

*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, September 20, 2015**

**Tone 7**

Gospel: Matthew 25:14-30

Epistle: II Corinthians 6:1-10

*16<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross*

**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**



**Glory  
Forever!**

*Afterfeast of the  
Elevation of the Cross*

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

## **Today the Church Remembers**

**16<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 7. Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross. Sunday after Elevation.** Greatmartyr Eustathius (Eustace) Placidus, his wife, Martyr Theopistes, and their children, Martyrs Agapius and Theopistus, of Rome (ca. 118). Holy Martyr and Confessor Michael and his councilor, Theodore, Wonderworkers of Chernigov (1245). Rt. Blv. Oleg, Prince of Briansk (ca. 1280). Monk Martyr Hilarion of St. Anne Skete (Mt. Athos—1804).

## **Weekly Bulletin Sponsors**

**For Health of:**

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

***Liturgical Schedule:***

**Sunday, September 20<sup>th</sup>**

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

**Saturday, September 26<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, September 27<sup>th</sup>**

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

**Saturday, October 3<sup>rd</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup>**

9:30 am: Sunday School  
9:40 am: Hours  
9:45 am: General Confession  
10:00 am: Divine Liturgy

***Readings:***

**Epistle:** II Corinthians 6:1-10

**Brethren**, working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain. For he says, "At the acceptable time I have listened to you, and helped you on the day of salvation." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation. We put no obstacle in any one's way, so that no fault may be found with our ministry, but as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: through great endurance, in afflictions, hardships, calamities, beatings, imprisonments, tumults, labours, watching, hunger; by purity, knowledge, forbearance, kindness, the Holy Spirit, genuine love, truthful speech, and the power of God; with the weapons of righteousness for the right hand and for the left; in honour and dishonour, in ill repute and good repute. We are treated as impostors, and yet are true; as unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and behold we live; as punished, and yet not killed; as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

**Gospel:** Matthew 25:14-30

**The Lord said this parable:** "For it will be as when a man going on a journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth.'



**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](mailto: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.

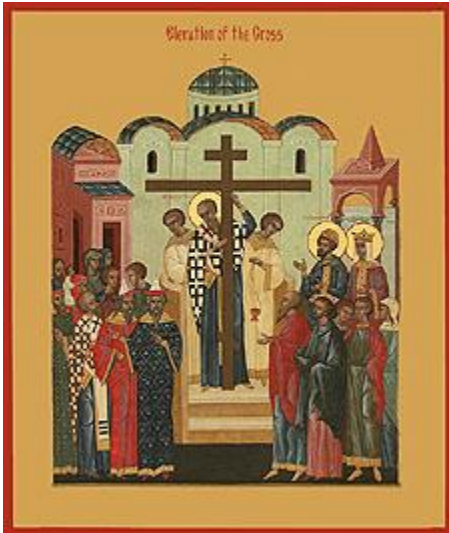
**SPECIAL PARISH MEETING:** Today, September 27th, following the Coffee Hour there will be a parish meeting to approve minor changes to the Amendment to the Parish Corporation Papers which will update their content. Please attend this very important meeting. Council meeting will be following the Special meeting.

**Registration for Sunday School is now on-going. Registration forms can be found at the candle stand. Even if your child attended Sunday School last year, please fill out a new registration form. Sunday School classes will begin SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20TH. The upper elementary class will meet at 9:30 each week except for the first Sunday of the month, when there will be no class. The pre-school/primary class will meet immediately after Divine Liturgy every week, including the first Sunday of the month. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE SEE MARIBETH ROMANOFSKY OR LINDA DANTINNE.**

There will be a 40 DAY PANNIKHIDA SERVICE for Elena (Helen) Wolfe on October 25<sup>th</sup> with a dinner to follow.



### *Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross*



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.

### *Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai 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 patiently 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 pull 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 maternal plenitude and vespereal 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 worship; become my companion on the rugged path to the eternal blessedness of the Triune Godhead.

O fiery Spirit, You are never separated from the Virginity of Eternity. Pierce my soul, cleanse her, illuminate her, perfume 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.

### *Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox Church, XXII*

#### **Those Who Have Known God**

When you throw a nail into a fire, it gets hot and starts to glow like fire. In the same way you, when you listen to divine teachings and live accordingly, will become like God.

St. Symeon of Daibabe, Sayings, 26

## **The Prologue of Ohrid**

St. Nikolai Velimirovic

### **Reflection**

Suicide is a mortal sin and an act of defiance against the Holy Spirit, Who gives life. Suicide is a much greater sin than murder, since for the sin of murder a man can still repent; but for the sin of suicide there is no repentance. Here are two examples of overwhelming misfortune, in the face of which a fainthearted man would commit suicide, yet in which holy men of God showed themselves to be heroes.

