

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: Trudy Ellmore Parish Council Vice President: Holly Dawson



Sunday, November 22, 2015

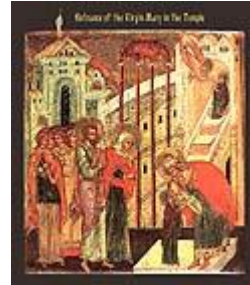
Gospel: Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
Luke 12:16-21

Tone 8

Epistle: Hebrews 9:1-7
Ephesians 4:1-6

25th Sunday after Pentecost (9th of Luke); The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple. Afterfeast of the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple

**Glory to
Jesus Christ!**



**Glory
Forever!**

*The Entry of the Most
Holy Mother of God into
the Temple.*

*Today is the prelude of the good will of God,
of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.
The Virgin appears in the temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming
Christ to all. Let us rejoice and sing to her:
"Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation."*

Today the Church Remembers

25th Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 8. The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple. Afterfeast of the Entry Into the Temple. Apostles of the Seventy Philemon and Archippus, Martyr Apphia, wife of Philemon and Equal-to-the-Apostles, and Onesimus, disciple of St. Paul (1st c.). Martyrdom of St. Michael, Prince of Tver' (1318). Rt. Blv. Yaropolk, in Baptism Peter, Prince of Vladimir in Volyn' (1086). Martyrs Cecilia, Valerian, Tiburtius, and Maximus, at Rome (ca. 230). Martyr Procopius the Reader, at Cæsarea in Palestine (303). Martyr Menignus at Parium (250). St. Agabbas of Syria (5th c.). Righteous Michael the Soldier, of Bulgaria (866). Ven. Callistus Xanthopoulos (Mt. Athos—1363).

Weekly Bulletin Sponsors

For Health of:

Sheryl-Ann Stefy, on her birthday, offered by her mother-in-law Lore Stefy.
Marisa Romanofsky, on her birthday, offered by her family.
Euginia Markevich, on her birthday, offered by her godmother Tatsiana Markevich DaGrosa and her family.

Prayer Request:

Matushka Barbara Kucynda, Danielle Geeza, Alexandra, and Mary, for good health and recovery.

For Memory of:

Kathleen Sheehan, mother of Maribeth.

Liturgical Schedule:

Sunday, November 22nd

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

Saturday, November 28th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, November 29th

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

Saturday, December 5th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, December 6th

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

Readings:

Epistle: Hebrews 9:1-7; Ephesians 4:1-6

Brethren, even the first covenant had ordinances of divine service and the earthly sanctuary. For a tabernacle was prepared: the first part, in which was the lampstand, the table, and the showbread, which is called the sanctuary; and behind the second veil, the part of the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of All, which had the golden censer and the ark of the covenant overlaid on all sides with gold, in which were the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the tablets of the covenant; and above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. Now when these things had been thus prepared, the priests always went into the first part of the tabernacle, performing the services. But into the second part the high priest went alone once a year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the people's sins committed in ignorance...

Brethren, I the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you

were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28; (9th Sunday of Luke) 12:16-21

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her. And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!" But He said, "More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Then He spoke a parable to them, saying: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, 'What shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops?' So he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there I will store all my crops and my goods.' And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have many goods laid up for many years; take your ease; eat, drink, and be merry.'" But God said to him, 'Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.'



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 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: Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

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 a parish council meeting December 20th immediately following coffee hour.

"On Sunday December 6th the parish will celebrate our annual St. Nicholas Day festivities. Children are invited to help decorate the tree in our community room after the Liturgy. Pizza will be served and a visit from St. Nicholas is expected. If you wish to have your child participate, please see Maribeth Romanofsky."



Sisterhood of the Protector of the Mother of God: Announcements

"The Sisterhood will be raffling off a Nativity gift basket on December 13th. Tickets are \$1.00, and each family is asked to sell ten tickets. Please see Lore Stefy for tickets. If you wish to contribute an item to the basket, there is a list posted downstairs regarding items needed."



NY/NJ Diocese News **Holy Apostles Mission Parish, Lansing NY**

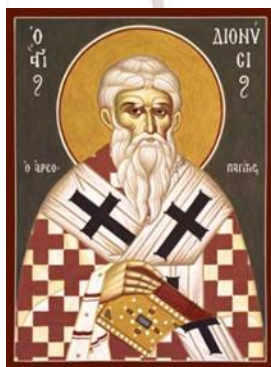
On a beautiful Tuesday evening, 17 November 2015, **Bishop Alexander of Toledo** (Bulgarian Diocese of the Orthodox Church in America) traveled to Ithaca NY to present a lecture on the writings of Saint Dionysius the Areopagite. The event was hosted by **Holy Apostles Orthodox Mission Parish in Lansing NY** (Father James Worthington,

rector) and the Orthodox Christian Fellowship of Cornell University. The lecture was given in conjunction with the mission parish’s ongoing adult education class: **“Know Your Faith Series.”** More than 20 faithful, friends and spiritually curious people gathered in the prestigious Founders Room of Anabel Taylor Hall to hear about His Grace’s spiritual journey to Mount Athos where he gained a deep love for the writings of Saint Dionysius, and how they have guided him to an ever deeper understanding of the mysteries of the Holy Trinity.

“Bishop Alexander beautifully recollected his life changing experiences on Mount Athos and his personal growth through coming to understand the work of Saint Dionysius,” noted Christina Forties, one of the attendees.

