

*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 17, 2017**

Gospel (Sunday After): Mark 8:34-9:1  
Gospel: Matthew 22:35-46

**Tone 6**  
Epistle (Sunday After): Galatians 2:16-20  
Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15

*15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross. Sunday after Elevation.*

Martyr Sophia, and her three daughters: Faith (Vera), Hope (Nadézhdá), and Love (Liubóv', Charity), at Rome (ca. 137). Martyrs Theodota at Nicæa (ca. 230). Martyr Agathocleia (ca. 230). 156 Martyrs of Palestine, including Bishop Peleus and Nilus, the Presbyter, Zeno, the Noblemen Paternuthius and Elias, and others (ca. 310).

**Troparion – Tone 1**

*O Lord, save Your people, / And bless You inheritance. / Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians / Over their adversaries. / And by virtue of Your Cross, / Preserve Your habitation.*

**Kontakion – Tone 4**

*As You were voluntarily raised upon the cross for our sake, / Grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God; / Make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power, / Granting them victories over their adversaries, / By bestowing on them the Invincible trophy, Your weapon of Peace.*

*From September 15 until the Leavetaking, we sing “O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. O son of God crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia” at weekday Liturgies following the Little Entrance.*



*Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross*

**Prayer Requests**

**For Health of:**

**Walter Stefy**, on his birthday, offered by his mother Lore Stefy.

**Mary Kuzemchak**, offered by Bill & MaryAnn Kuzemchak.

Newborn **Alexander Fornadel**, born September 8 and transported to Children's National Medical Center in Washington DC for specialty care; and his mother and father, **Christen and Chris Fornadel**, of Saints Peter and Paul Church in South River NJ, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

**Father Yakov Ryklin**, who underwent eye surgery on Friday, September 15, offered by Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

**Victims of Hurricane Harvey and Irma**, offered by Orthodox Church Mother of God, Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

**In Memory of:**

**Victims of Hurricane Harvey and Irma**, offered by Orthodox Church Mother of God, Archbishop Michael and the Diocese of NY/NJ.

**The Philokalia: Daily Readings**

Thus we need discernment in all things if we are to know how to act so as to do the will of God. For God, as the Creator of all things, knows our nature thoroughly and has ordered all things for our benefit.

**- St Peter of Damascus, A Treasury of Divine Knowledge**

*Liturgical Schedule*

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

9:30 am: Sunday School  
grades 4-8

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy  
After Communion: Sunday  
School pre-K - Grade 3

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

6:30 pm: Vespers

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

9:30 am: Sunday School  
grades 4-8

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy  
After Communion: Sunday  
School pre-K - Grade 3

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

6:30 pm: Vespers

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

9:30 am: No Sunday School

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Divine Liturgy  
After Communion: Sunday  
School pre-K - Grade 3

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

6:30 pm: Vespers

*Bulletin Sponsors*

*Lore Stefy; Bill &  
MaryAnn Kuzemchak*

*Readings:*

**The Prokeimenon in the 7<sup>th</sup> Tone:**

Extol the Lord our God: / worship at His footstool for it is holy!  
(*Psalms 98:5*)  
vs. The Lord reigns, let the people tremble!  
(*Psalms 98:1*)

**Epistle (Sunday After): Galatians 2:16-20**

**Brethren**, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

**Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15**

**Brethren**, it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For while we live we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you. Since we have the same spirit of faith as he had who wrote, "I believed, and so I spoke," we too believed, and so we speak, knowing that He who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into His presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

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

Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old!  
(*Psalms 73:2*)  
vs. God is our King before the ages; He has wrought salvation in the midst of the earth.  
(*Psalms 73;12*)

**Gospel (Sunday After): Mark 8:34-9:1**

**When He had called the people to Himself**, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole

world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

**Gospel:** Matthew 22:35-46

**At that time**, a lawyer, asked him a question, to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them a question, saying, "What do you think of the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." He said to them, "How is it then that David, inspired by the Spirit, calls him Lord, saying, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, till I put thy enemies under thy feet'? If David thus calls him Lord, how is he his son?" And no one was able to answer him a word, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

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***Orthodox Quote of the Day***

We shouldn't be vainglorious about health, or beauty, or any other gifts of God... All that is earthly is inconstant—both beauty and health. We have to thank the Lord—thank Him with humility, recognizing our unworthiness, and not be vainglorious about anything.

