

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: Dean Inferrera



**Sunday, September 10, 2017**

Gospel (Sunday Before): John 3:13-17  
Gospel: Matthew 22:1-14

**Tone 5**

Epistle (Sunday Before): Galatians 6:11-18  
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4

*14<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos. Sunday before Elevation*

Martyrs Menodora, Metrodora, and Nymphodora, at Nicomedia (305-311). Ven. Paul the Obedient, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th-14th c.). Bl. Prince Andrew, in monasticism Joasaph, of Kubensk (Vologda—1453). Apostles Apelles, Lucius, and Clement of the Seventy (1st c.). Martyr Barypsabas in Dalmatia (2nd c.). Rt. Blv. Pulcheria, the Empress of the Greeks (453). Ss. Peter and Paul, Bishops of Nicaea (9th c.).

**Troparion – Tone 4**

*Your Nativity, O Virgin, / Has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! / The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, / Has shone from You, O Theotokos! / By annulling the curse, / He bestowed a blessing. / By destroying death, He has granted us eternal Life.*

**Kontakion – Tone 4**

*By Your Nativity, O Most Pure Virgin, / Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; / Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. / And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: / The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life!*



Afterfeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

**Prayer Requests**

**For Health of:**

- Dean & Irene**, on their 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary, offered by the Inferrera Family.
- Cana & Chris**, on their anniversary, offered by the Inferrera Family.
- Danielle & Ivan**, on their anniversary, offered by the Inferrera Family.
- Doug & Jenn**, on their anniversary, offered by the Inferrera Family.

**The Philokalia: Daily Readings**

The devil will fail in his purpose if we apply the counsel of the holy fathers.

- St Peter of Damascus, A Treasury of Divine Knowledge

*Liturgical Schedule*

**Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

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

6:30 pm: Vesper/Liturgy:  
Elevation of the Cross

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

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup>**

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

**Saturday, September 23<sup>rd</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup>**

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

**Saturday, September 30<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, October 1<sup>st</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours  
9:45 am: General  
Confession  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

**Saturday, October 7<sup>h</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, October 8<sup>th</sup>**

9:40 am: Hours  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

*Bulletin Sponsors*

*The Inferrera Family*

*Readings:*

**The Prokeimenon in the 6<sup>th</sup> Tone:**

O Lord, save Thy people / and bless Thine inheritance!  
*(Psalm 27:9)*

vs. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great!  
*(Psalm 27:1)*

**Another, Tone 3 (Song of the Theotokos):**

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.  
*(Luke 1:46-7)*

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**Epistle (Sunday Before):** Galatians 6:11-18

**Brethren**, see with what large letters I have written to you with my own hand! As many as desire to make a good showing in the flesh, these would compel you to be circumcised, only that they may not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ. For not even those who are circumcised keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may boast in your flesh. But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

**Epistle:** 2 Corinthians 1:21-2

**Brethren**, it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has commissioned us; he has put his seal upon us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee. But I call God to witness against me--it was to spare you that I refrained from coming to Corinth. Not that we lord it over your faith; we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith. For I made up my mind not to make you another painful visit. For if I cause you pain, who is there to make me glad but the one whom I have pained? And I wrote as I did, so that when I came I might not suffer pain from those who should have made me rejoice, for I felt sure of all of you, that my joy would be the joy of you all. For I wrote you out of much affliction and anguish of heart and with many tears, not to cause you pain but to let you know the abundant love that I have for you.

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**Alleluia in the 1<sup>st</sup> Tone:**

I have exalted one chosen out of My people.  
*(Psalm 88:20)*

vs. For My hand shall defend him and My arm shall strengthen him.  
*(Psalm 88:22)*

**Another, Tone 8:**

Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear!  
*(Psalm 44:10)*

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**Gospel (Sunday Before):** John 3:13-17

**No one** has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.

**Gospel:** Matthew 22:1-14

**The Lord said this parable:** "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a marriage feast for his son, and sent his servants to call those who were invited to the marriage feast; but they would not come. Again he sent other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, Behold, I have made ready my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves are killed, and everything is ready; come to the marriage feast.' But they made light of it and went off, one to his farm, another to his business, while the rest seized his servants, treated them shamefully, and killed them. The king was angry, and he sent his troops and destroyed those murderers and burned their city. Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. Go therefore to the thoroughfares, and invite to the marriage feast as many as you find.' And those servants went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good; so the wedding hall was filled with guests. "But when the king came in to look at the guests, he saw there a man who had no wedding garment; and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless. Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and cast him into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.' For many are called, but few are chosen."