Bishop Alexander, who studied the writings of the Areopagite during his doctoral studies at Oxford University, gave a captivating lecture. While highlighting the historical context of the writings, he took the time to show how the thoughts conveyed bring the pious Christian to an understanding of God grounded in the mystical experience of the ascetic life. Radu Parvaescu, one of the OCF students, was touched by the talk: ***“It was very useful for me ... his output [is] scholarly, intellectual, and Orthodox at the same time.”***

Following the talk, those gathered partook of refreshments while continuing the conversation among themselves and with Bishop Alexander. During that time, Micah Brown relayed how he felt compelled to continue his studies on the matter: ***“I enjoyed the lecture. Although my knowledge of Saint Dionysius is limited, my interest was sparked and I now plan on engaging in at least a cursory examination of his life and writings.”***



In summing up the personal theological reflection by His Grace, Father Tom Parthenakis of Saint Catherine Greek Orthodox Church in Ithaca observed that ***“there are other perspectives found in [Bishop Alexander’s] personal experience. This is like an ascetic who struggles to understand Saint Dionysius the Areopagite. All the barriers that he faced, and how he dealt with them [in his spiritual pursuits], was infatuating for me.”***

His Grace’s trip to Lansing was topped off with the celebration of Matins on the following day. As part of the weekly cycle of services, several of the faithful of the parish gathered with Bishop Alexander to sing praises to God in thanksgiving for such an enlightening and spiritually beneficial visit.

The lecture can be seen at the website of Holy Apostles Church.



Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News

OCA Youth Department launches “Saints You Missed in Sunday School”

The Department of Youth, Young Adult, and Campus Ministry of the Orthodox Church in America has launched a new digital project titled “Saints You Missed in Sunday School”. This project will highlight the lives of some of the lesser known saints found on the OCA’s daily “Lives of the Saints.”

“The lives of our saints are an incredible resource for all of us, demonstrating the continuous preaching of the Gospel throughout history and encouraging us towards missionary work, deeper prayer, and acts of mercy by their example,” said Andrew Boyd, OCA Youth Director. “With the launching of ‘Saints You Missed in Sunday School,’ we hope to present these saints in a way that’s easier to share on social media and through other digital means, making them more accessible to youth and young adults.”

Metropolitan Tikhon, seminary deans guests of Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church

At the invitation of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, will deliver an address during the bicentenary valedictory celebrations of the Orthodox Theological Seminary in Kottayam, Kerala, India on Thursday, November 26, 2015.

Traveling with Metropolitan Tikhon are Archpriest Dr. Steven Voytovich, Dean of Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, and Archpriest Dr. John Behr, Dean of Saint Vladimir's Seminary, Yonkers, NY. Accompanying them is His Grace, Metropolitan Zachariah Mar Nicholovos of the Northeast American Diocese of the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church.

Metropolitan Tikhon also will speak at ceremonies that will be held in remembrance of the seminary's founder, the late Metropolitan Joseph Mar Dionysius.

Through its seminaries, the Orthodox Church in America has developed a strong relationship with the Malankara Church in North America in recent years. Many Malankarese bishops, priests, deacons and lay leaders have studied at Saint Tikhon's and Saint Vladimir's seminaries. Metropolitan Zachariah is a member of Saint Vladimir's Seminary Board of Trustees, while two Malankarese clergy, Priest M. K. Kuriakose and Priest Dr. Varghese M. Daniel, serve on the faculties of Saint Tikhon's and Saint Vladimir's seminaries respectively.

Metropolitan Tikhon and Fathers Steven and John also will attend ceremonies marking the opening of the Malankara Church's Sopana Academy for Studies in Theology and Culture.

The ancient Malankara Church traces its origin to the Apostle Thomas. Headquartered in the southern Indian province of Kerala, it numbers about 1000 parishes in India and another 200 parishes in North America.

OCA Treasurer's report for first three quarters of 2015 released

The financial report for the first three quarters of 2015, prepared by Ms. Melanie Ringa, Treasurer of the Orthodox Church in America, is now available on-line.

“Year to date, through September 30, 2015, expenses were under budget by \$107,054.00,” Ms. Ringa noted. “Total revenues for the same period were under budget by only \$18,856.00, representing slightly lower assessments and lower Chapel and Continuing Ed revenues.”

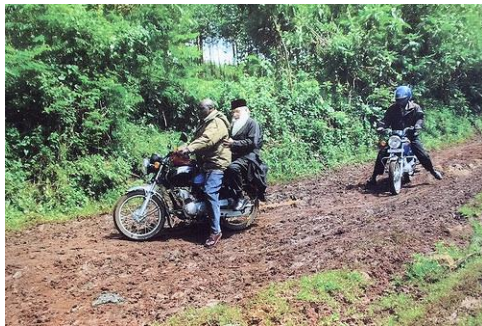


Join the OCMC Medical Team Serving in Medan, Indonesia, in May 2016!

Pediatricians, gynecologists, dentists, nurses, and other healthcare professionals are needed for an upcoming OCMC short-term mission team that will be offering healthcare and helping to train staff at an Orthodox hospital in Medan, Indonesia, from May 9th to the 21st, 2016. If you, or anyone you know, would be able to serve on this team, please visit http://www.ocmc.org/about/view_team.aspx?TeamId=177, e-mail teams@ocmc.org, or call 1-877-463-6784 FREE ext. 141 for more information or to apply.

OCA Diocese of the Midwest to Raise Funds for 10 Motorcycles for the Church in Kenya!

by Bishop Paul of Chicago and the Midwest (11/19/2015)



The OCA Diocese of the Midwest is trying to raise fund for 10 motorcycles for the Church in Kenya. These motorcycles will be a blessing to priests, many of whom care for multiple communities several miles apart.

To the Reverend Clergy, Parish Council members, and Faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest.

On November 15, 2015, we begin the Nativity Fast — that season during which we especially focus our attention on prayer, fasting and almsgiving in preparation for our celebration of the Incarnation of Our Lord, Jesus Christ!

By taking on our human nature, the Living Word of God shares, in His very person, the “Good News” of salvation. He comes to proclaim the Gospel to all who would receive it, especially the poor, as we read in the written words of Scripture. And He calls upon us to likewise share this Good News in every way possible, “to the ends of the earth.”

