

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.

Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

OCA – Diocese of New York-New Jersey

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson

Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



Sunday, November 20, 2016

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21

Tone 5(9th of Luke)

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

22nd Sunday After Pentecost

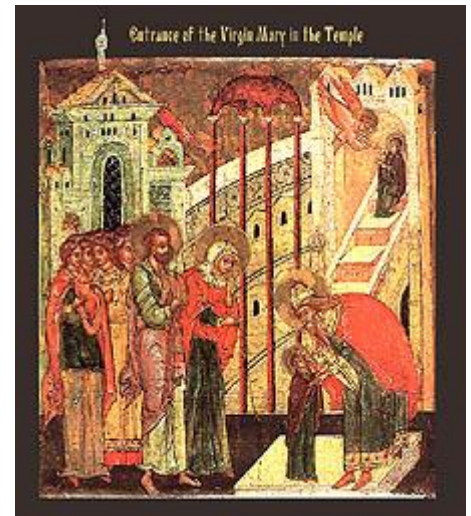
Forefeast of the Entry Into the Temple of the Most-holy Theotokos. Ven. Gregory Decapolites (816). St. Proclus, Archbishop of Constantinople (446-447). Ven. Diodorus, Abbot of Yuregorsk (1633). Martyr Dasius of Dorostorum (3rd c.). Martyrs Eustace, Thespesius, and Anatolius of Nicaea (312). Hieromartyrs Nerses and Joseph; John, Saverius, Isaac, and Hypatius, Bishops of Persia; Martyrs Azades the Eunuch, Savonius, Thecla, Anna, and many other men and women who suffered in Persia (343).

Troparion – Tone 4

Today Anna bequeaths joy to all instead of sorrow by bringing forth her fruit, the only ever-Virgin. / In fulfillment of her vow, / today with joy she brings to the temple of the Lord / the true temple and pure Mother of God the Word.

Kontakion – Tone 4

Today Anna bequeaths joy to all instead of sorrow by bringing forth her fruit, the only ever-Virgin. / In fulfillment of her vow, / today with joy she brings to the temple of the Lord / the true temple and pure Mother of God the Word.



Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

Mateo Nushi (Home of Hope), on his birthday, offered by Sub-Deacon Vlashi.
Alex Guedes, on his birthday, offered by his family.

In Memory of:

Peter Taran, offered by his family.

Panikhida Service:

Peter Taran, offered by his family.

Through the Grace of God – Orthodox Christianity

St Basil The Great: Helping The Poor

“When someone steals another’s clothes, we call them a thief. Should we not give the same name to one who could clothe the naked and does not? The bread in your cupboard belongs to the hungry; the coat unused in your closet belongs to the one who needs it; the shoes rotting in your closet belong to the one who has no shoes; the money which you hoard up belongs to the poor.”

Liturgical Schedule

Sunday, November 20th
9:30 am: No Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy
Panikhida – Peter Taran

Saturday, November 26th
6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, November 27th
9:30 am: Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, November 28th
Nativity Fast Begins

December 3rd
6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, December 4th
9:30 am: No Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
9:45 am: General
Confession
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Saturday, December 10th
6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, November 11th
9:30 am: No Sunday School
9:40 am: Hours
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

Bulletin Sponsors:

***Sub-Deacon Vlashi,
Family of Peter Taran,
Family & Friends of the
Guedes Family***

Readings:

The Prokeimenon in the 5th Tone:

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.
(Psalm 11:8)
vs. Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!
(Psalm 11:2)

Epistle: Galatians 6:11-18

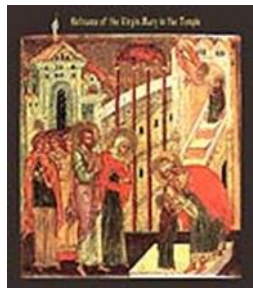
Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and not only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

Alleluia in the 5th Tone:

I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation. *(Psalm 88:2)*
vs. For Thou hast said: “Mercy will be established forever; My truth will be prepared in the heavens.” *(Psalm 88:3)*