*Orthodox Quote of the Day*

Nevertheless, besides the action of God's Grace for salvation, the personal efforts of man himself are also necessary. Man's personal efforts alone are insufficient for his salvation -but they are necessary, for without them, God's Grace will not begin to work out the matter of his salvation.

**Metropolitan Philaret**



*Martyrs Menodora, Metrodora, and Nymphodora, at Nicomedia*

The Holy Virgins Menodora, Nymphodora, and Metrodora (305-311), were sisters from Bithynia (Asia Minor). Distinguished for their special piety, they wanted to preserve their virginity and avoid worldly associations. They chose a solitary place for themselves in the wilderness and spent their lives in deeds of fasting and prayer.

Reports of the holy life of the virgins soon spread, since healings of the sick began to occur through their prayers. The Bithynia region was governed at that time by a man named Frontonus, who ordered that the sisters be arrested and brought before him.

At first he tried to persuade them to renounce Christ, promising great honors and rewards. But the holy sisters steadfastly confessed their faith before him, rejecting all his suggestions. They told him that they did not value the temporal things of this world, and that they were prepared to die for their Heavenly Bridegroom, for death would be their gateway to eternal life.

Flying into a rage, the governor took out his wrath on Saint Menodora, the eldest sister. She was stripped of her clothes and beaten by four men, while a herald urged her to offer sacrifice to the gods. The saint bravely endured the torments and cried out, "Sacrifice? Can't you see that I am offering myself as a sacrifice to my God?" Then they renewed their torments with even greater severity. Then the martyr cried out, "Lord Jesus Christ, joy of my heart, my hope, receives my soul in peace." With these words she gave up her soul to God, and went to her Heavenly Bridegroom.

Four days later, they brought the two younger sisters Metrodora and Nymphodora to the court. They showed them the battered body of their older sister to frighten them. The virgins wept over her, but remained steadfast.

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

Then Saint Metrodora was tortured. She died, crying out to her beloved Lord Jesus Christ with her last breath. Then they turned to the third sister, Nymphodora. Before her lay the bruised bodies of her sisters. Frontonus hoped that this sight would intimidate the young virgin.

Pretending that he was charmed by her youth and beauty, he urged her to worship the pagan gods, promising great rewards and honors. Saint Nymphodora scoffed at his words, and shared the fate of her older sisters. She was tortured and beaten to death with iron rods.

The bodies of the holy martyrs were to be burned in a fire, but a heavy rain extinguished the blazing fire, and lightning struck down Frontonus and his servant. Christians took up the bodies of the holy sisters and reverently buried them at the so-called Warm Springs at Pythias (Bithynia).

Part of the relics of the holy martyrs are preserved on Mt. Athos in the Protection cathedral of the Saint Panteleimon Russian monastery, and the hand of Saint Metrodora is on the Holy Mountain in the monastery of the Pantocrator.



**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](mailto:OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com) ; [reader.charles@hotmail.com](mailto:reader.charles@hotmail.com) or [sub-deacon.vlashi@outlook.com](mailto:sub-deacon.vlashi@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*

**Sunday School news:** Sunday School will begin for the 2017-18 school year on Sept. 17th. If your child is a returning Sunday School student in our parish, please sign the sign-up sheet located at the candle stand in the vestibule. If your phone number has changed within the past year, please include that information as well. If your child is new to Sunday School in our parish, please complete a new student information form, also found at the candle stand in the vestibule.

Times for Sunday School classes will remain the same as last year: Grades 4 through 8 will meet before the Divine Liturgy at 9:30 am in the community room. Grades K through 3, and pre-school will meet immediately after communion, also in our community room.

Thank you, and we are looking forward to a great year!

**Sisterhood news:** The Sisterhood of the Protection of the Mother of God will hold their next meeting on Sunday, September 10th immediately after coffee hour.

