

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 & the Diocese of NY/NJ

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Temporary Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Sub-Deacon Edward

HYMNS OF THE DAY

[Troparion \(Resurrection\) in Tone 6](#)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

[Troparion \(Ascension\) in Tone 4](#)

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God, granting joy to Thy Disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured, that Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world!

[Troparion \(Fathers\) in Tone 8](#)

Thou art most glorious, O Christ our God, Who hast established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth. Through them Thou hast guided us to the true Faith. O greatly compassionate One, glory to Thee!

[Kontakion \(Fathers\) in Tone 8](#)

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one Faith for the Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology, it defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

[Kontakion \(Ascension\) in Tone 6](#)

When Thou hadst fulfilled the dispensation for our sake and united earth to heaven, Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God, not being parted from those who love Thee, but remaining with them and crying: "I am with you, and there is no one against you!"

Panikhida

Christopher Dawson, requested by his grandparents Sub-Deacon Edward and Holly Dawson..

SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

MAY 20, 2018

7TH SUNDAY OF PASCHA: HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL. AFTERFEAST OF ASCENSION.

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Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

On the seventh Sunday of Pascha, we commemorate the holy God-bearing Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council.

The Commemoration of the First Ecumenical Council has been celebrated by the Church of Christ from ancient times. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise, “I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Mt. 16:18). Although the Church of Christ on earth will pass through difficult struggles with the Enemy of salvation, it will emerge victorious. The holy martyrs bore witness to the truth of the Savior’s words, enduring suffering and death for confessing Christ, but the persecutor’s sword is shattered by the Cross of Christ.

Persecution of Christians ceased during the fourth century, but heresies arose within the Church itself. One of the most pernicious of these heresies was Arianism. Arius, a priest of Alexandria, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In denying the divine nature of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Savior is not consubstantial with the Father, but is only a created being.

A local Council, convened with Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria presiding, condemned the false teachings of Arius. However, Arius would not submit to the authority of the Church. He wrote to many bishops, denouncing the decrees of the local Council. He spread his false teaching throughout the East, receiving support from certain Eastern bishops.

Investigating these dissensions, the holy emperor Constantine (May 21) consulted Bishop Hosius of Cordova (Aug. 27), who assured him that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ’s Church, and so he decided to convene an Ecumenical Council. In the year 325, 318 bishops representing Christian Churches from various lands gathered together at Nicea.

Among the assembled bishops were many confessors who had suffered during the persecutions, and who bore the marks of torture upon their bodies. Also participating in the Council were several great luminaries of the Church: Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (December 6 and May 9), Saint Spyridon, Bishop of Tremithos (December 12), and others venerated by the Church as holy Fathers.

With Patriarch Alexander of Alexandria came his deacon, Athanasius [who later became Patriarch of Alexandria (May 2 and January 18)]. He is called “the Great,” for he was a zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. In the Sixth Ode of the Canon for today’s Feast, he is referred to as “the thirteenth Apostle.”

The emperor Constantine presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, responding to the welcome by Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, he said, “God has helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but more distressful for me than any blood spilled in battle is for a soldier, is the internal strife in the Church of God, for it is more ruinous.”

Arius, with seventeen bishops among his supporters, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. In his speech, the holy deacon Athanasius conclusively refuted the blasphemous opinions of Arius. The heresiarch Arius is depicted in iconography sitting on Satan’s knees, or in the mouth of the Beast of the Deep (Rev. 13).

The Fathers of the Council declined to accept a Symbol of Faith (Creed) proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol of Faith. Saint Constantine asked the Council to insert into the text of the Symbol of Faith the word “consubstantial,” which he had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The Fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion.

In the Nicene Creed, the holy Fathers set forth and confirmed the Apostolic teachings about Christ’s divine nature. The heresy of Arius was exposed and repudiated as an error of haughty reason. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council also issued Twelve Canons on questions of churchly administration and discipline. Also decided was the date for the celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha should not be celebrated by Christians on the same day with the Jewish Passover, but on the first Sunday after the first full moon of the vernal equinox (which occurred on March 22 in 325).

The First Ecumenical Council is also commemorated on May 29.



