

*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 6, 2016**

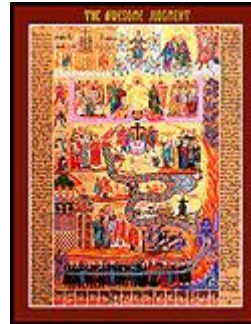
Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

**Tone 7**

Epistle: I Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

*Sunday of Meatfare of the Last Judgment: 2nd Sunday Before Lent*

**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**



*Sunday of Meatfare of  
the Last Judgment*

**Glory  
Forever!**

*When You, O God, shall come to earth with glory, all things shall tremble  
and the river of fire shall flow before Your judgment seat; the books  
shall be opened and the hidden things disclosed! Then deliver me  
from the unquenchable fire, and make me worthy to stand at Your  
right hand, righteous Judge!*

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

**Sunday of the Meatfare — Tone 7. Sunday of the Last Judgment.** The 42 Martyrs of Ammoria in Phrygia, including: Constantine, Aetitus, Theophilus, Theodore, Melissenus, Callistus, Basoës and others (ca. 845). The Uncovering of the Precious Cross and the Precious Nails by Empress St. Helen (Elena) in Jerusalem (326). Monk Martyrs Conon and his son, Conon, of Iconium (270-275). Ven. Arcadius of Cyprus (4th c.).

## **Prayer Request**

### **In Memory of:**

**Svetlana Kozak**, offered by Nadia Kozak.

Our deepest sympathies are expressed to **Archpriest David and Matushka Mariam Vernak**, on the falling asleep of Father David's mother, + **Dorothy**.

### *Liturgical Schedule:*

#### **Sunday, March 6<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am: No Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
9:45 am: General Confession  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

#### **Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **Sunday, March 13<sup>th</sup>**

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

#### **Wednesday, March 16<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Presanctified  
Liturgy/Potluck

#### **Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

#### **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: 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

### *Bulletin Sponsors:*

*Nadia Kozak*

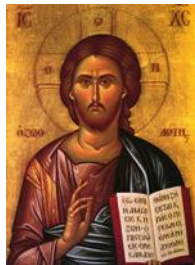
### *Readings:*



**Epistle:** I Corinthians 8:8-13; 9:1-2

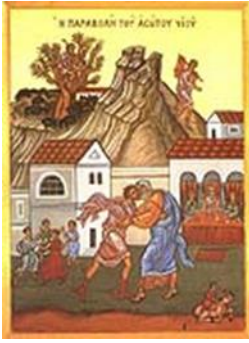
**Brethren,** food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. For if any one sees you, a man of knowledge, at table in an idol's temple, might he not be encouraged, if his conscience is weak, to eat food offered to idols? And so by your knowledge this weak man is destroyed, the brother for whom Christ died. Thus, sinning against your brethren and wounding their conscience when it is weak, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food is a cause of my brother's falling, I will never eat meat, lest I cause my brother to fall.

Am I not free? Am I not an apostle? Have I not seen Jesus our Lord? Are not you my workmanship in the Lord? If to others I am not an apostle, at least I am to you; for you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.



**Gospel:** Matthew 25:31-46

**The Lord said,** "When the Son of man comes in his glory and all the holy angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.' Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.' Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?' Then he will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."



### ***Sunday of Meatfare of the Last Judgment: 2nd Sunday before Lent***

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.



**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.

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### ***Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News***

***The next Parish Council meeting will be 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.***

***The Sisterhood of the Protection of the Mother of God will be sponsoring two upcoming luncheons. On Sunday, March 6th, a Meatfare Luncheon will be held. This is the last day meat is allowed before the beginning of Great Lent. On Sunday March 13th, a Cheese fare Luncheon will be held. Various dairy dishes including blini will be served. The cost of both luncheons will be \$5.00 per person.***

#### ***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***

#### **DDB Appreciation Dinner**

On Sunday evening, 28 February 2016, **Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church in Whitestone NY** hosted the annual appreciation dinner for **Distinguished Diocesan Benefactors (DDB)** of the New York City Deanery. Archbishop Michael offered his sincere gratitude to the DDBs and presented an overview of the many fruits brought forth through their sacrificial financial support. Over \$650,000 was contributed during the first five years (2011-2015) of the program! Last year a record-breaking total of \$160,000 was received to support vital ministries throughout the diocese.