**Council Meeting:** Sunday, September 24<sup>th</sup> immediately after coffee hour.

*Wisdom of the Church Fathers*

"In addition to right faith, then, let us also show forth behavior consonant with our beliefs, displaying great generosity towards the poor and caring deeply for those who are in need. Let us seek no more than we need. Let us engage in spiritual trade; this is true trade, this is how we acquire true wealth and everlasting treasure, by transferring all our things into the heavens and trusting that they will be kept there for us. Through the giving of alms we gain doubly: first, we will no longer have to fear for that money which we have deposited, that it might be

stolen by robbers or crooked and vile bankers; second, while being kept there it is not hidden away fruitlessly, but just as a root planted in fertile ground yields ripe fruit every year, so that money which we have planted in the hands of the poor will yield—not only once a year, but even every single day—spiritual fruit, that is to say boldness before God, the forgiveness of sins, companionship with the angels, a clean conscience, the joy of spiritual delight, unconquerable faith, all those unimaginable blessings which God has prepared for those who love him and for those who fervently seek the mercy of his presence. This we all pray for, that having passed this life in a manner pleasing to God, all wish to acquire, we might attain the eternal joy of those saved by the grace and mercy of our true God and Savior Jesus Christ, to whom belong glory and might, together with the Father, and his All-Holy Spirit, unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

**Saint John Chrysostom  
(347-407)**



### *NY/NJ Diocese News*

#### HURRICANE RELIEF: TEXAS AND FLORIDA

**Archbishop Michael appeals to all of our parishes and faithful** to donate to IOCC in support those afflicted and suffering in the aftermath and onset of the hurricanes in Texas and Florida. Please remember, IOCC donations are matched by governmental and corporate sponsors, so every dollar is multiplied 7 times! There is no better way to offer direct financial support!



#### HURRICANES IN TEXAS AND FLORIDA

Archbishop Michael writes: *"All of us have seen on our televisions or computers images of the disaster and devastation that has occurred in the southern parts of our country as a result of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. The loss of life, the destruction of property, and the displacement of whole families are staggering. Of course, I am asking that prayers be offered in all our churches for the victims of this horrific tragedy. But our response to this national crisis must be more than that. It must be what the Lord has asked of us in the Gospel: "Whatever you do for the least of My brethren, you do it for Me" (Matthew 25:40). In the face of incredibly great need, I am requesting our immediate assistance with the relief efforts of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), which is already responding to the aftermaths of both hurricanes."*

#### **ARCHBISHOP MICHAEL'S LETTER:**

To All of the Clergy and Faithful of the Diocese of New York and New Jersey:  
**Dearly Beloved in the Lord,**

*Christ is in our midst!*

All of us have seen on our televisions or computers images of the disaster and devastation that has occurred in the southern parts of our country as a result of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. The loss of life, the destruction of property, and the displacement of whole families are staggering.

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In the face of incredibly great need, I am requesting our immediate assistance with the relief efforts of International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC), which is already responding to the aftermaths of both hurricanes.

I am directing that all our parishes take up a special collection for IOCC as soon as possible, and I ask that each of us give whatever we are able. Please send parish offerings DIRECTLY to IOCC: International Orthodox Christian Charities, 110 West Road, Suite 360, Baltimore, MD 21204.

Additionally, parishes are urged to consider gathering much-needed items, specifically requested by IOCC, and assembling them into emergency kits, that will be delivered to the hurricane victims by IOCC. For parish young people or members of church organizations, this can be a meaningful service project of our “faith in action.” Parishes will be receiving information regarding this option in the very near future.

Once the collection of funds or relief items has been completed, the Chancery will send out an e-mail form, requesting the amount sent and the number of kits assembled, so that we can track the total contributions of the OCA Diocese of New York and New Jersey.

From the bottom of my heart, I thank you in advance for your faith-filled response to this national disaster, and pray that God will bless you richly for the holy work that you undertake in His Name.

With my humble prayers, Archpastoral blessings and sincere love,

+ MICHAEL

Archbishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey



***Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News***  
**Metropolitan Tikhon presides at triple celebration in Berlin, MD**

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon visited Christ the Savior Mission here August 25-27, 2017 for a triple celebration—the elevation of the community to full parish status; the celebration of the 90th birthday of the parish’s founder, Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak; and the annual Washington, DC Diocesan Day celebration.

The weekend’s festivities opened on Friday, August 25 with the welcoming of Metropolitan Tikhon, together with family and friends of Father Daniel and Matushka Dunia, for a dinner in their honor.