Martyrs Thallelaeus, Alexander and Asterius at Aegae in Cilicia

The Martyrs Thallelaeus, Alexander and Asterius lived during the reign of Numerian (283-284). The prefect of the city of Aegae sent soldiers to seek out Christians. They brought to him Thallelaeus, an eighteen-year-old blond-haired youth. To the prefect’s questions Saint Thallelaeus replied, “I am a Christian, a native of Lebanon. My father, Beruchius, was a military commander, and my mother was named Romylia. My brother is a

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subdeacon. I, however, am studying medicine under the physician Macarius. During a former persecution against Christians in Lebanon, I was brought before the prefect Tiberius, and barely escaped execution. But now that I stand before this court, do with me as you will. I wish to die for Christ my Savior and my God, and hope to endure all torments with His help.”

The enraged prefect ordered the two torturers Alexander and Asterius to bore through the knees of the martyr, pass a rope through the bone, and suspend him head downwards. But the executioners, by God’s design, bored into a block of wood, which they hung up in place of the martyr. When the prefect saw that they had deceived him, he then ordered that Alexander and Asterius be whipped. They also confessed themselves Christians and glorified God. The prefect immediately gave orders to cut off their heads. Twice he attempted to carry out the execution, and to bore through the saint’s knees, but the grace of God prevented him. Then he commanded that Saint Thallelaeus be drowned.

The returning servants reported to the prefect that they had carried out the execution, but just as they finished their report, Saint Thallelaeus appeared in white raiment. For a long time everyone was numbed with terror, but finally the prefect said, “Behold, this sorcerer has bewitched even the sea.”

Then one of his advisers, the magician Urbician, told the prefect to have the martyr thrown to the wild beasts. But neither the vicious bear, not the hungry lion and lioness, would touch the saint, all meekly lay down at his feet. Seeing this happen, the people began to shout, “Great is the God of the Christians. O God of Thallelaeus, have mercy on us!”

The crowd seized Urbician and threw him to the beasts, which did not hesitate to tear the magician apart. Finally, the prefect gave orders to kill the holy martyr with a sword. They led Christ’s martyr to the place of execution, called Aegea, where he prayed to God and bent his neck beneath the sword. This occurred in the year 284.

The relics of the holy martyr Thallelaeus are in the church of Saint Agathonicus of Constantinople and have performed many miracles. Saint Thallelaeus treated the sick without payment. For this reason, the Church calls him an Unmercenary Physician. He is invoked in prayers for the sick in the Mystery of Holy Unction, and during the Blessing of Waters.

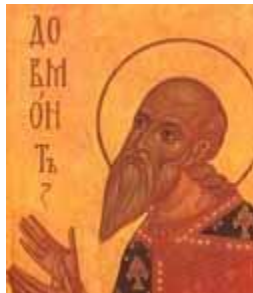


Uncovering of the relics of St Alexis the Metropolitan of Moscow and Wonderworker of All Russia

The Uncovering of the Relics of Saint Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow and All Rus. Before his blessed repose in 1378 Saint Alexis, Metropolitan of Moscow, left instructions to place his body in the Chudov (Miracle of the Archangel Michael) monastery in the Kremlin. He designated a burial place outside the altar of the church, since in his humility he did not want to be buried in the temple. But the pious Great Prince Demetrius Ivanovich Donskoy (1363-1389), greatly esteeming the holy hierarch, gave orders to place the body of Metropolitan Alexis inside the church, near the altar.

On May 20, 1431 the stairway of the temple where the saint rested crumbled from old age. During the construction of a new temple, the incorrupt relics of Saint Alexis were uncovered. At a Council of Russian hierarchs the commemoration of Metropolitan Alexis was established on the day of his repose, February 12, and on the day of the uncovering of his relics, May 20. He is also commemorated on October 5.

In 1485, the relics of the saint were transferred into a church dedicated to him. At present, they rest at the Patriarchal Theophany cathedral in Moscow. The Life of Saint Alexis is found under February 12.



Blessed Dovmont (Timothy) the Prince of Pskov

The Holy Prince Dovmont (Domant) of Pskov, prince of Nalshinaisk (Nalshensk), was a native of Lithuania, and at first he was a pagan. In 1265, escaping from internecine strife among the Lithuanian princes, he was forced to flee Lithuania and he arrived in Pskov with 300 families. The land of Pskov became his second country.

Here, in the expression of the Chronicler, “the grace of God was breathed upon him,” when he accepted Holy Baptism with the name Timothy and received the great gifts of the Lord. Within a year’s time, the people of Pskov chose him as their prince for his bravery and his true Christian virtues. For thirty-three years he ruled the city and was the only prince in the history of Pskov who died after living for so long in peace and in harmony with the Pskov veche (city-council).