Gospel: Luke 12:16-21 (9th Sunday of Luke)

The Lord said this parable: “The land of a rich man brought forth plentifully; and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns, and build larger ones; and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.” As he said these things, he cried out: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”



Forefeast of the Entry into the Temple of the Most Holy Theotokos

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple has only one day of prefeast. The hymns for today praise St Anna for bringing her daughter, the living temple of God, to the Temple in Jerusalem. The three Old Testament readings at Great Vespers refer to the Temple. The first lesson (Exodus 40:1-5, 9-10, 16, 34-35) refers to the arrangement of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation (a portable sanctuary which was carried by the Israelites in their wanderings). The second lesson (III Kings/I Kings 7:51; 8:1, 3-7, 9-11) describes the dedication of Solomon’s Temple. The third lesson (Ezekiel 43:27-44:4) speaks of the gate of the sanctuary which faces east. God enters through this gate, which is shut so that no one else can enter by it.



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, for a donation of \$10. Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles 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.

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.



Orthodox Church of the Mother of God: Parish News

There will be no church school today Sunday, Nov. 20th, the 9:30 class will not be meeting.

The Christmas Open House Walking Tour has been cancelled. So, the Luminaria fund raiser has been cancelled.



NY/NJ Diocese News

Pentecost Pilgrimage to the Holy Land with Archbishop Michael: June 4-17, 2017

The Department of Evangelization of the Orthodox Church in America, together with Archbishop Michael (Dahulich) and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey announce a first annual Pilgrimage -- this year to the Holy Land, beginning in Nazareth and ending in Jerusalem, with an optional additional trip to Petra in Jordan, **June 4-17, 2017**. The pilgrimage begins on the Monday of Pentecost, in Israel. The itinerary includes the following cities and major sites: Capernaum, Nazareth, Bethlehem, Mar Sabba, Jerusalem (Church of the Holy Sepulchre, Garden of Gethsemane, Mount Zion), and Petra (in Jordan).

“It is my joy to be able to lead this inaugural pilgrimage to the Holy Land. As an Archbishop and as a Professor of New Testament at St Tikhon’s, I cannot overstate the value of the living connection between the Scriptures and the Holy Sites where our Lord took flesh, grew up, was tempted; where he taught, where he healed; where he was crucified and where he arose from the dead. We will walk on those paths, we will stand in those hallowed sites, we will sit in those holy places, we will pray where he prayed, as we trace the Lord’s ministry in the Holy Land,” said His Eminence, Archbishop Michael.

“My experience in the Holy Land,” added Priest John Parker, Chair of the Department of Evangelization, “indeed brought the Scriptures to life. For my whole life I had read about the Sea of Galilee, but to sail on it puts it in perspective. How many times did I play the role of the inn-keeper in the Nativity Play as a child? But touching the very cave where Jesus was born brings his Holy Nativity into a whole new focus. And indescribable is the opportunity to kneel at the very tomb of our Lord Jesus Christ (still empty!) and to pray for my family, my parish, and the salvation of the world. These are some of the gifts of a pilgrimage of this nature.”

In addition to the usual sites one would expect on such a pilgrimage, we will also have the opportunity to visit significant archeological sites, not to mention Petra, an ancient city that is literally carved into rock cliffs.

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

The Pilgrimage will offer a remarkable opportunity for us to get back to our roots, and to make life-changing connections between the words of our Faith, and the Living Word, Jesus Christ.

Invite a friend! Come and see!

Space is limited and offered on a first-come, first-served basis.

The pilgrimage is organized by
Diocesan Archbishop Ilya Gotlinsky.

For more information
and/or to reserve your spot,
please visit:

<http://orthodoxtours.com/itinerary-june-4-17-2017-pilgrimage-holy-land-eminence-michael-dahulich/>

Lansing NY: A Half-Marathon Run in Support of the Parish –

Holy Apostles Church in Lansing NY is a young and special place that has an unprecedented opportunity to purchase a building to turn into an Orthodox Church. This cannot be done without assistance from the friends and family of the parish.

