By his sanctity of life, Paphnutius converted many sinners to the path of repentance, such as St. Thais, who is commemorated on October 8. Paphnutius resembled an incorporeal angel more than a man. He died near the end of the fourth century.

#### **Hymn of Praise**

*Venerable John the Clairvoyant on Humility*



John the Clairvoyant, teacher of humility,  
Spoke of humility with tears of joy:  
"O beloved children, right-believing children,  
The humbler you are, the more dear to God.  
Asceticism without humility helps not at all;  
The arrogant one offers his soul to the devil.  
If you empty your soul of self,  
The Living God will fill you.  
Who is more humble than God Himself?  
Nowhere does He emphasize His precedence.  
In secret, without clamor, He directs the world,  
Therefore the feeble-minded think He does not even exist.  
If the wind would not blow, or shriek, or howl,  
The feeble-minded would also deny it exists!  
He who has humility reproves himself;  
He easily succeeds in every virtue.  
Humility is nothing more than poverty of spirit;  
That is the Saviour's blessed teaching:  
Have no hope in yourself,  
And place all your hope in God.  
That is holy humility. Whoever violates it  
Prepares the darkest destruction for his soul.  
The thoughts of all the saints are strict in this:  
Without great humility, no one is saved!  
Joyous is the humble one, for God rules with him.  
O beloved children, being humble is akin to being saved!"

#### **Reflection**

"There is no cleanness in him who thinks evil," says St. Simeon the New Theologian; and he further adds: "How can there be a pure heart in one who soils it with impure thoughts as a mirror is darkened by dust?" Do you see, then, the inaccessible height at which Christianity stands above all other faiths and worldly sophistries? He who but thinks about evil, even though he does not commit any evil, is at fault before God and his own soul. For he offends God and loses his soul. To be a Christian, in the proper sense, means to invest enormous effort on cleansing evil thoughts from one's heart and mind. What kind of effort? There exists a vast amount of teaching about this--which in our days has become almost completely locked away, even from Christians--and an enormous wealth of actual experience on the part of holy men and women who justified that teaching. To cleanse oneself from wicked and impure thoughts, the root of all evil, was the goal of all the great ascetics, hermits and hesychasts (silenteries).

## **Contemplation**

Contemplate the Lord Jesus in death:

1. How He Who raised the dead hung on the Cross, a lifeless body;
2. How He died for our sake, so that we would have more abundant life, and more abundant truth about immortal life.

### **Homily: on Christians as kings and priests**

*"And hast made us unto our God kings and priests" (Revelation 5:10).*

The Lord Jesus wants to make all men like unto Himself. As the Son of God, He wants all men to become the adopted sons of God. As a King, He wants them to rule with Him. As a Priest, He desires that all should be fellow priests with Him; as Almighty, that all should share in His strength; as Eternal, that all should share in His immortality; as Holy, that all should share in His holiness; and as the Resurrected One, that all should be the children of the Resurrection. This the Lord desired, and that is why He descended to earth: to separate us from the animals, to elevate us above the life of the animals, and to give us dignity over His visible creation, a dignity which Adam had in Paradise before the Fall.

Because of this, His love for mankind and His plan for salvation for all people, the Lord was crucified on the Cross by the Jewish elders. And He reaps the thorns of ingratitude and misunderstanding countless times, even from us Christians today. We show ourselves to be ungrateful and unreasonable whenever we undermine and trample His commandments. By his sins, every sinner plait a new wreath of thorns and places it on His sacred head. When did He ever offend us, that we should do this to Him? When did He ever think evil about any one of us, that we should return Him evil? He lowered Himself into our foetid pit, where we have become accustomed to live with snakes and scorpions, and pulled us up to the heights, to light and purity in the Kingdom. He wants to make us kings and priests, but we drive away His saving hand and return to the pit with snakes and scorpions.

O brethren, this humiliation of Him and destruction of ourselves is enough and more than enough! Let us firmly grasp the hand of our Savior and follow Him. He desires good for us. He does good for us. For our good, He suffered. He is our One and Only Friend, Who does not change.

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



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

#### **Microcosm**

***We are a microcosm of the universe***

With this Lenten journey upon us it is good to contemplate the profound nature of our earthy struggle. This life is not about all the temporal things that often consume our energy and attention, but about those things that impact eternity. Humans are a microcosm of the whole universe because we have within ourselves the entire material world, and with it the noetic powers of the cosmos. Created as we were for immortality, it is our fallen nature that has separated us from that which God had intended. When we avail ourselves to the transformational healing that comes with repentance, we will see the Kingdom of God, which is within.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon



### **Daily Reflection** **The Least Among Us**



*"But while everyone was marveling at all the things he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 'Let these words sink into your*

*ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men.' But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side and said to them, 'Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.'"* (Lk 9: 43-48)

Jesus tries to point the disciples to His coming cross; that He is "about to be delivered into the hands of men." But the disciples quickly turn their attention to a question more interesting to them, - a question about "them," not about Him: Which of "them" is the greatest? The disciples were thus self-preoccupied when Christ was about to become the "least" among everyone; when He was abandoned by the "greatest" of the apostles. This state of affairs doesn't seem to have changed much throughout Church history, as our preoccupation with our own status and authority scandalously continues, despite the light of His cross.