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He was just and strict in pursuing justice for others, he gave alms generously, took in the poor and strangers, he observed the church feasts, he was a patron of the churches and monasteries and he founded a monastery in honor of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos.

After his marriage to the daughter of Great Prince Demetrius, the grandson of Saint Alexander Nevsky (November 23 and August 30), he became related to the Russian princely line. Prince Dovmont, like Saint Alexander Nevsky, was a glorious defender of the Russian Land. The prime importance of Prince Dovmont as a military leader and activist for the realm is that for many years he defended the northwest boundaries of the Russian realm from hostile incursions.

In 1268, Prince Dovmont was one of the heroes of the historic battle before Rakovor, where Russian forces won the victory over the Danish and German armies. Before each battle, Saint Dovmont went into church, set down his sword at the steps of the holy altar and received a blessing from the priest, who girded on his sword for him.

Saint Dovmont made the Pskov fortress impregnable. In memory of the glorious defender of the city, a stone wall, built by the holy prince beside the Krom at the end of the thirteenth century, was named the Dovmontov, and the territory enclosed by the wall, to the present day is called Dovmontov town.

The saintly defender's "House of the Holy Trinity" was another pious matter. In gratitude to the Lord in Whose Name he had gained victory unharmed, holy Prince Dovmont built a church beside the Pskov Kremlin in honor of the feastday on which he won the victory. Other inhabitants of Pskov also built churches there in fulfillment of vows. The territory of present day Dovmontov town was completely covered with churches (the first temple in honor of Saint Dovmont-Timothy was built in Dovmontov town in 1574).

The brave warrior-prince won his final victory on March 5, 1299 on the banks of the River Velika, where he defeated a large German army with a small company. Meanwhile, the Livonian Knights unexpectedly invaded the suburbs of Pskov, they seized the Snetnogor and Mirozh monasteries and burned them, cruelly murdering the inhabitants. They killed the founder of the Snetnogor monastery, Saint Joasaph, and seventeen monks, and also Saint Basil, igumen of Murozh (March 4). Holy Prince Dovmont, not waiting to raise a large army, went to engage the enemy with his retainers and he expelled the sacrilegious defilers from the boundaries of the Russian Land.

Several months later, holy Prince Dovmont-Timothy died and was buried in the Trinity cathedral of Pskov. The Chronicler relates that "there was then great sadness in Pleskov for the men and woman and small children on account of their good lord, the noble Prince Timothy." The people of Pskov remembered how the holy prince had cared for them during peaceful times, and when the city was threatened by danger, how he led them into battle saying, "Good men of Pskov! Whoever is old among you is my father, whoever is young is my brother. Stand fast for the Holy Trinity!"

Soon after the Prince's death he began to be venerated as a holy intercessor before God, guarding the land from enemies and misfortune. The holy prince defended Pskov more than once after his death. In the year 1480, when more than a hundred thousand Germans besieged the city, he appeared in a dream to a certain citizen and said, "Take my grave cover, carry it three times around the city with a cross, and do not be afraid."

The people of Pskov fulfilled his instructions and the Germans departed from the city. A service to the holy prince was composed after this miraculous deliverance from enemies. Along with the relics of the saint, his battle sword was preserved (now the sword is in a Pskov museum). Thereafter, the sword was handed to the Pskov princes upon their elevation to the princely throne.

Holy Prince Dovmont-Timothy and his wife, the future Schemanun Martha (November 8), were depicted upon the wonderworking Murozh Icon of the Mother of God (September 24): "You have bestowed a blessing on the all-pure image of Your icon, O Mother of God, by portraying the likeness of our steadfast intercessor Prince Dovmont and his pious spouse" (Service to the holy Prince Dovmont-Timothy).

When the Mother of God appeared to the Elder Dorotheus during a siege of Pskov by the Poles on August 27, 1581, holy Prince Dovmont-Timothy was among the saints accompanying the heavenly Protectress of Pskov (the related account about the Pskov Protection Icon of the Mother of God is found under October 1).

The relics of holy Prince Dovmont-Timothy rest in the Pskov cathedral of the Life-Creating Trinity.