Within the Orthodox Archdiocese of Kenya, under the omophorion of His Eminence, Archbishop Makarios, over 250 priests labor to proclaim the Gospel in a growing number of communities, many of which are remote and not easily accessible. Transportation is a major obstacle in pursuing their ministry. In order to assist these dedicated servants of the Living Word, the Orthodox Christian Mission Center has undertaken the cause of raising funds to purchase motorcycles, to be used by the Kenyan clergy, which will greatly assist them in visiting the People of God. This quest, it seems, would provide an ideal way for the faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest to not only give alms during the Nativity Fast, but to ensure that those who otherwise might not hear the joyous message of the Incarnation and to receive the Holy Mysteries might do so, especially during this most holy season and beyond.

With this in mind, I would like to ask our diocesan parishes and missions to raise alms during the Nativity Fast to purchase at least 10 motorcycles for the Archdiocese of Kenya. One motorcycle costs a mere \$1,000.00. Perhaps one parish can donate the entire amount to purchase a motorcycle, two parishes donate \$500.00 to purchase one, or four parishes can donate \$250.00 each to purchase another. Of course, any gifts of any amount would be greatly appreciated. What a wonderful way for parishes of our diocese to work together to raise these funds.

Whether it be through an outright donation, a special collection, or a fundraiser – bake sale, luncheon, or related event — every parish is asked to “do something” in our collective almsgiving effort. Families and individuals also may send donations as well, which will be gratefully received. Regardless of the “method,” we do, as a diocesan family, have the

“means” to assist in this endeavor to bring the Light of Christ to those who otherwise might not encounter it.

Additional information may be found on our diocesan website at www.domoca.org. There you will find a flyer that may be downloaded, printed and distributed locally, beginning November 15, highlighting our effort.

Please send all donations, which will be sent to Kenya in partnership with the Orthodox Christian Mission Center, to the Diocese of the Midwest Kenya Fund, 927 North LaSalle, Chicago, Illinois 60610 by January 1, 2016. Checks should be made payable to the Diocese of the Midwest, with “Motorbikes for Kenya” noted in the memo line. Once all donations have been received, we will forward our collective alms to OCMC with our prayers for the ongoing ministry of the Kenyan clergy and the faithful they serve.

Thanking you in advance for your positive and generous response to this effort, I remain.

With love in Our Lord,

Paul
Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest



The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple. Afterfeast of the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple



According to Holy Tradition, the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Sts Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called “Psalms of Ascent.”) The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all

those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt.

The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. “If anyone were to ask me,” said St Jerome, “how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian.”

But there are accounts in Church Tradition, that during the All-Pure Virgin’s stay at the Temple, She grew up in a community of pious virgins, diligently read the Holy Scripture, occupied Herself with handicrafts, prayed constantly, and grew in love for God. From ancient times, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Indications that the Feast was observed in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, which say that the holy Empress Helen (May 21) built a church in honor of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

St Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, also mentions this Feast. In the eighth century Sts Germanus and Tarasius, Patriarchs of Constantinople, delivered sermons on the Feast of the Entry.

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple foretells God’s blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.

DISCOURSE ON THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR MOST PURE LADY THEOTOKOS INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES

by Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica

If a tree is known by its fruit, and a good tree bears good fruit (Mt. 7:17; Luke 6:44), then is not the Mother of Goodness Itself, She who bore the Eternal Beauty, incomparably more excellent than

every good, whether in this world or the world above? Therefore, the coeternal and identical Image of goodness, Preeternal, transcending all being, He Who is the preexisting and good Word of the Father, moved by His unutterable love for mankind and compassion for us, put on our image, that He might reclaim for Himself our nature which had been dragged down to uttermost Hades, so as to renew this corrupted nature and raise it to the heights of Heaven. For this purpose, He had to assume a flesh that was both new and ours, that He might refashion us from out of ourselves. Now He finds a Handmaiden perfectly suited to these needs, the supplier of Her own unsullied nature, the Ever-Virgin now hymned by us, and Whose miraculous Entrance into the Temple, into the Holy of Holies, we now celebrate. God predestined Her before the ages for the salvation and reclaiming of our kind. She was chosen, not just from the crowd, but from the ranks of the chosen of all ages, renowned for piety and understanding, and for their God-pleasing words and deeds.

In the beginning, there was one who rose up against us: the author of evil, the serpent, who dragged us into the abyss. Many reasons impelled him to rise up against us, and there are many ways by which he enslaved our nature: envy, rivalry, hatred, injustice, treachery, slyness, etc. In addition to all this, he also has within him the power of bringing death, which he himself engendered, being the first to fall away from true life.

The author of evil was jealous of Adam, when he saw him being led from earth to Heaven, from which he was justly cast down. Filled with envy, he pounced upon Adam with a terrible ferocity, and even wished to clothe him with the garb of death. Envy is not only the begetter of hatred, but also of murder, which this truly man-hating serpent brought about in us. For he wanted to be master over the earth-born for the ruin of that which was created in the image and likeness of God. Since he was not bold enough to make a face to face attack, he resorted to cunning and deceit. This truly terrible and malicious plotter pretended to be a friend and useful adviser by assuming the physical form of a serpent, and stealthily took their position. By his God-opposing advice, he instills in man his own death-bearing power, like a venomous poison.

If Adam had been sufficiently strong to keep the divine commandment, then he would have shown himself the vanquisher of his enemy, and withstood his deathly attack. But since he voluntarily gave in to sin, he was defeated and was

made a sinner. Since he is the root of our race, he has produced us as death-bearing shoots. So, it was necessary for us, if he were to fight back against his defeat and to claim victory, to rid himself of the death-bearing venomous poison in his soul and body, and to absorb life, eternal and indestructible life.