As we all prepare to accompany Him on His journey to Golgotha, let me let Him re-focus my attention on Him. Let me open my eyes and "see" what He is showing me, as He becomes entirely vulnerable, entirely "delivered into the hands of men." Let me "receive the Child" Who was laid in a manger in Bethlehem, and years later laid in a tomb, as His grief-stricken Mother watched. He does it all for me; He becomes the "least" among us, that I may have true life in Him, liberated from the deadening anxieties of self-preoccupation

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

#### **"On Lent" by St. Francis**

We ought to fast, and to abstain from all vice, and from all that will lead us into sin, as well as from extravagance and superfluity. We should often visit the churches, and venerate and reverence all ecclesiastics on account of their office, and because they distribute the Sacred Body and Blood of Christ, which they offer in sacrifice, receive themselves, and administer to others. And let everyone know and hold for certain that we cannot be saved except through the sacred Words and the Precious Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which priests preach, announce, and distribute, and of which they are the sole ministers.

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

He who is living the life in Christ has gone beyond the righteousness of both the Law and nature.

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

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## 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		

## *Make Disciples of All Nations 2016*

*Children's Home of Hope, Shen Vlash, Albania*

*Makarios Children's Home, Nyeri, Kenya*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ;

This summer I have accepted the opportunity to be part of two short term mission trips through the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC). On the first trip I will be returning to the Children's Home of Hope in Shen Vlash and the Protagonist School in Tirana, Albania. The second trip will be a new experience going to the Makarios Children's Home in Nyeri, central Kenya. We will be working with the children at both locations. Team members will share life experiences and fellowship, and provide a visible witness of the Holy Orthodox Christian Faith.

1. **SHEN VLASH, ALBANIA:** 6/7/2016 to 6/20/2016—Help administer youth programs at the Children's Home of Hope in Shen Vlash and the Protagonist School in Tirana. Incorporate religious educations, Bible studies, discussion, music, sports, crafts and activities while teaching English. Work with OCMC missionaries to Albania.
2. **NYERI, KENYA:** 8/10/2016 to 8/22/2016—Lead a summer camp program at the Makarios Children's Home in Nyeri, central Kenya, which is part of a holistic outreach of the Church in Kenya to orphans and abandoned children. Share the love of Christ at an Orthodox orphanage which cares for over 150 children. Teach them about the Orthodox faith through lessons, crafts, music and sports, and assist with the daily programs at the Home. Work with the dedicated staff of the Children's Home and local clergy to teach the faith to the children whose ages range from infants to teens.

My previous trips to Albania have been a true blessing in my life. I am grateful to be able share time with the children there again. Kenya will be a new experience and I trust very different than Albania.

There is an associated cost, not just financially but spiritually as well. That is where you come in. First and foremost, I covet your prayers for me and all who will be traveling to Albania and Kenya and for those who await our arrival. Secondly, your financial support is also needed. The cost that required is **\$6,500** and due by June 1, 2016. May I count on your prayer and / or financial support? If you are able to contribute, there are 3 options to do so. The following link: <http://bit.ly/1OZHxtR> will take you directly to OCMC contribution page. Click on the arrow next to my name to select which trip you would like to provide support to. If it is more comfortable for you, please fill out the below form and return it to me at 132 Lenape Avenue, Mays Landing, NJ 08330 or to OCMC, 220 Mason Manatee Way, St. Augustine, Florida 32086. Your financial donations are tax deductible when made payable to **Orthodox Christian Mission Center**. Any and all money raised over the necessary **\$6,500** will be donated to Children's Home of Hope and the Makarios Children's Home.

I sincerely hope you will be a part of this awesome opportunity, for I know that you too will be blessed. Thank you and God bless.

In Christ,  
Sub-Deacon Vlashi (Charles Gallagher)

✂

Yes, I will support Charles Gallagher on this mission trip to Albania in the following ways: *Please check the appropriate box.*

- ☐ I will pray for you as you prepare, travel and minister.  
☐ Enclosed is my financial, one time, donation support in the amount of \$\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_ Albania \_\_\_\_\_ Kenya

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_