The holy Princes Vsevolod and Dovmont aided Russian armies more than once in defense of the country's western borders. Then came the hour when they were sent by the Leader of the Heavenly Hosts to rise up in defense of the eastern frontiers.

In the year 1640, the great national movement to the east, "the meeting of the sun," resulted in the Russian explorers arriving at the mouth of the Amur River and the Pacific Ocean. Rus bordered pagan China on these frontiers. The bulwark of Orthodoxy became the Russian fortress of Albazin, famous for the wonderworking Albazin Icon of the Mother of God (March 9) and the heroic "defense of Albazin" (1685-1686).

In the summer of 1679, during the Apostles' Fast, Gabriel Florov and a company of cossacks set out from Albazin to explore the Zea River valley. For three years the cossacks did patrol duty on the Zea, making the rounds

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of the surrounding settlements. They brought the Tungus settlers under Russian rule, and they established winter quarters and a stockade.

Once, cossack riders encountered two men on white horses, clad in armor and armed with bows and swords. These were Saints Vsevolod and Dovmont. Speaking with the cossacks and learning that they were from Albazin, the holy warrior-princes predicted the approach of Chinese armies upon the Amur soon afterwards. They said the battle would be difficult, but predicted the ultimate triumph of Russian arms. “The Chinese will come again, and enter into a great battle, and we shall aid the Russian people in these struggles. The Chinese will not trouble the city.”

Several times during 1684-1686 the Chinese horde advanced towards Albazin, but did not take the city. By the miraculous help of the Albazin Icon of the Mother of God and the holy Princes Vsevolod and Dovmont of Pskov, the enemy was rendered powerless against the Orthodox fortress.

“The Account of the Miracles of Holy Princes Vsevolod and Dovmont” was written by Gabriel Florov at Yakutsk on October 23, 1689. The fealty of these saints has not ceased. New generations arise to change the face of the earth, but the Russian warriors Saints Vsevolod and Dovmont stand steadfast in sacred patrol of their country.

Martyr Asclas of Egypt

The Holy Martyr Asclas was a Christian, born in the city of Great Hermopolis (Middle Egypt). The saint suffered under Diocletian (284-305). Brought before the governor Arrian, Saint Asclas boldly confessed his faith and refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. The saint predicted to Arrian that there would come a time when he himself would be forced to call on Jesus Christ as the one true God.

By Arrian’s order, they began to torture the saint cruelly, they suspended him and raked him with iron instruments, so that pieces of his flesh fell to the ground. Saint Asclas quietly endured the torments. When one of those present said, “Look, he is already unconscious and near to death,” the holy martyr answered, “I have not lost consciousness, and unceasingly do I glorify my God and Savior.”

The governor Arrian gave orders to resume the martyr’s tortures in the city of Antinoe, on the opposite bank of the Nile, where he himself soon intended to go. But the martyr prayed to God, beseeching Him to hold back Arrian’s boat until he confessed the Lord Jesus Christ before all the people.

The boat suddenly halted in the middle of the river, and not even oars could move it from the spot. Arrian ascribed the miracle to sorcery. In drawing up the sentence of the saint, the governor happened to say something about the one true God, and then the boat sailed on to shore. Going into the city, Arrian again gave orders to suspend Saint Asclas and scorch him with fire.

Finally, the saint was sentenced to be drowned in the river. The martyr said to the Christians accompanying him, “Strive, brethren, to receive the rewards of the Lord God. My children, come to the north part of the city in three days and find my body. Bury it with the stone that will be tied to it.”

The martyrdom of Saint Asclas occurred around the year 287, not far from the city of Antinoe. On the third day, Christians found the body of the martyr and buried it with the stone.

Venerable Stephen of Piperi, Serbia

No information available at this time.



Glorification of the Venerable Zabulon and Sosana (Susan), the father & mother of St Nino Enlightener of Georgia

According to Holy Tradition, Saint Nino and Great-martyr George were blood relatives. At the same time as Saint George’s martyrdom, a certain nobleman, the servant of God Zabulon, arrived in Rome from Cappadocia. Zabulon began to serve in the emperor’s army, and before long he was widely recognized as a courageous cavalryman and a fine soldier.

During a battle with the Franks the Lord granted victory to Zabulon—he captured the Frankish king and his suite and delivered them to the Roman emperor. The emperor sentenced the captives to death, but before they were executed they confessed their desire to be baptized into the Christian Faith. Zabulon relayed this to the emperor, and Zabulon himself became their godfather. Then he pleaded with the emperor to have mercy on his godchildren, and the emperor set them free.