Over the last few months, at the encouragement of the faithful of Holy Apostles Church, Fr James Worthington, the parish priest, has been in training for the Philadelphia Half Marathon, which is to be held on Saturday, November 19th. He is looking for sponsors to donate to the Building Fund for each mile that he runs.

The fundraiser works like this. Since a half marathon is 13.1 miles, Fr James will throw in the first 1/10th of a mile as a goodwill gesture! The parish is seeking a pledge of any dollar amount for each mile that is completed. So, if you pledge \$1 per mile, you would donate \$13. If you are generous and able to donate \$25 per mile, that would be \$325. Every pledge will be designated solely for the Holy Apostles Orthodox Church Building Fund. Fr James runs, you help to spread the Gospel in the Finger Lakes region.

Fr James and the faithful of Holy Apostles Church in Lansing thank you so very much for considering this opportunity. As Bill, one of the parishioners has said, “Every time we receive a donation, or someone visits our young parish, my heart swells with gratitude and love.”

Donations can be made through the dedicated GoFundMe page or by mailing them to the parish at PO Box 333, Lansing, NY 14882. More information can be found at the parish website at this link: <http://holyapostleslansing.org/runwithamission.html>

There are 4 donation levels with varying rewards.

\$42 - Apostle Matthew

\$4 per mile: Personal letter of thanks from Fr James & the Parishioners

\$130 - Apostle Mark

\$10 per mile: Personal letter of thanks from Fr James & the Parishioners Photo of the Church

\$195 - Apostle Luke

\$15 per mile: Personal letter of thanks from Fr James & the Parishioners Photo of the Church Holy Apostles T-Shirt

\$325 - Apostle John

\$25 per mile: Personal letter of thanks from Fr James & the Parishioners Photo of the Church Holy Apostles T-Shirt Mounted icon of the Twelve Apostles
From the Office of the Archbishop

Congratulations to:

Archpriest James Parsells, awarded the Synodal Gramota, by His Eminence, Archbishop Michael, on behalf of the Holy Synod of Bishops, in celebration of the 40th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Holy Priesthood,

during the 101st Anniversary Celebration of the parish, at Saint John the Baptist Church, Manville NJ, on Sunday, October 30, 2016.

Protodeacon Paul Sokol, awarded the kamilavka, by Archbishop Michael, during the 101st Anniversary Celebration of the parish, at Saint John the Baptist Church, Manville NJ, on Sunday, October 30, 2016.



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

Metropolitan Tikhon, OCA delegation to visit Church of Russia

At the invitation of His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and a delegation from the Orthodox Church in America will join the Primate and representatives of the Local Orthodox Churches at services and related festivities in Moscow marking His Holiness' 70th birthday.

Metropolitan Tikhon and the OCA delegation will arrive in Moscow on Friday, November 18, 2016. Members of the delegation include His Grace, Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa; Archimandrite Gerasim; Archpriest Nazari Polataiko; Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak and Roman Ostash.

On the day of their arrival, Metropolitan Tikhon and the OCA delegation will meet with Patriarch Kirill at his residence in Moscow's Danilov Monastery. Later they will celebrate a Service of Intercession before the relics of Saint Tikhon the Confessor in the Donskoy Monastery.

On Saturday, November 19, Metropolitan Tikhon will preside at the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the OCA's Representation Church of the Great Martyr Catherine, after which a 40-day Memorial will be celebrated for the repose of Archimandrite Alexander [Pihach], the recently departed Dean of Saint Catherine's and OCA Representative to the Moscow Patriarchate. Among those expected to attend the Divine Liturgy is Canadian Ambassador to the Russian Federation, John Kur. On Saturday evening, Metropolitan Tikhon and the OCA delegation will join the permanent members of the Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Primate of the Local Orthodox Churches and their delegations for a welcoming dinner.

Moscow's historic Christ the Savior Cathedral will be the site of the Patriarchal Divine Liturgy on Sunday, November 20, after which a reception honoring Patriarch Kirill will be held in the cathedral refectory. The following day, a formal program marking the Patriarch's birthday will be held in the cathedral hall, where a concert in Patriarch Kirill's honor will be held on Tuesday, November 22. Earlier that day, Metropolitan Tikhon will meet with US Ambassador to the Russian Federation John Teft at the US Embassy.