It was necessary for us to have a new root for our race, a new Adam, not just one Who would be sinless and invincible, but one Who also would be able to forgive sins and set free from punishment those subject to it. And not only would He have life in Himself, but also the capacity to restore to life, so that He could grant to those who cleave to Him and are related to Him by race both life and the forgiveness of their sins, restoring to life not only those who came after Him, but also those who already had died before Him. Therefore, St Paul, that great trumpet of the Holy Spirit, exclaims, “the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45).

Except for God, there is no one who is without sin, or life-creating, or able to remit sin. Therefore, the new Adam must be not only Man, but also God. He is at the same time life, wisdom, truth, love, and mercy, and every other good thing, so that He might renew the old Adam and restore him to life through mercy, wisdom and righteousness. These are the opposites of the things which the author of evil used to bring about our aging and death.

As the slayer of mankind raised himself against us with envy and hatred, so the Source of life was lifted up [on the Cross] because of His immeasurable goodness and love for mankind. He intensely desired the salvation of His creature, i.e., that His creature would be restored by Himself. In contrast to this, the author of evil wanted to bring God’s creature to ruin, and thereby put mankind under his own power, and tyrannically to afflict us. And just as he achieved the conquest and the fall of mankind by means of injustice and cunning, by deceit and his trickery, so has the Liberator brought about the defeat of the author of evil, and the restoration of His own creature with truth, justice and wisdom.

It was a deed of perfect justice that our nature, which was voluntarily enslaved and struck down, should again enter the struggle for victory and cast off its voluntary enslavement. Therefore, God deigned to receive our nature from us, hypostatically uniting with it in a marvelous way.

But it was impossible to unite that Most High Nature, Whose purity is incomprehensible for human reason, to a sinful nature before it had been purified. Therefore, for the conception and birth of the Bestower of purity, a perfectly spotless and Most Pure Virgin was required.

Today we celebrate the memory of those things that contributed, if only once, to the Incarnation. He Who is God by nature, the Co-unoriginate and Coeternal Word and Son of the Transcendent Father, becomes the Son of Man, the Son of the Ever-Virgin. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8), immutable in His divinity and blameless in His humanity, He alone, as the Prophet Isaiah prophesied, "practiced no iniquity, nor deceit with His lips" (Is. 53: 9). He alone was not brought forth in iniquity, nor was He conceived in sin, in contrast to what the Prophet David says concerning himself and every other man (Ps. 50/51: 5). Even in what He assumes, He is perfectly pure and has no need to be cleansed Himself. But for our sake, He accepted purification, suffering, death and resurrection, that He might transmit them to us.

God is born of the spotless and Holy Virgin, or better to say, of the Most Pure and All-Holy Virgin. She is above every fleshly defilement, and even above every impure thought. Her conceiving resulted not from fleshly lust, but by the overshadowing of the Most Holy Spirit. Such desire being utterly alien to Her, it is through prayer and spiritual readiness that She declared to the angel: "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto Me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38), and that She conceived and gave birth. So, in order to render the Virgin worthy of this sublime purpose, God marked this ever-virgin Daughter now praised by us, from before the ages, and from eternity, choosing Her from out of His elect.

Turn your attention then, to where this choice began. From the sons of Adam God chose the wondrous Seth, who showed himself a living heaven through his becoming behavior, and through the beauty of his virtues. That is why he was chosen, and from whom the Virgin would blossom as the divinely fitting chariot of God. She was needed to give birth and to summon the earth-born to heavenly sonship. For this reason also all the lineage of Seth were called "sons of God," because from this lineage a son of man would be born the Son of God. The name Seth signifies a rising or resurrection, or more specifically, it

signifies the Lord, Who promises and gives immortal life to all who believe in Him.

And how precisely exact is this parallel! Seth was born of Eve, as she herself said, in place of Abel, whom Cain killed through jealousy (Gen. 4:25); and Christ, the Son of the Virgin, was born for us in place of Adam, whom the author of evil also killed through jealousy. But Seth did not resurrect Abel, since he was only a type of the resurrection. But our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, since He is the very Life and the Resurrection of the earth-born, for whose sake the descendents of Seth are granted divine adoption through hope, and are called the children of God. It was because of this hope that they were called sons of God, as is evident from the one who was first called so, the successor in the choice. This was Enos, the son of Seth, who as Moses wrote, first hoped to call on the Name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26).

In this manner, the choice of the future Mother of God, beginning with the very sons of Adam and proceeding through all the generations of time, through the Providence of God, passes to the Prophet-king David and the successors of his kingdom and lineage. When the chosen time had come, then from the house and posterity of David, Joachim and Anna are chosen by God. Though they were childless, they were by their virtuous life and good disposition the finest of all those descended from the line of David. And when in prayer they besought God to deliver them from their childlessness, and promised to dedicate their child to God from its infancy. By God Himself, the Mother of God was proclaimed and given to them as a child, so that from such virtuous parents the all-virtuous child would be raised. So in this manner, chastity joined with prayer came to fruition by producing the Mother of virginity, giving birth in the flesh to Him Who was born of God the Father before the ages.

Now, when Righteous Joachim and Anna saw that they had been granted their wish, and that the divine promise to them was realized in fact, then they on their part, as true lovers of God, hastened to fulfill their vow given to God as soon as the child had been weaned from milk. They have now led this truly sanctified child of God, now the Mother of God, this Virgin into the Temple of God. And She, being filled with Divine gifts even at such a tender age, ... She, rather than others, determined what was being done over Her. In Her manner She showed that She was not so much presented into the Temple, but that She Herself

entered into the service of God of her own accord, as if she had wings, striving towards this sacred and divine love. She considered it desirable and fitting that she should enter into the Temple and dwell in the Holy of Holies.