**St. Nikon of Optina**

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***Martyr Sophia and her three daughters at Rome***



The Holy Martyrs Saint Sophia and her Daughters Faith, Hope and Love were born in Italy. Their mother was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine. Saint Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Sophia and her daughters did not hide their faith in Christ, but openly confessed it before everyone.

An official named Antiochus denounced them to the emperor Hadrian (117-138), who ordered that they be brought to Rome. Realizing that they would be taken before the emperor, the holy virgins prayed fervently to the Lord Jesus Christ, asking that He give them the strength not to fear torture and death. When the holy virgins and their mother came before the emperor, everyone present was amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Summoning each of the sisters in turn, Hadrian urged them to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. The young girls remained unyielding.

Then the emperor ordered them to be tortured. They burned the holy virgins over an iron grating, then threw them into a red-hot oven, and finally into a cauldron with boiling tar, but the Lord preserved them.

The youngest child, Love, was tied to a wheel and they beat her with rods until her body was covered all over with bloody welts. After undergoing unspeakable torments, the holy virgins glorified their Heavenly Bridegroom and remained steadfast in the Faith.

They subjected Saint Sophia to another grievous torture: the mother was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage, and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword.

In order to intensify Saint Sophia's inner suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters. She placed their remains in coffins and loaded them on a wagon. She drove beyond the city limits and reverently buried them on a high hill. Saint Sophia sat there by the graves of her daughters for three days, and finally she gave up her soul to the Lord. Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyr's crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters.

The relics of the holy martyrs have rested at El'zasa, in the church of Esho since the year 777.



**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*

**Church School news:** Sunday school begins today! Grades 4 through 8 meet at 9:30 AM. Grades pre-K through 3 will meet immediately after Communion.

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

**Sisterhood news:** ..The Sisterhood will be sponsoring a fundraiser selling gourmet popcorn and snacks. The fundraiser will run from this Sunday, Sept. 17th, through Oct. 1st. One half of all the costs for items purchased will be returned directly to the Sisterhood. We are asking that all parish families participate in this fundraiser. Please see Tammy Zimmerman for more information.

This year, our feast day celebration will be held outside of church at Cousin Mario's restaurant on Harding Highway. The celebration will be on Sunday Oct. 8th at 12:15 PM. All Sisterhood members in good standing are invited to attend. The Sisterhood will be covering the cost of the luncheon. Alcoholic beverages are not included. Please see Linda Dantine for more information, and to RSVP.

There will be a special collection taken today and next Sunday to aid the victims of both hurricane Harvey and hurricane Irma. Please be generous in your donations.

### *Wisdom of the Church Fathers*

A certain monk asked St. Anthony the Great, "What must I do to be saved?" The elder answered him, "Don't trust in your own righteousness, don't worry about what's past, and constrain your tongue and your stomach."

**Saint Anthony the Great**  
(251-356)



### *NY/NJ Diocese News*

2017 ANNUAL DIOCESAN GIRLS RETREAT  
NOVEMBER 10-12, 2017

**THEME:** Connection Established: Journeying with Your Patron Saint

**OPEN TO:** Young Women in Grades 7-12

**WHEN:** Friday, November 10th - Sunday, November 12th

**WHERE:** Saint Basil Academy - 79 St Basil's Rd, Garrison, NY 10524

**SPEAKER:** Melinda Johnson, author of *Letters to Saint Lydia*

“**Connection Established: Journeying With Your Patron Saint**” is this year’s retreat theme. We have designed a weekend program with guest speaker **Melinda Johnson, an author of Orthodox books for children and young adults**; one of Melinda’s most noteworthy works is *Letters to Saint Lydia*. Melinda was not always an Orthodox Christian, and her journey to Orthodoxy went hand-in-hand with her journey into writing *Letters to Saint Lydia*. During her time with us she will share the story of how she came to Orthodoxy and how she came to St. Lydia, how her journey made the book possible, and how that book has led her to where she is today. Her sessions will be engaging and interactive, so come prepared for great discussions and an open-mind for connecting more fully with the saints of the church, specifically your own.

### **OFFICIAL: Assembling IOCC Emergency Kits**

Very Reverend, Reverend and Dear Fathers, Beloved in the Lord:

As promised in the recent letter from His Eminence appealing for parishes' assistance in relief efforts for hurricane victims, here is a link to IOCC's website offering details on the assembly of emergency kits.