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Nearly all the Franks were converted to Christianity as a result of Zabulon's struggles on behalf of the Faith. A 9th-century Georgian hymnographer wrote, "Her father Zabulon converted Gaul with his sword, and blessed Nino converted Georgia with the Life-giving Cross."

Sometime later, Saint Zabulon journeyed to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage. While he was there he distributed all his possessions to the poor and began to serve Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem. There he met Sosana (Susan), the sister of the patriarch. Shortly thereafter they were joined in marriage by the patriarch.

The newly wedded couple moved to Cappadocia, where they had a baby girl whom they named Nino. While raising Nino, Saint Sosana served God and the needy with great dedication.

When Nino reached the age of twelve, her parents sold all their possessions and moved back to Jerusalem. With the blessing of Patriarch Juvenal, Zabulon departed for the wilderness to begin a life of asceticism. The place where he labored is known only to God. With the patriarch's blessing, Sosana ministered to the poor and infirm. On December 10, 1996, the Georgian Orthodox Church declared Zabulon and Sosana, the parents of Saint Nino, confessors of the Christian Faith. Living during a time when pagan religions were still widely practiced and Christians were often persecuted, they converted many people and then abandoned worldly things to follow God alone.



St. Lydia of Philippi

While Saint Paul was at Troas, he beheld a certain Macedonian in a dream (Acts 16:9), who entreated him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." He heeded this voice as if it were the voice of God, and he decided to journey to Macedonia without delay, accompanied by Saints Timothy, Silas, and Luke.

They disembarked at Neapolis and made their way to Philippi. On the outskirts of Philippi, on the banks of a river, there was a Jewish place of prayer. It was the Sabbath and, to the women who had gathered there, the Apostle of the Gentiles preached the Word of God in Europe for the first time.

The God-fearing women listened to the words of this unknown Jew carefully and with reverence. The one who was most enthusiastic was St. Lydia, a proselyte and a seller of purple from Thyatira. As she listened, the Lord opened her heart to heed the words that were being spoken by Saint Paul. When she heard him talk about the Messiah, she accepted the truth of what he said and she believed in Christ.

Saint Lydia and her entire household were baptized in the waters of the river. Thus, she became the first woman of Macedonia to be enrolled as a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven. Her heart was filled with gratitude toward those who had opened the eyes of her soul, and so she asked them to accept the hospitality of her house. "If you have judged me to be a believer in the Lord, come to my house and remain there." And she insisted that they should come (Acts 16:15).

The Orthodox Church honors Saint Lydia as an Equal of the Apostles, and at the holy place of her baptism on the banks of the Zygaktos River, a baptistery has been built, which is similar to the early Christian basilicas of Philippi.

Saint Lydia is commemorated on March 23 (Slavic usage) and on May 20 (Greek usage). She was glorified by the Church of Constantinople on May 23, 1972.

GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

Prokeimenon, Tone 4 (*Song of the Fathers*):

Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers / and praised and glorified is

Thy name forever! (*Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3*)

vs. For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us! (*Song of the three Holy Children, v. 4*)

Epistle Reading

The reading from the Acts (20:16-18, 28-36) of the Holy Apostles

In those days, For Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he would not have to spend time in Asia; for he was hurrying to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the Day of Pentecost. From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for

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the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them: "You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears. So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified. I have coveted no one's silver or gold or apparel. Yes, you yourselves know that these hands have provided for my necessities, and for those who were with me. I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'" And when he had said these things, he knelt down and prayed with them all..

Alleluia, Tone 1:

The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. (*Psalm 49:1*)
vs. Gather to Me My venerable ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice! (*Psalm 49:5*)

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from John (17:1-13)

At that time, Jesus lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him power over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work which you gave me to do; and now, Father, you glorify me in your own presence with the glory which I had with you before the world was made. "I have manifested your name to the men whom you gave me out of the world; yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you; for I have given them the words which you gave me, and they have received them and know in truth that I came from you; and they have believed that you did send me. I am praying for them; I am not praying for the world but for those whom you have given me, for they are mine; all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one. While I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me; I have guarded them, and none of them is lost but the son of perdition, that the scripture might be fulfilled. But now I am coming to you; and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves."