Therefore, the High Priest, seeing that this child, more than anyone else, had divine grace within Her, wished to set Her within the Holy of Holies. He convinced everyone present to welcome this, since God had advanced it and approved it. Through His angel, God assisted the Virgin and sent Her mystical food, with which She was strengthened in nature, while in body She was brought to maturity and was made purer and more exalted than the angels, having the Heavenly spirits as servants. She was led into the Holy of Holies not just once, but was accepted by God to dwell there with Him during Her youth, so that through Her, the Heavenly Abodes might be opened and given for an eternal habitation to those who believe in Her miraculous birthgiving.

So it is, and this is why She, from the beginning of time, was chosen from among the chosen. She Who is manifest as the Holy of Holies, Who has a body even purer than the spirits purified by virtue, is capable of receiving ... the Hypostatic Word of the Unoriginate Father. Today the Ever-Virgin Mary, like a Treasure of God, is stored in the Holy of Holies, so that in due time, (as it later came to pass) She would serve for the enrichment of, and an ornament for, all the world. Therefore, Christ God also glorifies His Mother, both before, and also after His birth.

We who understand the salvation begun for our sake through the Most Holy Virgin, give Her thanks and praise according to our ability. And truly, if the grateful woman (of whom the Gospel tells us), after hearing the saving words of the Lord, blessed and thanked His Mother, raising her voice above the din of the crowd and saying to Christ, “Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps Thou hast sucked” (Luke 11:27), then we who have the words of eternal life written out for us, and not only the words, but also the miracles and the Passion, and the raising of our nature from death, and its ascent from earth to Heaven, and the promise of immortal life and unfailing salvation, then how shall we not unceasingly hymn and bless the Mother of the Author of our Salvation and the Giver of Life, celebrating Her conception and birth, and now Her Entry into the Holy of Holies?

Now, brethren, let us remove ourselves from earthly to celestial things. Let us change our path

from the flesh to the spirit. Let us change our desire from temporal things to those that endure. Let us scorn fleshly delights, which serve as allurements for the soul and soon pass away. Let us desire spiritual gifts, which remain undiminished. Let us turn our reason and our attention from earthly concerns and raise them to the inaccessible places of Heaven, to the Holy of Holies, where the Mother of God now resides.

Therefore, in such manner our songs and prayers to Her will gain entry, and thus through her mediation, we shall be heirs of the everlasting blessings to come, through the grace and love for mankind of Him Who was born of Her for our sake, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, honor and worship, together with His Unoriginate Father and His Coeternal and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

My faith sees You, Lord.

It is the light and the farseeing vision of my eyes.

It is the sensing of Your omnipresence. It pulls my knees to the ground and lifts my arms toward heaven.

My faith is my soul's contact with You. It prompts my heart to dance and my throat to sing.

When a swallow draws near, the baby swallows become excited in the nest. For even in the distance they sense the coming of their mother.

My faith is my excitement, for You are coming, my Mother.

If my friend is thinking of me while writing a letter in a distant city, I also dismiss other thoughts and think of my friend.

My faith is my thinking about You, which prompts You, all-encompassing Lord, to think of me.

When a lion is separated from his lioness, the lion's eyes are distraught with longing for the lioness.

My faith is my longing for You, when You are far from me, my Beauty.

When there is no sun, the most terrifying storms lash the sea.

My faith is the calming of the storm within my soul, for Your light pours into me and pacifies me.

My eyes said to me: "We do not see Him." But I pacified them with the words: "The truth is, that you were not created to see Him but to see what is His."

My ears said to me: "We do not hear Him." But I brought them to their senses with the words: "The truth is, that you were not created to hear Him but to hear what is His."

Nothing of all that is created can see or hear Him but only what is His. What is created sees and hears what is created. Only what is begotten of Him can see Him. And only what is begotten of Him can hear Him. A painting cannot see the painter, but the son of a painter can see the painter. A bell cannot hear a bell-caster, but the daughter of a bell-caster can hear her father.

The eye cannot see Him because it was not created for the purpose of seeing Him. The ear cannot hear Him, because it was not created for the purpose of hearing Him. But vision can see Him, and hearing can hear Him.

My faith sees You, Lord, just as what is begotten sees its begetter. My faith hears You, Lord, just as what is begotten hears its begetter.

The God within me sees and hears the God in You. And God is not created but begotten.

My faith is like diving into the abyss of my soul and swimming out with You.

My faith is my only genuine knowledge. Everything else is like the children collecting motley pebbles by the lake.

Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XXXI:

The Fear of God

(Fear of Offending God With One's Sins)

Whoever has become a servant of the Lord fears only his Master. But whoever is without the fear of

God is often afraid of his own shadow. Fearfulness is the daughter of unbelief. A proud soul is the slave of fear; hoping in itself, it comes to such a state that it is startled by a small noise, and is afraid of the dark.

St. John of the Ladder, The Ladder, 21.11,1,4

The Prologue of Ohrid

St. Nikolai Velimirovic

1. The Entry into the Temple of the Most-Holy Theotokos (Nov. 21st)

When the Most-holy Virgin Mary reached the age of three, her holy parents Joachim and Anna took her from Nazareth to Jerusalem to dedicate her to the service of God according to their earlier promise. It was a three-day journey from Nazareth to Jerusalem but, traveling to do a God-pleasing work, this journey was not difficult for them. Many kinsmen of Joachim and Anna gathered in Jerusalem to take part in this event, at which the invisible angels of God were also present. Leading the procession into the Temple were virgins with lighted tapers in their hands, then the Most-holy Virgin, led on one side by her father and on the other side by her mother. The virgin was clad in vesture of royal magnificence and adornments as was befitting the "King's daughter, the Bride of God" (Psalm 45:13-15). Following them were many kinsmen and friends, all with lighted tapers. Fifteen steps led up to the Temple. Joachim and Anna lifted the Virgin onto the first step, then she ran quickly to the top herself, where she was met by the High Priest Zacharias, who was to be the father of St. John the Forerunner. Taking her by the hand, he led her not only into the Temple, but into the "Holy of Holies," the holiest of holy places, into which no one but the high priest ever entered, and only once each year, at that. St. Theophylact of Ohrid says that Zacharias "was outside himself and possessed by God" when he led the Virgin into the holiest place in the Temple, beyond the second curtain--otherwise, his action could not be explained. Mary's parents then offered sacrifice to God according to the Law, received the priest's blessing and returned home. The Most-holy Virgin remained in the Temple and dwelt there for nine full years. While her parents were alive, they visited her often, especially Righteous Anna. When God called her parents from this world, the Most-holy Virgin was left an orphan and did not