<https://www.iocc.org/take-action/assemble-emergency-kits>

IOCC is also now requesting that those persons or parishes who can, assemble and send emergency clean-up buckets. The buckets involve different materials and shipping considerations than the kits; but perhaps some of our parishioners will be able to undertake this effort. Details are at:

<https://www.iocc.org/take-action/assemble-emergency-kits/clean-up-bucket>

Please read the information on the IOCC site and offer what you can.



### ***Orthodox Church in America (OCA) News***

#### **In The News: Hurricanes, an earthquake, 9/11, and a conference**

#### **OCA parishes weather hurricanes, earthquake**

While communications have been difficult as a result of the recent hurricanes affecting the South and the major earthquake that hit Mexico, it appears that OCA parishes and communities in the affected areas have largely “weathered the storms.”

In Texas, Father Dimitri Cozby, Priest-in-Charge of Victoria’s All Saints Mission, reports that while his church was undamaged except for several downed trees, recovery efforts were being offered locally from other parts of Texas, from neighboring states, and from countless volunteers. “A couple of carloads of 20-somethings from Saint Anthony Parish in San Antonio came down and cleaned up our property and the properties of some in our neighbors, thereby enabling me to help a wheel-chair bound parishioner to get his downed trees cleared,” Father Dimitri says. “We also helped a volunteer worker from central Texas get his equipment fixed after he and the equipment got caught in the flooding. A member of the Antiochian parish in Waco sent us \$1000.00, which we are distributing especially to our Eritrean members—we are still trying to locate some of them who evacuated and find out their needs.”

Closer to Houston, Father Benedict Crawford, Priest-in-Charge of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem Mission, The Woodlands, TX, reports that “our area thankfully was not hit nearly as hard as Father Dimitri’s, and the flood waters quickly receded.” He adds that a number of parishioners had experienced various degrees of flooding and damage to their homes, but that cleanup efforts had already been concluded or were ongoing.

Meanwhile in Jacksonville, FL—especially hard hit by flooding—Father Ted Pisarchuk reports that Saint Justin Martyr Church experienced no damage, other than a downed tree blocking the church entrance. As of Wednesday, September 13, he knew of no major damage to any parishes in his deanery.

Miami’s Christ the Savior Cathedral also suffered downed trees, but there was no damage to the church or hall. Father Patrick Smith, Rector of Saint Andrew Church, New Port Richey, FL, reports “minimal damage,” while

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

Father Joseph Ciarciaglino, Priest-in-Charge of Tampa’s Saint Philip Mission, is thankful that “all are accounted for and there was no damage at anyone’s house, or at the church.”

“Thanks to God, there seems to be no injury to any faithful and no major loss of property due to Hurricane Irma,” says Father Marcus Burch, Chancellor of the Diocese of the South. “The one exception is that a 100 year oak tree fell on Father Theophan Buck’s house in Macon, GA, destroying a third of it. Fortunately he and his wife and daughter were in another part of the house at the time, and sustained no injury.”

Elsewhere across Florida, Father Gleb McFatter, Priest-in-Charge of Saint Demetrius Mission, Naples, FL, reports that while damage in the area was widespread, the church “has been spared any major—or really even minor—damage.” Father Leonid Palceski, Rector of Holy Cross Church, Fort Myers, FL, reports that while his church was spared from flooding, damage to the cross on the cupola over the altar caused water damage. Meanwhile, Father Stephen Lourie, Priest-in-Charge of Holy Spirit Church, Venice, FL, reports only minor damage, adding that no parishioners had been seriously affected. Father John Chudik, Rector of Bradenton’s Saint Mark Church, reports that “all is well” in his parish.

Meanwhile, His Eminence, Archbishop Alejo of Mexico City says that no damage was reported by any of the churches or missions in his diocese during the magnitude 8.1 earthquake—the strongest to hit Mexico in a century—late Thursday night, September 7.

Those who know of any major damage to parishes or the homes of faithful across the Diocese of the South and/or the Diocese of Mexico are kindly asked to send information to the Orthodox Church in America at [info@oca.org](mailto:info@oca.org) for inclusion in an upcoming article.