Metropolitan Tikhon and the delegation will return to the US on Wednesday, November 23.

Patriarch Kirill was born on November 20, 1946, in Leningrad—today's Saint Petersburg—where his father served as a priest. He graduated from the Leningrad Theological Seminary and Academy in 1970. In April 1969, he embraced monasticism and was ordained to the diaconate. In June of that same year, he was ordained to the priesthood. In March 1976, he was consecrated Bishop of Vyborg and Auxiliary of the Leningrad Diocese, while in 1984 he was elected Bishop of Smolensk. In 1991 he was elevated to the rank of Metropolitan.

Patriarch Kirill has held numerous administrative positions within the Russian Orthodox Church. He served as Rector of the Leningrad Theological Seminary and Academy from 1974 to 1984. For many years he has been a leading figure in the Church's ecumenical activity. In 1989, he was appointed Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations and became a permanent member of the Russian Church's Holy Synod. On December 6, 2008, after the repose of His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy II, Metropolitan Kirill was named Patriarchal Locum Tenens. He was elected Patriarch of Moscow by the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church on January 27, 2009, and enthroned on February 1.

SVS Press releases collection by Patriarch Kirill of Moscow

As part of this weekend's Jubilee Celebration marking the 70th birthday of His Holiness, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow, Saint Vladimir's Seminary Press [SVS Press] released a collection of his writings, titled Patriarch Kirill in His Own Words, on Friday, November 18, 2016. The new volume is laid out in an engaging "daily reading" format, and includes short excerpts from Patriarch Kirill's homilies, media interviews, articles, and formal speeches, among other published talks and writings.

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

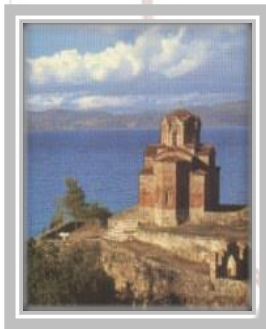
The book is Volume Seven of the Press’s Profile Series, edited by Archpriest Chad Hatfield, CEO of Saint Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary, who will be present in Russia for the celebration. [See related story regarding participation by His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and a delegation from the Orthodox Church in America.] SVS Press’s English-language edition of the work was released simultaneously with a Russian-language version published by Saints Cyril and Methodius Theological Institute for Post-Graduate Studies, as a joint publication venture.

The introduction to the book, written by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk and Chairman of the Moscow Patriarchate’s Department for External Church Relations, states in part, “This book allows the living voice of Patriarch Kirill to be heard in English for all American readers who want to listen... the Patriarch [conveys] the eternal gospel truths, the divine truth that remains unchanged, regardless of the external circumstances of the world.”

Within the body of his new work, Patriarch Kirill explains his vision for the Orthodox Church’s mission and public life, including an explication of the relationship between Church and state, and his thoughts on the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Orthodox Church in America. He also offers counsel on internal spiritual warfare—that is, how to battle sinful passions and acquire Christian virtues amidst the temptations and distractions of 21st century life.

“I know this book will be an inspiring surprise to North American readers, as Patriarch Kirill’s words were to me, when I first encountered them,” said Father Chad. “It’s my joy to share his vision with the English-speaking world.”

Patriarch Kirill in His Own Words may be ordered on-line from SVS Press.



Prayers by the Laker, St. Velimirovich, LXXXIII:

People carry on foolish conversations as soon as they move away from Your presence, my Wisdom. Those without faith speak about works, and those without works speak about faith.

Each disparages what he does not have, and what he does have he proclaims throughout the marketplace.

While You, O Lord, are filling my home with Your life-creating breath, I always forget to ask which is more important -- faith or works? As soon as I offend You and feel abandoned by You, I angrily enter into people's discussions, and support one side or the other.

For without You I am like a weather vane on a chimney that rattles in the direction of the wind. When the wind of faith rises in my soul, I stand with those who have abandoned works and championed faith; when the wind of activity rises in my soul, I support the side of those who have abandoned faith and championed works.