wish to leave the Temple until death or to enter into marriage. As that would have been against the Law and custom of Israel, she was given to St. Joseph, her kinsman in Nazareth, after reaching the age of twelve. Under the acceptable role of one betrothed, she could live in virginity and thus fulfill her desire and formally satisfy the Law, for it was then unknown in Israel for maidens to vow virginity to the end of their lives. The Most-holy Virgin Mary was the first of such life-vowed virgins, of the thousands and thousands of virgin men and women who would follow her in the Church of Christ.

Hymn of Praise

Saints Joachim and Anna

The parents of the Holy Virgin
Lead her to the holy Temple,
And according to their promise
They give her to the Lord.
They lead the Temple to the Temple,
While angels chant,
And chant with joy
To the young Virgin in purest attire.

The virgins accompany our Virgin,
With hymns and tapers;
Zacharias leads her
To the Holy of Holies;
And into the Holy Place he takes her,
Where the awesome mystery is hidden.

Where the Ark of the Covenant is,
Where the golden lampstand is,
Where the staff and the manna are,
Into the guarding place of all mysteries;
There the pure Virgin is led--
The Mystical Ark of the Living Christ.

Reflection

Submit yourself to the will of God and do not pry too closely into God's judgments, for you can lose your mind. The judgments of God are innumerable and unfathomable. A monk in the wilderness, imagining that he had attained perfection, prayed to God that He would reveal to him His various judgments in the lives of men. God put the thought in his mind to go to a distant place to inquire of a spiritual elder concerning this. However, while the monk was on his way, an angel of God in the form of an ordinary man joined him, saying that he too

wanted to go to that elder. Thus traveling together, they came upon the house of a God-fearing man, who treated them well, giving them to eat from a silver platter. When they had eaten, the angel took the platter and threw it into the sea. The monk found this both amazing and unjust, but he remained silent. The second day they came upon the house of another hospitable man who cordially received and treated them as kinsmen. Before leaving, that man brought out his only son for the travelers to bless. The angel of God then took the child by the throat and strangled him. The monk was greatly angered and asked the angel who he was, and why he had committed such misdeeds. The angel meekly replied to him: "The first man was pleasing to God in all things and had nothing in his house that was attained by injustice except that silver platter. By God's judgment, I threw that stolen platter away, so that the man would be righteous before God in all things. The other man was pleasing to God and had nothing in his house that would bring down the wrath of God except his son, who--had he matured--would have become a great criminal and a demonic vessel. Therefore, by God's judgment, I strangled that child in time to save his soul, for the sake of his father's goodness, and to save the father from many miseries. Behold, such are the mysteries and the unfathomable judgments of God. And you, elder, should return to your cell and not strive vainly by inquiring into that which is in the authority of the One God."

Contemplation

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2):

1. How God created man from the dust of the earth;
2. How He breathed the spirit of life into his nostrils;
3. How man became a living soul.

Homily:

on the faithful as one body and one spirit

...There is one body and one spirit (Ephesians 4:4).

The Holy Apostle counsels the faithful to strive to be *one body and one spirit*. By *one body* is understood "one Faith," without divisions, without heresies and without self-will: the whole Church

is *one body* of which Christ is the Head. By *one spirit* is understood "love," the ardent love of all the faithful for Christ, from which proceeds mutual love. The many become as one; many men become as one man. This is the miracle of the Christian Faith and Christian love. There is no power in the world which can be a stronger bond among men: not the same blood, or the same language, or the same hearth, or the same parents, or any type of common material interests. None of these is even nearly as powerful a bond as Christian faith and love. By this powerful, irresistible bond, all the members of the Church are bound to each other. The Church of God stands as one man, in time and in eternity--*one body and one spirit*. There is nothing more contradictory to this wondrous unity than the pride of individual men. Pride distorts faith, cools love, creates heresies, divides the Church, and sacrifices the good of the whole for individual satisfaction. Pride, in essence, is the absence of both faith and love. Brethren, may God save us from pride, the primal infirmity of the human race, that we may always be *one body and one spirit* in our Lord Jesus Christ.

To Thee, O Lord Jesus; to Thee, the Head of the Church, be glory and praise forever. Amen.

1. The Holy Martyr Cecilia (Nov. 22nd)

Cecilia was born in Rome of wealthy and eminent parents. She had great faith in Christ the Lord and a great zeal for the Faith. Vowing life-long virginity to God, St. Cecilia wore a coarse hair shirt beneath the costly raiment that her parents gave her. When her parents coerced her into marriage with Valerian, a pagan, Cecilia counseled her bridegroom on their wedding night to go to Bishop Urban to be baptized, and then live in chastity. Accepting the Christian Faith, Valerian also converted his brother Tiburtius. Soon after, both brothers were condemned to death for their faith. But their faithfulness did not falter, even in the face of death. Led to the place of execution, these wonderful brothers also succeeded in converting the captain of the guard, Maximus, to the Faith. Then all three suffered together for Christ the Lord. St. Cecilia buried their bodies together. Cecilia was then brought to trial, for she tirelessly won pagans over to the Christian Faith. In only one evening, she won over four hundred souls. When the judge asked her from whence such boldness came, she answered: "From a pure

conscience and undoubting faith." After cruel torture, Cecilia was condemned to beheading. The executioner struck her three times on the neck with the sword, but he was unable to kill her. She was only wounded, and blood flowed from her wounds, which the faithful collected in handkerchiefs, sponges and bowls for the sake of healing. Three days after this, the martyr and virgin of Christ gave her soul to her Lord, with Whom she eternally rejoices. St. Cecilia suffered with the others in about the year 230. Her relics lie in Rome, in the church dedicated to her. In the Western Church, St. Cecilia is regarded as the patroness of church singing and music.