**9/11 victims remembered at OCA’s St. Catherine Representation Church, Moscow**

Every year since September 11, 2001, the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America’s Representation Church of the Great Martyr Catherine in Moscow have commemorated the terrorist attacks on the US and offered prayers for their victims. This year’s commemoration—which coincided with the celebration of the Feast of the Beheading of Saint John the Baptist on the Julian Calendar—was attended by Minister Counselor for Political Affairs of the US Embassy in Moscow, Christopher T. Robinson, and Secretary for Political Affairs of the Embassy of Canada in Moscow, Nina Kondraty. At the conclusion of the service, the commemorative bell was rung 16 times in honor of those who lost their lives on that day.

Prior to the service, Archpriest Christopher Hill read the message of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon to the clergy and faithful of the parish.

“As the Representation Church of the Orthodox Church in America, it is worthy and right that you commemorate the tragic violence of September 11, 2001, by praying for all those who died on that Day of Terror,” Metropolitan Tikhon wrote. “The Orthodox Faith respects and honors every human being as a being created in the image and likeness of God. Acts of terror are violent assaults on men, women and children who are precious in the sight of God.

“Our prayer today for the thousands who died in the towers of the World Trade Center, in Washington, and in the downing of Flight 93, is our prayerful witness for loving memory, our prayerful witness against acts of terror, our prayerful witness for true humanity, for human dignity, for a world of peace and mutual respect,” Metropolitan Tikhon continued. “Russians and Americans hold in common experiences and memories of terrorism. These experiences and memories hold our peoples and nations together as witnesses to suffering, and also as witnesses to the power and grace of compassion. Let us together create a better and humane world, a world open to the presence of God. May the blessing of the Lord be upon you, through His grace and love for mankind, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.”

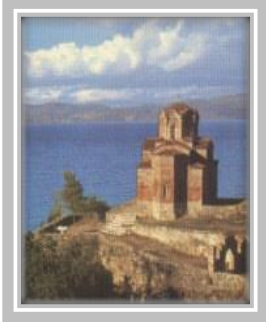
**Archbishop Michael to deliver keynote at Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black annual conference October 6–8**

The Brotherhood of Saint Moses the Black will hold its 24th annual conference at the Mother of God, Joy of All Who Sorrow Church, Princeton, NJ October 6–8, 2017.

The conference theme—“Closer to Christ, Closer to Each Other”—will be introduced in the keynote address by His Eminence, Archbishop Michael of New York and New Jersey. Other presenters will include Archpriest Moses Berry, Priest Jerome Sanderson, Hieromonk Alexii [Altschul], Al Raboteau and Mother Katherine.

Advanced registration may be made on-line or by contacting Carla Thomas, PO Box 1887, Anniston, AL 36202-1887; 1-256-239-7353; [panteleimonmd@aol.com](mailto:panteleimonmd@aol.com). The conference fee is \$100.00. Limited scholarships are available upon request. Discounted lodging—\$119.00 per night—is available from the Holiday Inn Princeton,

100 Independence Way, Princeton, NJ. Reservations also may be made by calling 1-855-914-1890.



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

You pour Your holy oil into the stars, O Holy Spirit, and out of senseless conflagrations You make vigil lamps before the Glory of Heaven. Pour Yourself into my soul also, and out of a passionate conflagration make a vigil lamp before the heavens.

You stroll through fields of flowers without being heard, and You sprinkle the flowers with Your grace, so that the blood of the earth may not look through, but the beauty of God. Sprinkle the field of my soul with Your grace also, so that it may not be said that the field of my soul sprouted from the blood of the earth, but that it is adorned with the beauty of God.

You mingle with every heap of ashes and pour in life. Pour life into the ashes of my body also, so that I may live and glorify Your works.

You tame the fire and wind, and out of demons of fury You make servants of the Most High. Tame my pride and make me a servant of the Most High.

You are kind to the animals in the woods. Show kindness to me also, who am animalized by ignorance.

You fertilize every seed of life. You hover in every womb. You sit in the egg of a bird's nest and masterfully form a new miracle of life. Fertilize, I beseech You, the invisible seed of goodness within me also, and keep watch over it until it reaches maturity.

O Awesome and Almighty Spirit, by Your presence You turn a den of thieves into a haven of Heaven, and a terrifying universe into a temple of God. Descend into me also, I beseech You, and turn a handful of ashes into what You know how to do and can.

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

**III. Us and Our Neighbors**

*Love Toward Enemies*

Do not desire to hear about the misfortunes of those who oppose you. For those who listen to such speech later reap the fruits of their evil intention.