### **United States Military Academy at West Point: Archpastoral Visit**

On Sunday, 28 February 2016, Archbishop Michael visited Archpriest Joseph Frawley (civilian chaplain), Matushka Irene, and the faithful cadets and faculty at historic **West Point Military Academy**. Gathering at **Saint Martin of Tours Chapel** every week, the “parish” at West Point is a loving and warm respite from the rigorous demands of military academy life. Ministry to those assigned at the Academy has been continually offered by Orthodox priests since the mid-1960 when parishioners from Paramus NJ, under the leadership of Archpriest John Nehrebecki, began making visits to celebrate the Divine Liturgy on Sundays.

The United States Military Academy's mission is to educate, train and inspire the Corps of Cadets so each graduate is a commissioned leader of character committed to the values of Duty, Honor, Country and prepared for a career of professional excellence and service to the nation as an officer in the United States Army.



### ***Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News*** **Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop Leo pledge mutual cooperation** KUOPIO, FINLAND [OCA]

Prior to his return to the US after a week-long visit to the Orthodox Church in Finland, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon signed an agreement with His Eminence, Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland pledging mutual cooperation in five important areas of Church life.

Metropolitan Tikhon led a delegation from the Orthodox Church in America on his visit to the Finnish Church during the last week of February 2016.

Additional information and a photo gallery highlighting the visit will be posted shortly. The text of the agreement reads as follows.

#### **Cooperation Agreement**

#### **The Orthodox Church in America and the Orthodox Church of Finland March 1, 2016 Kuopio, Finland**

In concluding the visit of a delegation led by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon of the Orthodox Church in America to Archbishop Leo of Karelia and All Finland and the Orthodox Church of Finland, and having rediscovered our common historical roots and the shared present realities of the situations in which our churches minister we resolve to continue and deepen our relationship by cooperating in the five following areas:

**1. Seminary exchange programs:** our contemporary western and increasingly secular societies lead us to seek exchanges of faculty and students through whom we can share our resources and experiences in the areas of pastoral training and applied theology. This will help advance the mission of the Orthodox Church in the lands in which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ has planted us as his witnesses.

**2. Dialogue on ethical issues:** common reflection and dialogue in the field of Orthodox Christian ethics would be useful to address the challenges posed by the societies in which our two Churches serve. Topics that are now relevant include an understanding of the family, sexuality, respect of life both in its early and late phases, and questions of bioethics. The parishes, local communities and countries we serve are not



isolated from these new developments. We need fresh perspectives stemming from genuine Orthodox thinking to both engage with and respond to these questions.

**3. Pastoral Care and work with Nordic indigenous peoples:** we affirm the need to strengthen the co-operation of our Northern areas – Finnish Lapland and the Oulu Diocese in Finland, with the native peoples of Alaska and Canada. We share a common concern for the indigenous people in the North and together we commit to finding new and creative ways to both minister to them, and for them to share their experiences. Among the areas of mutual concern is climate change. This has its most significant effects in the Arctic, where people are the least responsible for the changes.

It is also good to remember, that the most significant monasteries of Old Russia emerged in the Northern region. The severe nature of the North contributed to the ascetic life of many saints such as Herman, Juvenaly, Innocent and Jacob of Alaska, Sergius and Herman of Valaam, Arseny of Konevets, Alexander of Svir, Trifon of Pechenga, Herman, Zosima and Savvati of Solovetsk, Cyril of Beloozero and many others. Powered by their holy prayers we need to promote the co-operation of our Northern areas.

**4. Youth exchanges:** our churches have a long history of working together on youth leadership training, education and exchange. Through greater connections between our youth we can ensure a long and fruitful relationship between our Churches.

**5. Clergy and monastic exchanges:** our clergy and monastics find themselves ministering in similar secular societies that present common challenges as well as fresh opportunities to present the Gospel as we have received it in the Orthodox Church. Learning from each other through clergy and monastic exchanges would strengthen the mission and witness of both our Churches.

To take these initiatives forward and oversee their development we appoint a joint working group representing our two Churches. The initial members of this working group are Metropolitan Elia of Oulu and Archpriest Rauno Pietarinen (Orthodox Church of Finland), and Archbishop Melchisedek of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania and Archpriest John A. Jillions (Orthodox Church in America).