“His Beatitude conveyed the sincere best wishes and congratulations of the Holy Synod, the Chancery and the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, of which Father Daniel has been a faithful priest for 60-plus years, serving in numerous parishes and capacities, most notably as chancellor, treasurer, secretary, and head of the OCA Representation Church of Saint Catherine in Moscow,” said Priest John Parsells, Rector. “At the conclusion of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy on Saturday, Father Daniel and Matushka Dunia were presented with the Order of Saint Innocent, Gold Class—the OCA’s highest award.”

Clergy and faithful from the Archdiocese of Washington gathered at Christ the Savior on Saturday, August 26, joining those already in attendance, to celebrate their annual Diocesan Day, which provides an occasion for the unity of the Archdiocese to be concretely experienced in joyful gathering for worship, spiritual conversation, and fellowship. After the Divine Liturgy, during which Dr. Nicholas Borodulia was tonsured to the order of Reader, attendees enjoyed a festive barbecue, an open house in the rectory, and a little relaxation in the parish pool. Following a spiritual discussion with Metropolitan Tikhon, the day concluded with the celebration of Great Vespers in the chapel.

“The festive and noteworthy events of the weekend continued as His Beatitude elevated the church from mission to full parish status,” Father John added. “This officially marked the coming of age of the community which was established some 17 years earlier in Fenwick Island, DE, before relocating to Dagsboro, DE, and finally settling in Berlin, MD. The ‘graduation to parish status,’ following exactly one year after the mortgage burning celebration, signified that the community had reached the necessary level of institutional maturity and stability established in the Archdiocesan guidelines for parishes to which the church aspired since its inception in 2000.”

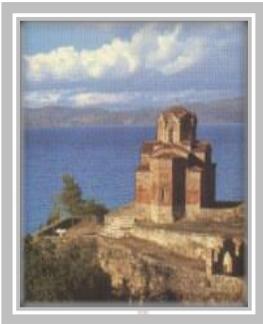
Metropolitan Tikhon congratulated the entire community, thanking them for their efforts in service to God, and bestowed upon Father John the privilege of wearing the gold cross.

“We thank all those who traveled, in some cases at great distances, to celebrate the coinciding of these joyous occasions, and we also congratulate those who wished to but could not be in attendance,” Father John concluded. “We thank His Beatitude, accompanied by Archdeacon Joseph Matusiak, Subdeacon Roman Ostash,

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and the priests and deacons who led the divine services and festivities. We heartily wish Protopresbyter Daniel and Matushka Dunia, the members, benefactors, supporters, and all the faithful, including the newly tonsured Reader Nicholas, health, strength, salvation, a furtherance in every good thing, and many blessed years! We ask the Lord to grant eternal memory and rest with the Saints to all the departed members of Christ the Savior, who have gone before us in the assurance of the resurrection. And most importantly, we bow down most deeply before Almighty God, overwhelmed by gratitude and filled with awe in the face of His majesty, providential care, and merciful kindness to us, glorifying and thanking Him for the gift of this small humble parish which bears His Holy Name and unites us to Him and one another in the joy and peace of eternal life, experienced already in this age!

Several photo galleries may be viewed on the Christ the Savior Church web site.



***Prayers by the Laker, St. Velimirovich, XXIII:***

*The chamber of my soul* is not aired out, and You, O awesome Holy Spirit, are knocking at the door. Just a moment, while I air out my chamber from its unclean spirits, and I shall open the door for You. For if I opened it as it is, You would not enter into a chamber full of bad odors and would withdraw from my door forever. Just one moment, I beseech You, my most important guest!

Ah my shame and my sorrow, how that one moment is being prolonged! Just a little longer and my whole lifetime on earth will find its place within that moment. Yet You patient-ly wait at the door, and listen to my breathing.

The uninvited guests within me are impudent, they are impudent and have multiplied exceedingly. If I try to open a window, they gull my hands back. If I set out for the door to feel Your life-giving presence, they bind my feet. They tie me by force of habit to their foul stench, so that I am afraid of what is fresh and shrink back from what is new. Ah if only I am not too late to open the door to You!