Daily Inspirations by Abbott Tryphon

The Way of Christ

*The more we seek Him the more His grace
abounds*



Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk said, "Do not think about the sins of your brother but about what in him is better than in yourself." These words are powerful, and can be life changing if we take them as our own. Finding fault only in ourselves is always grace imparting, for it is the way of Christ. As well, being quick to ask others for their forgiveness is always better than waiting for them to ask for yours.

The way of Christ seems difficult, but the more we seek Him out the more His grace abounds, and we can say with the Apostle Paul, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me (Gal 2:20)."

A clear sign of love for God is when our heartfelt gladness in God shines forth for all to see. The love of God cannot exist without joy, and the sweetness of our love for God extends to all those around us. This is true because the sweetness of our love cannot be felt without joy. This joy which is both spiritual and heavenly, and is a foretaste of the sweetness of eternal life.

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Daily Reflection
Faith vs. Fear

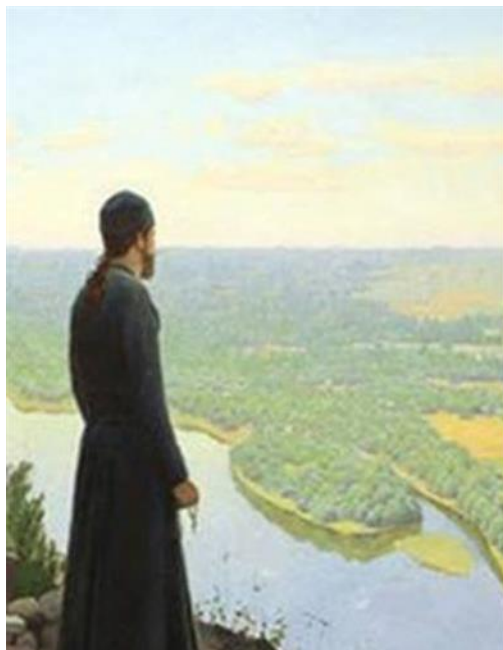
“The Lord is my light and my saviour; whom then shall I fear? The Lord is the defender of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?” (Ps 26/27: 1, Septuagint-translation)



The opposite of fear is not courage, or self-confidence, but faith. When some form of fear or anxiety rears its ugly head in my heart, like the fear of financial insecurity, of human opinion, of abandonment and being alone, of “failure” or “success,” – it’s a tap on the shoulder, telling me that I’ve slipped away from God-reliance; I’ve lost sight of His loving presence in my life and my world.

So I need to hurry back into His hands, in some heartfelt prayer, letting His grace liberate me from the crippling effects of fear. Because God’s grace, – His “energies” of mercy, love, and Self-offering com-*passion* with us, – liberate me from the bonds of self-doubt that come from self-reliance, assuring me that I’ll be OK, and that I’m already OK, in God’s eyes, so I can humbly do the next right thing. If, on the other hand, I choose to engage with my fears on my own, in burdensome self-reliance, attempting to carry the weight of my whole world on my own shoulders, (which, as it turns out, is impossible), I find myself tied down in inactivity, which breeds more fear.

Today let me choose faith over fear, and hand myself over to God, as I move forward on my cross-carrying journey. “Come to me,” the Lord says to me, and all of us, today, “all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”



Christ leads us out of separation from God, away from a “self” defined by our will and passions, into a new life that is the work of His hands, the fruit of His will, the created glory of His eternal, unending and glorious life.

Bishop Irenei Steenberg
The Beginnings of a Life of Prayer p.54

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PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Nest council meeting will be on Sunday, May 20th.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Sunday, May 20th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General Confession
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K – Grade 3
Pannikhida: Christopher Dawson

Saturday, May 26th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, May 27th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General Confession
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K – Grade 3

Saturday, June 2nd

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, June 3rd

9:30 am: No Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General Confession
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K – Grade 3

Saturday, June 9th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, June 10th

9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General Confession
10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom
After Communion: Sunday School pre-K – Grade 3

Request & Bulletin Sponsor: 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 will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles can be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

Private Confessions: **Can be heard a half hour before any service.** See Father Matthew for other times.

General Confession: Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Receiving Holy Communion: Holy Communion is offered to those baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the reception of the Sacrament by prayer and fasting. Blessed Bread is available for all our visitors at the very end of the Divine Liturgy.

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

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

The Grey Book Step Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.