2. Saint Callistus, Patriarch of Constantinople

Callistus is called "Xanthopoulos" after the cell of that name on Mount Athos, where he lived for a long time in asceticism with his companion, Ignatius. With this same Ignatius, St. Callistus wrote in one hundred chapters of his personal experience of a life of stillness. This work occupies a very prominent place in ascetical literature. Callistus was greatly influenced by his teacher, St. Gregory of Sinai, and wrote his Life. Having become Patriarch of Constantinople, St. Callistus became ill and reposed while on a journey to Serbia. Before he undertook his journey this was prophesied to him by St. Maximus of Kapsokalyvia of the Holy Mountain.

3. The Holy Martyr Menignus

Menignus was born on the Hellespont. He worked as a linen-bleacher, for which he was called "the Fuller." At the time of Emperor Decius, he tore up the imperial decree declaring a persecution of Christians. For this, he was thrown into prison, where the Lord Himself appeared to him and encouraged him, saying: "Be not afraid, I am with thee." At that moment his chains melted like wax, the prison opened of itself, and he went out. He was arrested again and tried. They tortured him inhumanly, severing his fingers and toes and beheading him. At night, his severed head glowed like a lamp.

4. The Holy Righteous Michael the Soldier

Michael was a Bulgarian by birth. With his companions, he fought in the Greek army against the Hagarenes and Ethiopians, where he displayed

marvelous fearlessness. He killed a terrible serpent and freed a maiden. Soon afterward, this righteous man took up his abode in eternal life. He lived and reposed in the ninth century. He was first buried somewhere in Thrace, but Emperor Kalo-John translated his relics to Trnovo in 1206.

5. The Holy Apostles Philemon and Archippus, and the Holy Martyr Apphia

Archippus was one of the Seventy Apostles. The Apostle Paul mentions him in his Epistle to the Colossians: *And tell Archippus, 'See that you fulfill the ministry that you received in the Lord'* (Colossians 4:17), as well as in his letter to Philemon, calling him *our fellow soldier* (Philemon 1:2). In the town of Colossae, the centre of Christianity, was in the home of Philemon. Here Christians gathered for prayer. In writing to Philemon, the Apostle Paul called this *the church in your house* (Philemon 1:2). At that time, the apostles ordained their disciples as bishops; some of them in permanent places and others as missionaries traveling to various places. Philemon was one of the latter. Apphia, Philemon's wife, hosted and served in the domestic church! At the time of a pagan feast to the goddess Artemis, according to their custom, all the faithful in Colossae gathered in the home of Philemon for prayer. The pagans, learning of this gathering, rushed and apprehended all the Christians. As the leaders, Philemon, Apphia and Archippus were first whipped and afterwards buried up to their waists and stoned. Thus, they killed Philemon and Apphia, and Archippus they removed from the pit barely alive and left him to the amusement of the children. The children pierced him throughout with knives. Thus, this "fellow soldier" in battle ended well in the course of his earthly path.

Hymn of Praise *The Holy Martyr Cecilia*

Cecilia-strong in faith, rich in faith-
Her faith is more beautiful than the stars, more
precious than gold.

She nailed herself to the Lord, as to the Cross,
And sacrificed youth, joy, marriage and honor for
Christ!

The cruel demon could steal nothing from her;
And when only her body remained, she gave it to
Christ.

For the love of Christ, she gave the whole world-

Even two worlds: her body and her pure soul.
Thus does the flame of faith burn, and the flame of
love,
And by that flame, Cecilia glorified herself.

Reflection

Every effort of learning is in vain without the effort of attaining purity of faith and life. The heavenly world is revealed not to the learned but to the pure. When St. Cecilia was led to the bridal chamber with her bridegroom Valerian on the first night, she said him: "I want to tell you a mystery: standing here is an angel of God, the guardian of my virginity, whom you do not see. He stands ready to protect me, his handmaid, from assault. If you only touch me, he will kill you." Valerian begged Cecilia to show him the angel, so that he could see it, too. The virgin replied: "You are a man who knows not the true God. You cannot see the angel of God until you cleanse yourself of the foulness of your unbelief." When Valerian was baptized, he saw the angel in great light and ineffable beauty. So, too, when Valerian's brother Tiburtius changed his life from impurity to purity in baptism, he saw holy angels and spoke with them. Maximus their fellow sufferer as well, when the two brothers were beheaded, vowed with a great oath before the executioners and the people, saying: "I see angels of God shining like the sun, taking the souls of these martyrs from their bodies like beautiful virgins from the bridal chamber, and leading them to heaven with great glory." But that which he saw, none of the impure unbelievers were able to see.

Contemplation

Contemplate the wondrous creation of the world (Genesis 2):

1. How God planted a paradisaal garden in Eden and placed man there;
2. How God made trees in Paradise, beautiful to look at and good for food;
3. How God brought all the animals before man and he named them.

Homily:
on that which constitutes the unity of the faithful

... One Lord, one Faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all (Ephesians 4:5-6).

Here is the all-important and extremely obvious reason for all Christians to keep *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Ephesians 4:3) and be *one body and one spirit* (Ephesians 4:4). For the One Lord Jesus Christ is our Creator, Redeemer and Resurrector. There are not two true Christs, that there should be division among us. One and the same blood was shed upon the Cross for us all, just as one and the same mouth prayed for us all in Gethsemane. We have one Faith in the Holy Trinity, undivided and life-creating--the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, one in Essence and three in Persons--the Unbegotten Father, the Begotten Son and the Spirit proceeding from the Father. We have one Baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This Baptism is by threefold immersion in water, for death to sin and the devil, and for the resurrection and life in Christ the Lord. *One God and Father of all*--the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, Who through Christ and because of Christ adopts us and gives us the right to say to Him, *Our Father*.