**St. Mark the Ascetic, Homilies, 2.173**



*The Morning Offering – Daily Inspiration by Abbott Tryphon*

**Avoiding Hypocrisy**

*We must not let our Christian Faith be artificial*

It is very easy to live our lives in hypocrisy if we are not mindful of the pitfalls of the spiritual life. We can become Pharisees without even noticing, if we let our Christianity be artificially lived. Living our lives as though we have been rehearsed by a stage director, we will have accomplished nothing, and will remain no more than an actor. Putting on the mask of Christianity, is not living in Christ. An honest, daily examination of our conscience, together with regular guidance by our confessor, is the only way we can live a Christian life that will lead to transformation of the heart.

If we simply put on a show of being a Christian, without any true repentance, we will remain mired in false religiosity, and our heart will grow dark. Christ must be invited into the heart on a daily basis, through prayer, and honest examination of our conscience, without which there can be no spiritual growth. We cannot play at being a Christian, for to do so will lead to spiritual death.

We must “put on Christ”, daily, and make sure our public expression of our faith is not being acted out for others, but is ever entering into a deeper relationship with this very Christ. Playing at spirituality only leads to spiritual death. If our life does not give witness to Christ in us, and if our attention is given over to self-promotion, or a desire to please others, but avoids honest examination of our sins, we will be like fruit that dies on the vine.



*Coffee with  
St. Yvonne*

115 Hudson Street, Mays Landing, New Jersey 08330

See us on the web at: [ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin](http://ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin)

*Daily Reflection*  
**Leaving the Results to God**



Phone: 856-227-6915 Em

E-Mail us at: [OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com](mailto:OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com)

*“Therefore, holy brethren, partakers (μέτοχοι) in a heavenly call, consider Jesus, the Apostle and High Priest of our confession. He was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in his house. Yet Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, as the builder of a house has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.” (Hebr 3: 1-4)*

Here’s a simple, but liberating, thought. As we go about our vocations, as “partakers in a heavenly call,” we participate in the building of our own “house,” in light of God’s life-giving word. We go about our daily responsibilities, trying to do the next right thing, growing and developing both physically and spiritually. But as we do “the next right thing,” whether it’s caring for our physical well-being (e.g., maintaining a healthy diet, getting enough exercise and sleep), or for our spiritual health (e.g., maintaining a connection with God in daily prayer and some healthy reading, and embracing consistent forgiveness of ourselves and others), we leave the “results” of our efforts to God. Because “the builder of all things is God.”

So let me do what I need to do today, according to my responsibilities, but leave the results to God. He alone is the Judge of my “progress,” so I can relax on that account. Glory be to Him.

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### *Holy Orthodox Quotes*

“But my sin was this, that I looked for pleasure, beauty, and truth not in Him but in myself and His other creatures, and the search led me instead to pain, confusion, and error.

- St. Augustine

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### *Ancient Christian Wisdom*

If there is a time for everything under heaven, as Ecclesiastes says, and by the word ‘everything’ must be understood what concerns our holy life, then if you please, let us look into it and let us seek to do at each time what is proper for that occasion. For it is certain that, for those who enter the lists, there is a time for dispassion and a time for passion (I say this for the combatants who are serving their apprenticeship); there is a time for tears, and a time for hardness of heart; there is a time for obedience, and there is a time to command; there is a time to fast, and a time to partake; there is a time for battle with our enemy the body, and a time when the fire is dead; a time of storm in the soul, and a time of calm in the mind; a time for heartfelt sorrow, and a time for spiritual joy; a time for teaching, and a time for listening; a time of pollutions, perhaps on account of conceit, and a time for cleansing by humility; a time for struggle, and a time for safe relaxation; a time for stillness, and a time for undistracted distraction; a time for unceasing prayer, and a time for sincere service. So let us not be deceived by proud zeal, and seek prematurely what will come in its own good time; that is, we should not seek in winter what comes in summer, or at seed time what comes at harvest; because there is a time to sow labours, and a time to reap the unspeakable gifts of grace. Otherwise, we shall not receive even in season what is proper to that season.

+ St. John Climacus

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### *Through the Grace of God – Orthodox Christianity*

#### **Monk Simeon the Athonite: Spiritual Reading**

“It’s not who we are when we read a spiritual book that is most important, but who we are when we close it.”