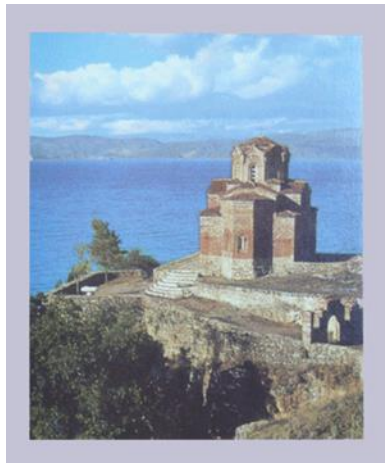
+TIKHON  
Archbishop of Washington  
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

+LEO  
Archbishop of Karelia  
and All Finland



### **Mission Sunday, March 13th, is Almost Here!**

In just a few more days our great Lenten journey begins! As this beautiful season approaches, please remember that Mission Sunday is also March 13th. What better way to approach our March toward Pascha than to pray for and support the Church's mission to share the salvation of Christ with the world! On March 13th, please say a prayer for Orthodox Missions and Orthodox Missionaries serving around the world, consider volunteering to serve as part of an Orthodox Mission Team, and support this eternal work of the Church with a gift to the Mission Center. For more information or to get involved, visit <http://www.ocmc.org>, e-mail [missions@ocmc.org](mailto:missions@ocmc.org), or call 1-877-463-6784.



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

*Come closer to me, closer still, O majestic Spirit of Truth. Draw near, and enter into me, more deeply than light and air enter me. Indeed, I can spend an entire night without light, but without You I cannot even lie down on my bed. I can take ten steps without air, but without You I cannot even take one.*

*Take up your abode in my soul more deeply than my thought can follow. The entire universe is insufficient to encourage my soul to persevere in virginity, if You do not encourage her.*

*The world incessantly asks for the hand of my soul, in order to be wedded to her. The world offers my soul all its treasures, if only she will abandon her waiting for You. The world whitewashes all its sepulchres, just to entice my soul. The world sets all its ashes out in the sun and pours flattery and pomposity all over it, just to seduce my soul.*

*Manifest all Your splendor, O Holy Spirit, so that my soul may recognize whose bride she is.*

*Come closer to me, closer still, O Power of the Holy Trinity. Enter into my consciousness more deeply than thoughts and emblems of the world can. In the same way as a wise mother, when she conceives, prepares and embellishes a cradle for her child, so prepare and embellish my mind for that which will be begotten from You, O Beauty and Purity.*

*Many evil thoughts lurk like serpents around the cradle of Your Son. And many wicked desires emerge from my heart and seek the cradle of Your Prince, to poison Him with their arrows.*

*Defend the cradle of my mind, and teach my soul how to give birth and care for an infant.*

*Shroud in deep darkness the journey of all malevolent visitors coming to see my newborn son. And raise aloft a most radiant star over the way of the Wise Men from the East<sup>2</sup> men who are truly wise, because they are coming to visit my most precious child with three gifts -- faith, hope, and love.<sup>3</sup>*

*Come closer to me, closer still, O majestic Son of God. Descend deeper into my heart than any emotion, or desire, or passion of the world can descend into it. Protect my heart from the countless merchants, from the numerous buyers and sellers, who are forever swarming in legions around my young and inexperienced heart. And teach my heart not to be crazy about the motley illusions of people and things.*

*Take up Your abode in the bottom of my heart, as the master of a house does in his own home, my beloved Son, and be for me a merciless judge and a sagacious counselor.*

*Once purity of soul and sagacity of mind occupy my heart, truly in vain will evil spirits dance attendance in order to step into it.*

*And my heart will be filled with an ineffable heavenly peace, and will glorify God in chorus with the cherubim and the seraphim. And enriched, it will return to the soul and the mind what it borrowed, for as their equal it will recompense them in equal measure.*

*And my heart will be filled with sweet love for its Lord, and with compassion for and good will toward suffering souls in the world and in Hades.*

*Come closer to me, still closer, my majestic Lord*

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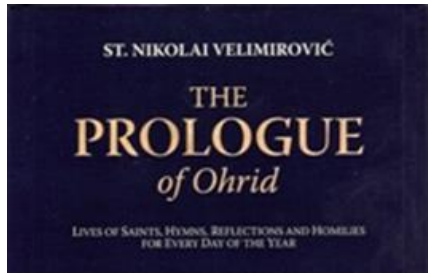
***Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XLVI:***

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

The acquisition of holiness is not the exclusive business of monks, as certain people think. People with families are also called to holiness, as are those in all kinds of professions, who live in the world, since the commandment about perfection and holiness is given not only to monks, but to all people.