But in Your all-calming presence there is no wind, no swaying, no "doing things." I neither feel faith nor see works; instead I feel and see only You, the living God. In truth, You are not my faith but my vision. And You are not my doing, but I am Your doing. And again I say: You are not my faith but I am Your faith, and Your trust.

And so I teach those around me who are carrying on the debate: whoever has true faith in the Living God prefers to remain silent. And whoever performs a true work of God, prefers to remain silent. But whoever shuts up his faith with his mind, gladly squabbles about faith. And whoever does his own work and not God's gladly boasts of his works.

Deep is the tranquility of the soul in a man of faith, deeper than the tranquility at the bottom of the sea. For God's Wisdom is born and resides in deep tranquility.

Deep is the tranquility in the tongue of one who does God's work, deeper than the tranquility of the iron in the heart of a mountain. For whoever does the work of another listens to instructions and carries them out, moreover he listens, and has no time to speak.

I speak believing in works: Is not my prayer a working and reworking of my very self? Is not the whole world within me, from beginning to end, together with all the world's poverty and impurity? Truly I am not without works, when I sweat and weep in prayer, but am immersed in the weighty task of helping the poor in my soul -- healing the sick and casting out the unclean spirits from my soul.

I speak believing in faith: Do I not awaken faith in my neighbors through the good works that I do?

Is not my work in the world the song of my faith, the psalm of one saved among the unsaved? Who would stop the song in the throat of a brimming soul? Who would stop a brimming spring from flowing? Would the nymphs who guard the spring quarrel with the nymphs in the spring's stream over which water is more beneficial? Truly, if there were no spring, there would be no stream.

O my Lord, do not go far away from me, lest my soul succumb to meaningless quarrels. Silence in Your presence expands my soul; discussions in Your absence shrink her and expend her to the thinness of a boon of flax.

I listened last time to the people squabbling, and You waved your hands and went far away. Indeed, those who truly have faith do not squabble with those who are true doers of Your work. This is the quarrel of servants with little faith and much ill will. Those who are of little faith squabble with the errand boys of the world. They are a dried-up spring quarrelling with a dried-out stream.

While they were full, they both used to sing a true song of joy, and joyfully used to hail each other.

But this is a malicious believer quarrelling with a malicious doer. What do I have in common with them? What ties me to them except compassion, which flows forth from Your radiance?

Fill the house of my soul, O Life-Creating Spirit, so that I may become blind and not see angry squabbling people, and so that I may be deaf to their foolish discussion.

They have slipped away from You, my Joy, therefore they engage in foolish discussions.

I bow down and beseech You, tie my soul across the thousands of sunbeams to You, lest she slip away from You, and plunge into the cold abyss.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, LXXXIII:

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

Christians, always rejoice, for evil, death, sin, the devil and hell have been conquered by Christ. But when all of this is conquered, is there anyone in the world who can bring our joy to naught? You are the lord of this eternal rejoicing as long as you do not give in to sin. Joy burns in our hearts from His truth, love, resurrection, and from the Church and His saints. Joy burns in our hearts all because of sufferings for Him, mockings for Him, and death for Him, insofar as these sufferings write our names in heaven. There is no true joy on earth without the victory over death, but the victory over death does not exist without the Resurrection, and the Resurrection does not exist without Christ. The risen God-Man Christ, the founder of the Church, constantly pours out this joy into the hearts of His followers through the Holy Mysteries and good deeds. Our faith is fulfilled in this eternal joy, insofar as the joy of faith in Christ is the only true joy for human nature.

+ St. Justin Popovich, Explanation of I Thessalonians, 5

The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration by Abbott Tryphon



The Divine Liturgy

The place where heaven and earth are united

As a priest, I bear the awesome burden of offering the Holy Oblation before the Throne of God, on behalf of all the people whose names are submitted to the monastery, and who are Orthodox. I offer for my monks, and my spiritual children, and even for the whole world. I commemorate my own beloved parents, Albert and Dolores, who both converted to the Orthodox Faith while in their mid-seventies, and who both lived many years in Orthodoxy before reposing in the Lord.