Do you see, my brethren, how strong are the bonds that unite us? Not even the stars themselves are bound by stronger bonds, nor the water to the earth, nor fire to the air. Do you see the overwhelming reasons that we have for unity? Everything else that, from the left hand, would urge us to division is inconsequential compared to these reasons, like a grain of sand compared to the high mountains. The devil cannot destroy our unity if we do not help him. The devil can never conquer us if we do not surrender ourselves to him.

O Lord Jesus, sweet and gracious, how firmly Thou hast bound us for eternal good! Keep us, we pray, in this bond.

To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.

*Thoughts for Each Day of the Year
According to the Daily Church Readings
from the Word of God
By St. Theophan the Recluse*

To the man who asked how to be saved, the Lord on his part offered a question: *What is written in the law? how readest thou?* By this He showed that to resolve all perplexity one must turn to the

word of God. And so that there will not be such perplexity at all it is best to always read Divine Scripture attentively, with discernment and sympathy, applying it to your own life, and fulfilling in your own thoughts what relates to thoughts, in your own feelings and dispositions what relates to the senses, and in your deeds what relates to deeds. One who hearkens to the word of God gathers bright understanding of all that is in him, what is near to him, and what is above him; he clarifies his obligations in all aspects of life, and holy rules, like valuable pearls, are strung onto the thread of his conscience, which then precisely and definitely indicate how and when to act so that he please the Lord. He tames the passions—something reading the word of God always acts to assuage. No matter what passion troubles you, begin to read the word of God and the passion will become quieter and quieter, and at last it will be entirely calmed. He who enriches himself through knowledge of the word of God is overshadowed by the pillar of cloud which guided the Israelites in the desert.

*The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration
with Abbott Tryphon*



Harmony
Creating harmony out of chaos

The briefness of life has become more evident to me as I face health issues that have come with aging. It has not been a fearful experience for I believe with all my heart that God is there, especially when I am suffering through periods of trial and uncertainty. Death comes to all of us. This inevitability is what many refuse to think about, but an awareness of death is the very thing that should be at the forefront of our thoughts. A prayer life devoid of facing our eventual death is no prayer life at all.

When you live your life focused on enjoyment and lust, you enslave yourself, but freedom from this enslavement comes with love of God. This love creates perfection and faultlessness. When you think on your own death you become free to perform every task you do, for God.

Your heart, imprisoned by your fallen nature is liberated, becoming inflamed with the love of God. This love of God engenders a love that permeates your very essence, allowing you to love every person and every creature. Your heart burns with love. This love turns chaos into harmony and it is Divine Energy and divine strength that transforms you into the being God intended you to be. You are His child, deified and made whole.

With love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

Coffee with Sister Vassa – Daily Reflection



Prayer of Entrance

“Master and Lord our God, You have established in heaven the orders and hosts of angels and archangels for liturgical service (εἰς λειτουργίαν) to Your glory. Make our entrance be the entrance of the holy angels, concelebrating with us (συλλειτουργούντων ἡμῖν) and co-glorifying Your goodness.” (Prayer of Small Entrance, Byzantine Divine Liturgy)

“Transitional” moments in liturgy, just like major “transitional” moments in life, are traditionally accompanied with intensified prayer. The prayer cited above is read by the priest at the so-called Small Entrance, which was originally at the very beginning of liturgy; when the people and clergy

entered the church. In the prayer we ask God that our transition from the outside to the inside of the church, our “entrance” into the divine-human “work” of Liturgy, be in harmony with the “work” of the heavenly powers, the holy angels. On earth as it is in heaven. This unity of heaven and earth is an important leitmotif of Byzantine Liturgy.

I’m reflecting on this prayer today, when those of us on the Old(er) Calendar are celebrating the feast of St. Michael and all the heavenly powers, while those of us on the “New” Calendar are celebrating the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple. Both feasts remind me today of the importance of entering all of life’s “transitional” moments with prayer, in harmony with God’s will, on earth as it is in heaven. This includes small, daily transitions, like getting up from bed to begin the day, or going from home to church, or from home to work, or preparing for bed; as well as major “transitions,” like moving to a new city, changing jobs, or, for some people, getting married, getting divorced, giving birth to a child, preparing for death, or whatever.

Today let me not fear any changes or transitions in life, but place them all in God’s hands, in communion with those who did and continue to do His will, like the holy angels, and like the “more honorable than the cherubim,” the Most Holy Theotokos. “Thy will be done,” I pray today, “on earth as it is in heaven.”

The Philokalia: Daily Readings

If you wish to find the way that leads to life, look for it in the Way who says, “I am the way, the door, the truth and the life” (John 10:7, 14:6), and there you will find it. Only let your search be diligent and painstaking, for “few there are that find it” (Matt 7:14) and if you are not among the few you will find yourself with the many.

- St Maximos the Confessor, 400 Chapters on Love.

November – 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9:40 Hours 9:45 Gen'l Confession 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social 12:15 Sisterhood Mtg.	2	3 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	4	5	6 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	7 6:30 Vespers
8 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	9	10 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	11	12	13 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	14 6:30 Vespers
15 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social 12:15 Council Mtg.	16	17 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	18	19	20 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	21 6:30 Vespers
22 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social <i>The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple.</i>	23	24 7:00-8:00pm – The Grey Book Step Mtg. NA Grp	25	26	27 8:00-9:15pm – Living Clean NA Group Mtg.	28 6:30 Vespers
29 9:30 Sunday School 9:40 Hours 10:00 Divine Liturgy / Social	30					