St. Eustathius found himself in the following predicament: he left one of his sons on the bank of a river, while he carried the other son to the opposite bank and returned for the first son. Halfway back across the river, he saw that a lion had seized his son and carried him away. He looked at the other bank and saw a wolf seize the second son and carry him away. A fainthearted man in such a situation would have drowned himself in the water, and made an end to his life. Even though drowning in sorrow, Eustathius did not commit suicide, but with hope in God lived as a hireling for fifteen years. This patient man lived to see his two sons again. Thus, God rewarded his faith and patience.

As a young man, St. Hilarion was forced to become a Moslem, but his conscience began to torment him cruelly, and he had no peace at all. He returned to the Christian Faith, was tonsured a monk, and gave his body over to intense fasting and every difficult ascetic labour. Even so, his peace of soul did not return to him. A fainthearted man of little faith would have committed suicide. But Hilarion chose an incomparably better path. He went to Constantinople with his spiritual father Bessarion, and not only openly confessed the Christian Faith at the sultan's court, but even counselled him to go to Russia and be baptized. After being subjected to mockery and torture, this courageous young man was beheaded, and God glorified him both in heaven and on earth. Even today, his holy relics are miracle-working. But where is the glory of those who commit suicide? Where are their relics?

### **Contemplation**

Contemplate the righteousness of King Jehoshaphat, and God's reward (II Chronicles 17):

1. How Jehoshaphat was zealous for God's truth, and how he destroyed the idols in his land;
2. How God granted him riches, glory, peace and victory over his enemies.

### **Homily:**

#### **on the only Way, Truth and Life**

*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me (John 14:6)*

Brethren, these words were not merely spoken, but were soaked with blood, confirmed by the Resurrection, instilled by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of the faithful, and proven again and again by the Church through ages and ages. Of all the treasures on earth, men love life the most--and they love life more than they do truth, even though there is no life without truth. Thus, the highest good is life, but truth is the foundation of life. He who loves life, must also love truth. But where is the way to truth? Our Lord says: *I am the Way*. He did not say: "I am a way," so that none would think there is another way to truth besides the Lord Jesus. And He is not only the Way, but also *the Truth and the Life*, so that none would think that there is some other truth and some other life besides the Lord Jesus. For this He was born as a man, to show men the way; for this He was crucified, to mark the way by His blood. *No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me*. This addresses those who deceive themselves by thinking that they can know God and acquire the Kingdom of God without the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord entirely cut off this false hope and desperate self-deception by these words. The apostle who heard and wrote these words in the Gospel, expressed them in his Epistle in this way: *Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father* (I John 2:23).

O Blessed Lord Jesus Christ, Source of all blessings--truly Thou art for us the only Way, the only Light, the only Truth, the only Life and



Life-giver. We acknowledge Thee before men and angels as our only God and Saviour. Have mercy on us and save us.

**To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.**

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

The parable about the talents offers the thought that life is a time for trading. That means that it is necessary to hasten to use this time as a person would hurry to a market to bargain for what he can. Even if one has only brought bast shoes, or only bast,<sup>[1]</sup> he does not sit with his arms folded, but contrives to call over buyers to sell what he has and then buy for himself what he needs. No one who has received life from the Lord can say that he does not have a single talent—everyone has something, and not just one thing; everyone, therefore, has something with which to trade and make a profit. Do not look around and calculate what others have received, but take a good look at yourself and determine more precisely what lies in you and what you can gain for that which you have, and then act according to this plan without laziness. At the Judgment you will not be asked why you did not gain ten talents if you had only one, and you will not even be asked why you gained only one talent on your one, but you will be told that you gained a talent, half a talent or a tenth of its worth. And the reward will not be because you received the talents, but because you gained. There will be nothing with which to justify yourself—not with nobleness, nor poverty, nor lack of education. When this is not given, there will be no question about it. But you had hands and feet. You will be asked, what did you gain with them? You had a tongue, what did you gain with it? In this way will the inequalities of earthly states be levelled out at God’s judgment.

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***POLITICAL PARTIES***

*Political Ideologies, and our life in the Church*

I was asked, just recently, which political party I thought was the best fit for an Orthodox Christian. My response was that this is an issue, as a priest of Christ's Church, I did not think I should answer. Within the Orthodox Church, internationally, we Orthodox are politically aligned across the map. Yet, as Orthodox Christians, it is important that we remember our true allegiance should be to the Church herself, and to Christ, her Founder and Head. Political ideologues, political parties, and earthly rulers, are a part of this world. In Christ, our true national identity should be Orthodoxy. The scriptures tell us that in Christ, we are "neither male, nor female, Greek nor Jew." We could easily add, "neither American, nor Russian, nor Norwegian", since our true identity is with Christ's Church. For me as an Orthodox priest to push my own political opinions, could potentially undermine the teaching authority of the Church. It is important that the Church stand in witness to the moral and spiritual truths that are of eternal importance, and not to those things which are transitory. History is rife with stories of the Church being discredited, in the minds of the common people, because she failed to stand apart from the political powers of the day. THE most important role of a priest is the proclamation of Christ's Gospel, and the eternal Truth that we must love one another. All else is of this world.

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon

