

*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 27, 2015**

Gospel: Matthew 15:21-28

**Tone 8**

Epistle: II Corinthians 6:16-7:1

*17<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost; Martyr Callistratus and 49 Martyrs with Callistratus*



**Glory to  
Jesus Christ!**

**Glory  
Forever!**

*Martyr Callistratus and  
49 Martyrs with  
Callistratus*

*In contest you were strengthened by the Holy Spirit, Martyr Callistratus,  
and were glorious in casting down the Enemy.*

*You offered a noble army of athletes as sweet-smelling incense to Christ.  
With them pray for us who praise you with hymns.*

## **Today the Church Remembers**

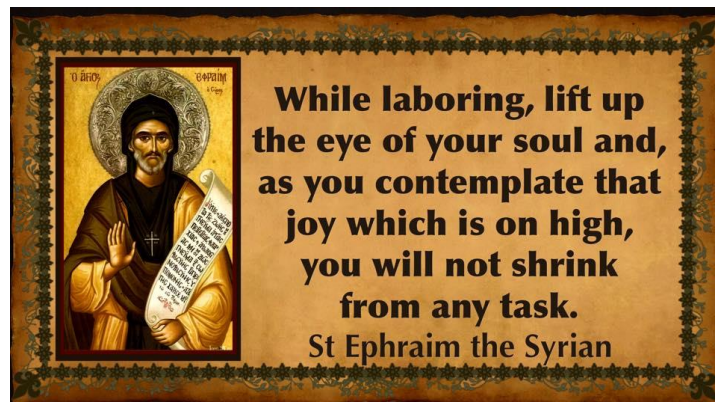
**17<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost — Tone 8.** Martyrs Callistratus and his company (49 Martyrs—ca. 304). Ven. Savvatii (Sabbatius), Wonderworker of Solovétsky Monastery (1435). Apostles Mark, Aristarchus, and Zenas, of the Seventy (1st c.). Martyr Epicharis of Rome (3rd c.). Ven. Ignatius, Abbot in Asia Minor (963-975).

## **Weekly Bulletin Sponsors**

**For Health of:**

**Katie and Jeff Salcedo**, on their 3<sup>rd</sup> anniversary, offered by Sub-Deacon Vlashi.

**Rocky Shepherd**, offered by Jankowski Family and sons..



***Liturgical Schedule:***

**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

**Saturday, October 10<sup>th</sup>**

6:30 pm: Vespers

**Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>**

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

***Readings:***

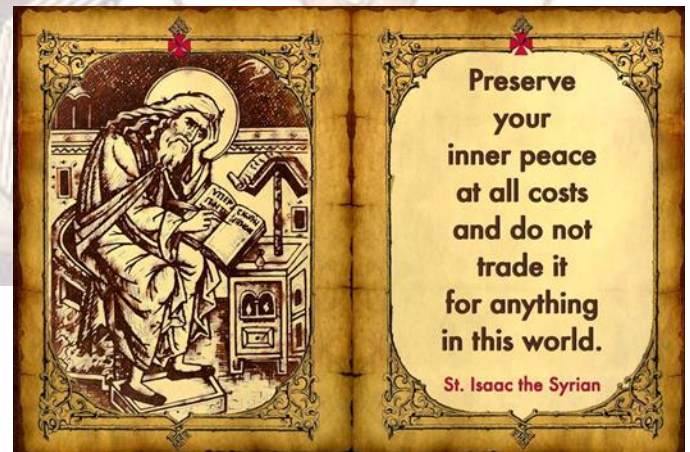
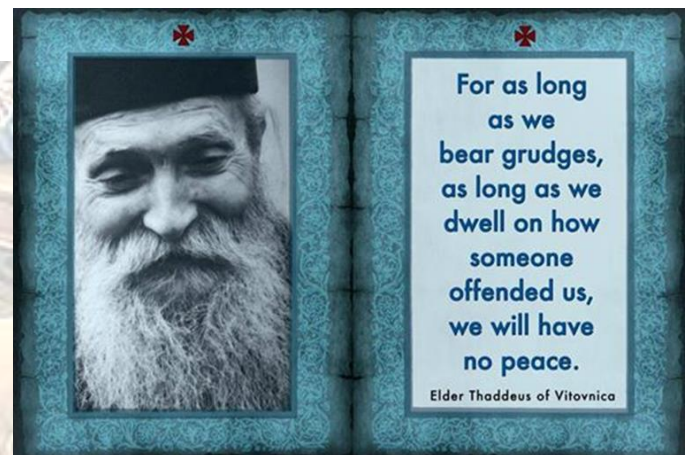
**Epistle:** II Corinthians 6:16-7:1

**Brethren**, what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will live in them and move among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore come out from them, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch nothing unclean; then I will welcome you, >and I will be a father to you, and you shall be my sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty." Working together with him, then, we entreat you not to accept the grace of God in vain.

**Gospel:** Matthew 15:21-28

**At that time**, Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and cried, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely possessed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying

after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not fair to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.