I remember my best friend in college, Russell, who, like myself, converted from Lutheranism to Orthodoxy, and died at the age of 56, in the pastoral care of my friend and confessor, Archpriest Nicholas Letten. I offer the Holy Oblation for the people who regularly attend the Sunday and Holy Day Liturgies, here in our monastery's temple. I offer, like all priests, the Holy Oblation for our nation, our civil authorities, and our armed forces. I offer the Eucharistic sacrifice for our Holy Patriarch Kirill, our Metropolitan Hilarion, for Archbishop Kyrill of San Francisco, and my Bishop Theodosy of Seattle. I offer the Oblation for all those who have no one to pray for them, and for those who have died, but are forgotten. I offer the Holy Sacrifice for all the clergy of the Seattle area, and for my brother priests of the diocese. I offer the Holy Sacrifice for myself.

As a priest, I am a Servant of the Altar, and when I stand before the holy table I am bound together with every priest who has ever served, and with everyone who has laid down his life for Christ, as a martyr. I am bound to every Christian who has ever lived. I am bound to Christ in His Eternal Kingdom wherein the Heavenly Banquet is eternally celebrated, eternally offered, and I am falling down, together with all the heavenly hosts, in worship of the Holy Trinity.

The whole of the cosmos is united together in this heavenly offering, for it is the very source of Life itself. This offering is not simply a “symbol” or “memorial” of something that took place in the past, but a place where we meet the Eternal God, for Christ said, “he who eats of My Body, and drinks of my Blood, has life”. Within this celebration we enter into the place where there is neither time, nor space, and we enter into the Heavenly Kingdom, where the Church Triumphant (in heaven) unites with the Church Militant (on earth). We enter into the Communion of Saints!

Finally, I am a proponent of frequent communion because we need the Eucharist. It sustains us, encourages us, fortifies us, heals us, and transforms us. The early Christians receive whenever they gathered together, for they knew the communal participation in the Eucharistic banquet, the Divine Liturgy, was life giving.



Daily Reflection Being Rich Toward God



“Then he told them a parable: ‘The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, ‘What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?’ Then he said, ‘I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not being rich toward/for God (εις θεον πλουτων).” (Lk 12: 16-21)

What does it mean to be rich “toward” or “for” God (εις θεον)? It means approaching any wealth that I have in a God-focused manner; with God and His purpose as my focus. Because it is God’s in the first place, like life itself. But the rich man in this parable turns his focus toward himself, – and hence also his wealth, toward himself, so that it only serves his own purpose, to “relax, eat, drink, and be merry.” As it turns out, he misses the whole point of his “ample goods,” which are taken from him, together with his life, by God, the One Who gave them to the man in the first place.

How can I avoid this loss of focus, this turning of my life and other “ample goods” toward myself? First of all, through gratitude. Whatever I “have” has been given to me temporarily, so that I can give, and “be rich toward God,” eternally. So let me not be crippled and limited today, by the blindness of self-seeking. Let me rather open my heart to God and others, that I may participate in the Creator’s much-larger purpose for me and all creation.

Holy Orthodox Quotes

“When sitting at a table laden with food, remember death and judgment, for even so you will only check the passion slightly.”
+St John Climacus

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

Think good thoughts about what is good by nature, and think well of every man.

+ St Thalassios the Libyan, 400 Texts on Love and Self-Control

Ancient Christian Wisdom

You have anxieties about your life... Pray fervently to the Lord from your heart in this way: “I place my fate in Thy hands, O my Saviour. In the way that Thou knowest, arrange my life as is best. From now on I cut off every care about myself, having but one care, to do what is pleasing before Thee.” Speak to God in this way, and by doing so you will already have placed yourself completely in His hands, not being concerned about anything, but calmly accepting every sort of situation, pleasant or unpleasant, as being arranged for you purposely by God. Your only concern should be to act according to God’s commandments in everything. This is all that is required of you.

+ St. Theophan the Recluse