But behold, even at the price of this life of slavery, I will open wide all the windows and in the name of the Most Pure Virgin and Her Son I will chase out of myself all the malicious masters and tyrants of my soul. And when You enter, You will bring my corpse to life with Your life-giving breath, with Your youthful strength, with Your loving dew.

O Spirit of manly strength, of matinal plenitude and vesperal quietude--You who are lighter than sleep, swifter than wind, fresher than dew, sweeter than a mother's voice, brighter than fire, holier than all sacrifices, stronger than the universe, more alive than life--to You I pray and You I wor-ship; become my companion on the rugged path to the eter-nal blessedness of the Triune Godhead.

O fiery Spirit, You are never separated from the Virginity of Eternity. Pierce my soul, cleanse her, illuminate her, per-fume her with heavenly incense, enter her and make her Your bride, so that the hymn of Divine wisdom may be conceived within her; so that the Eye of eternity may be opened within her.

You arise early and never sleep, teach me to keep watch vigilantly and to wait patiently.

***300 Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, CXXIII:***

**III. Us and Our Neighbors**

*Love Toward Enemies*

When you have been insulted, cursed, or persecuted by someone, do not think of what has happened to you, but of what will come from it, and you will see that your insulter has become the cause of many benefits to you, not only in this age, but in that which is to come.

**St. Mark the Ascetic, Homilies, 1.114**



***The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration by Abbott Tryphon***

**Poustinia**

*The importance of the desert to the inner life*

The Russian word, “Poustinia”, means “desert”, and the importance of the poustinia to the inner life cannot be dismissed. If we are to hear the voice of God speaking to us, we must listen to His silence. If we are to learn to hear His voice, we must learn to be silent. Without recollection and silence, the inner life is impossible, and we will not make spiritual progress.

The desert must be a part of our daily living, for without entering into the desert of the heart, nothing can be gained. With the noise of the Internet, and the world of computers, iPods, laptops, and iPhones, the noise of the world threatens our soul like nothing in the previous history of humanity. The world of cybernetics has its place, but we must not allow it to overwhelm the spiritual dimension of our humanity.



### **Daily Reflection** **Small Acts of Kindness**



*“Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.” (Mt 10: 40-42)*

By “these little ones” Christ means anyone who happens to come to Him, or be brought to Him by others, – even little children, who may not even understand that they are being brought to Him, or Who He is, or what He is all about (cf. Mt 18: 4-6). In other words, I can bring “reward” or blessing into my world, both by simply being “one of these little ones” and allowing small acts of kindness to be done to me, or by doing unto other “little ones” small acts of kindness.

So today let me not underestimate the value of small acts of kindness, be it the everyday responsibilities of a mom or dad to their children, like making breakfast, or going to their boring workplace and sitting in a cubicle all day for their daily bread; or providing “a cold cup of water” to a hurricane-survivor through a small donation to a charity-organization (like International Orthodox Christian Charities, now helping victims of Hurricane Harvey in Houston, - look it up here on Facebook!); or just offering a kind word to the lonely old lady in the elevator, instead of burying my nose in my phone, in disinterested silence.

Because any act of kindness, done in and from the light of the Lord’s word, said to us here, will be “rewarded,” rather than underestimated, by Him. Thank You, Lord, for asking so little of us, because many of us have so little to give.

### **Holy Orthodox Quotes**

*“Grant me the heart of Jesus, around which darkness waited in vain to enter, but never could.”*

**- St. Nikolai Velimirovich**

### **Ancient Christian Wisdom**

Struggle, my child, for God’s road is narrow and thorny; not inherently, but because of our passions. Since we want to eradicate from our heart the passions, which are like thorny roots, so that we may plant useful plants, naturally we shall toil greatly and our hands will bleed and our face will sweat. Sometimes even despair will overcome us, seeing roots and passions everywhere! But with our hope in Christ, the Repairer of our souls, let us diligently work at clearing the earth of our heart. Patience, mourning, humility, obedience, cutting off one’s will - all these virtues help cultivate it. We must apply all our strength, and then God, seeing our labor, comes and blesses it, and thus we make progress.

**- Elder Ephraim**

### **Through the Grace of God – Orthodox Christianity** **Archimandrite Irene Sternberg: Love of Christ**

*“The love of Christ is never a love that “accepts people as they are”: it is always a love that takes people as they are and changes them into something new, precious and divine.”*