*Hieromartyr Onuphry Gagalu*





### **1. The Holy Forty-Two Martyrs from Ammoria**

They were all commanders of the Byzantine Emperor Theophilus. When the Emperor Theophilus lost the battle against the Saracens at the city of Ammoria, the Saracens captured the city, enslaved many Christians and among them these commanders. The remaining Christians were either killed or sold into slavery. The commanders were thrown into prison where they remained for seven years. Many times the Muslim leaders came to them. They counseled and advised the commanders to embrace the Islamic Faith, but the commanders did not want to hear about it. When the Saracens spoke to the commanders, saying, "Mohammed is the true prophet and not Christ," the commanders asked them, "If there were two men debating about a field and the one said, 'This field is mine,' and the other, 'It is not, it is mine,' and nearby, one of them had many witnesses saying it is his field and the other had no witnesses, but only himself--what would you say, 'Whose field is it?'" The Saracens answered, "Indeed, to him who had many witnesses!" "You have judged correctly," the commanders answered. That is the way it is with Christ and Mohammed. Christ has many witnesses: the Prophets of old, from Moses to John the Forerunner, whom you also recognize and who witness to and about Him [Christ], but Mohammed witnesses only to himself that he is a prophet and does not have even one witness. The Saracens were ashamed and again they tried to defend their faith in this manner: "Our faith is better than the Christian Faith as proved by this: God gave us the victory over you and gave us the best land in the world and a kingdom much greater than Christianity." To that the commanders replied, "If it were so, then the idolatry of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Hellenes, Romans, and the fire-worship of the Persians would be the true faith, for at one time, all of these people conquered the others and ruled over them. It is evident that your victory, power and wealth do not prove the truth of your faith. We know that God, at times, gives victory to Christians and, at other times, allows torture and suffering so as to correct them and to bring them to repentance and purification of their sins." After seven years, they were beheaded in the year 845 A.D. Their bodies were then thrown into the Euphrates River, but they floated to the other side of the shore where they were gathered and honorably buried by Christians.

### **2. The Blessed Job**

Job was born in Moscow in the year 1635 A.D. Church singing and liturgical services drew him to the Church. He became the spiritual father to Emperor Peter the Great, but, because of intrigue, he withdrew into the Slovecki Monastery, where he underwent a difficult life of asceticism. In the year 1720 A.D., in his eighty-fifth year, he died in the Lord. Before his death he cried out: "Blessed is the God of our Fathers! And, as He is thus, I am not afraid, but, with joy, I leave this world."

### **3. The Holy Martyrs Conon the Father and Conon the Son**

When the father was already an old man, the son was a youngster of seventeen years. During the reign of Dometian, they were sawed in half for their faith in Christ and were glorified and honoured in the Church on earth and in heaven. They honorably suffered in the year 275 A.D.

#### **Hymn of Praise** *Saint Conon*

The emperor counsels the youthful Conon:  
"From old age your father is deranged.  
You, young man, do not hearken to his words,  
But deny and forget Christ.



Offer sacrifice to the Roman gods,  
And then remain with me in honor."  
The youthful Conon courageously replied:  
"It is written, O Emperor-torturer,  
That the son does what from the father, he sees,  
And of the father's deed, he is not ashamed.  
My father, the True Faith, teaches me,  
The True Faith and the knowledge of God,  
That I know the One God,  
My Creator, Merciful;  
That I know Christ the Savior,  
From death, my Redeemer.  
Whatever you do with the body of my father,  
That also do with mine.  
But over the soul, you have no authority;  
Our souls are our possessions  
And the possessions of the Son of God."

### **Reflection**

For as long as you are on earth, consider yourself a guest in the Household of Christ. If you are at the table, it is He who treats you. If you breathe air, it is His air you breathe. If you bathe, it is in His water you are bathing. If you are traveling, it is over His land that you are traveling. If you are amassing goods, it is His goods you are amassing. If you are squandering, it is His goods that you are squandering. If you are powerful, it is by His permission that you are strong. If you are in the company of men, you and the others are His guests. If you are out in nature, you are in His garden. If you are alone, He is present. If you set out or turn anywhere, He sees you. If you do anything, He remembers it. He is the most considerate Householder by Whom you were ever hosted. Be careful then toward Him. In a good household, the guest is required to behave. These are all simple words, but they convey to you a great truth. All the saints knew this truth, and they governed their lives by it. That is why the Eternal Householder rewarded them with eternal life in heaven and glory on earth.

### **Contemplation**

To contemplate the Mystery of Communion as a life-giving cure for the soul and body:

1. As a cure that heals and cleanses the soul from sinful maladies, and restores it to life;
2. As a cure that heals and cleanses the body from avarice and vice, and restores it to life;
3. As a cure that enlivens man and makes him a healthy member of the immortal Body of Christ. But if a man will remain decayed to the end, eventually he will be cut off and cast aside.

### **Homily: About the heir and the slave**

*"I mean that as long as the heir is not of age, he is no different from the slave" (Galatians 4:1).*

As long as the heir apparent is in the cradle, what would make him better than the son of a slave? Neither is his body better, nor are his thoughts more elevated, nor are his wishes or desires more pure. Such is the son of the king; so is the son of the slave; so is the son of the beggar. For a few years the son of the king does not differ from the son of the slave. However, when the son of the king reaches maturity and with full consciousness of his dignity, he receives authority over the kingdom; and when the son of a slave

reaches full maturity and with full consciousness, he succumbs to the yoke of slavery. Then the enormous difference is seen. Then it is clearly manifest that the heir and the slave are not equal. The slave has to serve and the king has to rule.

The apostle means to say that it is the same with Christians and with those who are not Christians. The non-Christian is a slave to nature, but the Christian rules over nature. The pre-Christian era of the history of mankind shows us how man was the slave to the elements of nature, the slave of the flesh, the slave of idols, and creatures. The Christian era of the history of mankind shows us how man was master and owner, a nobleman of a royal race and heir to all.

Even those who knew about the One True God, as the Israelites knew, were not like children toward God nor heirs toward their Father, but were slaves and servants toward their Lord and Judge. *But when the fullness of time had come* (Galatians 4:4), the Only-Begotten Son of God came to earth. He made it possible *so that we might receive the adoption of sons* (Galatians 4:5), and by the Spirit of God to address God: *Abba, Father* (Galatians 4:6).

Brethren, why did Christ come to earth? He did so to make us better than slaves and to give us the right of sonship and the duty of the master. The right of sonship is such that in the name Christ we can call God, "Father." The duty of the master to rule over ourselves, over our flesh, over our thoughts, over our desires, and over all nature around us.

O Only-Begotten Son of God, by Your mercy and sacrifice, we have received the adoption of sons. Oh, help us that with Your aid we may persevere to the end in purity and in truth.

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



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

#### **Monasteries**

*Centers for spiritual healing and intercessory prayer*

Monastics are an integral part of the Church and should not be seen as independent of the Church Universal. Monks are bound by the same Gospel as other Christians and need to avail themselves to the missionary and pastoral needs of the Church, as needed. Although a primary role of monasticism is to be found in worship and contemplative prayer, monks also have a long history as missionaries.

Many of the great monasteries of Russia, as an example, were founded in remote places but became centers of pilgrimage, attracting countless people. Whole cities often formed around monasteries, precisely because the monks had reached out with the Gospel and worked among the people. Where there was a need, monks responded with charity and evangelical witness.

In these difficult times where people are suffering economic hardship, loss of jobs and foreclosure on homes, monks can bring a different perspective that can give hope to those who've lost all hope. Monasteries become centers of spiritual healing and empowerment. People who've been struggling to find meaning in their lives can walk away with a new vision, gained through the interior work of the monks who've availed themselves as therapists for those who are hurting.

The strength of Orthodox monasticism is not to be found in the sameness of every monastery, for each monastic community has its own expression, often quite different from other monasteries. In Greece and Russia, there are monastic communities that run printing presses, care for the elderly and infirm, run Orthodox bookstores in cities, live as hermits, run large retreat facilities, teach in schools, and even, on occasion, serve parishes.

Monasticism is not something that is mastered through academic pursuits, but is rather acquired over many years of struggle, through obedience, long nights of prayer, ascetical practice, and communal life. A




monastic, who is true to his vocation, will often see himself as just a beginner, even though he’s been a monk for forty years, for he realized how far he is from the perfection that comes with total surrender to Christ.

Many would wish to see monasticism in a romantic way, with monks quietly and silently living out hidden lives, yet there are monks who work with people as spiritual fathers, preachers, teachers, participating in an active way in service to the world. Each monk, and each monastery is called apart for the service of God and His Church, as God wishes. Thus, it is dangerous ground when we judge a monastery or a monk from our own fanciful image of what we think they should be like, for even on the Holy Mountain of Athos, there are many varieties of monastic expression, none being better than the other, and all based on the prompting of the Holy Spirit, as the monk attempts to live out the evangelical life of the Gospels.

Although the Orthodox Church does not have religious orders as the Latin Church does, there are in Orthodoxy different styles of monastic life, both individually and in community. Generally speaking some monasteries may be more liturgically oriented, while others may be more ascetic, while still others may have a certain mystical tradition, and others be more inclined to spiritual guidance and openness to the world for the purpose of care and counseling. These various styles of monasticism, which take both a personal as well as a corporate form, are not formally predetermined or officially legislated. They are the result of organic development under the living grace of God.

Yet all monastics share the common vows of poverty, chastity, stability, and obedience, ever following the words of Jesus which are the cornerstone for this life, “be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.”


With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon



Coffee with  
Sr. Vassa

**Daily Reflection**  
**Jesus Bullied**

*“Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him.*



*They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.” (Mt 27: 27-31)*

Right after Pilate makes his final decision, “handing over” Jesus to be crucified (Mt 27: 26), the Roman soldiers do not immediately proceed to the task at hand. No, they take “time out” for this horrible, sadistic, and even ritualized scene of... bullying. Tragically, this scene plays out every day in our school courtyards. This “need” to take time out and hurt another, to mock another, is also on display in the internet, in the pointless yet very hurtful comments certain people take the time to make.

So this, too, was absorbed and carried by my Lord, in His life-giving journey of the Cross. He let Himself be undressed, “stripped,” then dressed and undressed again, by bullies. And He walks through it all; He descends into our darkness, even unto our death and our hell, in order to bring it out, in His resurrected Body. He says, Look, you have shamed Me, you have stripped Me, you have bullied Me, and yet I have come back to you in light and peace. Now stop doing it to yourselves. I have nailed your frustrations,



your anger, your self-loathing, and your bullying to the cross. Let all of us, the bullies and the bullied, take pause, and hear Him today, saying, "Come to me, all you that are weary and are burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." (Mt 11: 28-29)

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

#### **"God's Masterpiece" by St. Basil**

God doesn't judge the beauty of His work by how it charms the eyes. He doesn't have the same idea of beauty that we do. What He considers beautiful is that which perfectly demonstrates skillful artistry and tends to be useful toward its end. So then, God judged the design of His own works and approved each one of them. They fulfilled their ends according to His creative purpose. A hand, an eye, or any place of a statue lying separate from the rest wouldn't look beautiful to anyone. But if each one is restored to its own place in beautiful proportion, although almost unperceived until now, they would strike even the most uncultured. Before uniting the parts of a work, artists distinguish between and recognize the beauty of each piece. they think of the object that have in hand. And Scripture depicts the Supreme Artist in the same way. It praises each one of His works. Soon, however, when His work is complete, He will give well-deserved praise to the whole.

*From Hudson, CD, Sharrer, JA, and Vanker, L. Day by Day with the Early Church Fathers. Hendrickson: MA, 1999. Pg. 61.*

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

Whoever possesses spiritual knowledge must always possess as well a rich store of virtue gained through his conduct.

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

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Forget your good deeds as soon as possible... Do not record your good deeds, for if you record them, they will soon fade. But if you forget them, they will be written in eternity.

**+St. Nicholas of Serbia**

The name of our Lord Jesus Christ, descending into the depths of the heart, will subdue the serpent holding sway over the pastures of the heart, and will save our soul and bring it to life.

Thus, abide constantly with the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so that the heart swallows the Lord and the Lord the heart, and the two become one.

But this work is not done in one or two days; it needs many years and a long time.

For great and prolonged labor is needed to cast out the foe so that Christ dwells in us.

**+ St. John Chrysostom**

Therefore, recognize the evil that hides itself within you as a deadly poison, and you will hasten to be delivered from it.

And the more you recognize it, the more zealously you will seek deliverance.

The evil hidden in the human heart in conceit, self-will, envy, wrath, avarice, impurity, and every abominable thing.

**+Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk**

## 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	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 Presanctified Liturgy/Potluck	24	25 <b>Annunciation</b> 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		