**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.

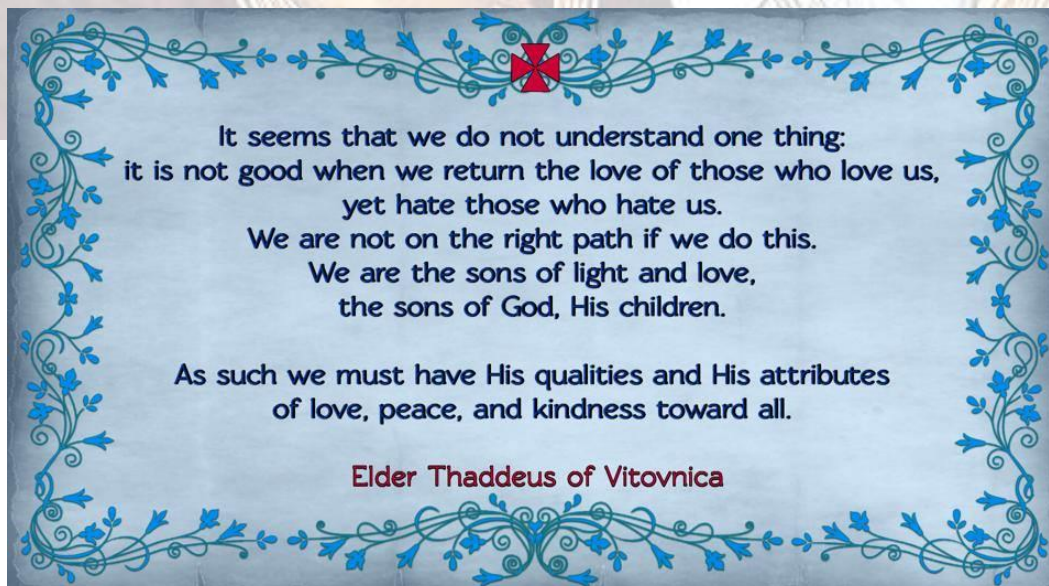
**Special Announcements** for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail:  
[Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

**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.

**There will be a 40 day Pannikhida Service for Elena (Helen) Wolfe on October 25<sup>th</sup> with a dinner to follow.**



### ***Martyr Callistratus and 49 Martyrs with Callistratus***



Saint Callistratus was a native of Carthage. An ancestor of St Callistratus, Neochorus, has served under the emperor Tiberius in Palestine, under the command of Pontius Pilate, the procurator of Judea, and was a witness to the suffering on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, His voluntary death and glorious Resurrection.

The saint's father was a Christian, and he raised his son in faith and piety. Also like his father, St Callistratus became a soldier and excelled among his pagan military comrades by his good conduct and gentle disposition.

At night when everyone slept, he usually stayed up at prayer. Once, a soldier sleeping nearby heard St Callistratus invoking the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he reported this to the military commander, who in turn summoned Callistratus, interrogated him and wanted to make him offer sacrifice to idols. The saint resolutely refused to do this, so the military commander ordered that the saint be beaten. Then, covered with wounds, the saint was dragged over sharp stones. The beating and the torments did not sway the firm will and brave endurance of the sufferer.

The saint was sewn up in a leather sack and drowned in the sea. By God's mercy, however, the sack struck a sharp rock and was torn open.

St Callistratus came to dry land unharmed, carried by dolphins. Viewing such a miracle, forty-nine soldiers came to believe in Christ. Then the military commander threw St Callistratus and the believing soldiers into prison. Before this, all of them were subjected to innumerable floggings.

In jail St Callistratus continued to preach the Word of God to the soldiers and he bolstered their spirits for martyrdom. Summoned again before the military commander, the sufferers firmly confessed their faith in Christ, after which they were bound hand and foot and thrown into a dam. But there their bonds broke, and with bright faces the holy martyrs stood in the water, rejoicing in their Baptism, which coincided with the act of martyrdom.

Beautiful bright crowns appeared over their heads, and all heard a voice: "Be brave, Callistratus, with your company, and come rest in the eternal habitations." At the same time, the earth shuddered and an idol standing nearby fell down and smashed. Seeing this, another 135 soldiers also believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The military commander, fearing a mutiny in the army, did not put them on trial, but again imprisoned St Callistratus with the others, where they fervently prayed and gave thanks to the Creator for giving them power to endure such sufferings.

At night the martyrs were cut to pieces with swords by order of the military commander. Their holy relics were buried by the 135 soldiers who remained alive. Later, a church was built on the spot of their sufferings, as St Callistratus had foretold.

### ***49 Martyrs with Callistratus***

These holy martyrs suffered at Carthage with St Callistratus at the beginning of the fourth century.

St Callistratus was miraculously saved after his tormentors had tied him up in a sack and cast him into the sea. By God's mercy, however, the sack struck a sharp rock and was torn open. St Callistratus came to dry land unharmed, carried by dolphins. Viewing such a miracle, forty-nine soldiers came to believe in Christ. Then the military commander threw St Callistratus and the believing soldiers into prison. Before this, all



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*Prayers by the Lake, St. Nikolai  
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.

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*Sayings of the Ascetics of the Orthodox  
Church, XXIII:*

**Those Who Have Known God**

The soul that has come to know God fully no longer desires anything else, nor does it attach itself to anything on the earth; and if you put before it a kingdom, it would not desire it, for the love of God gives such sweetness and joy to the soul that even the life of a king can no longer give it any sweetness.

St. Silouan the Athonite, Writings, IX.13

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*The Prologue of Ohrid  
St. Nikolai Velimirovic*

**Reflection**

All our riches, glory and honour are as a brief repast that ends at death. No one takes a single crumb of this meal into the other world. Blessed is the one who understands that the soul is his only possession that is not diminished by

anything, not even by death. Such a one thinks only of three realities: death, the soul, and God the Judge. Abba Evagrius teaches: "Hold your approaching death and the Judgment constantly in your mind, and you will preserve your soul from sin." All our bodily cares in this life are like cares about a meal which must soon be cut short. St. Isaiah the Solitary says: "Have death before your eyes every day: think constantly about how you will separate from the body, how you will pass through the region of the powers of darkness who will meet you in the air, and how you will present yourself before God. Prepare yourself for the Dread Day of answering to the Judgment of God, as though you already behold it now." One day, John, a rich merchant, came to St. Sabbatius of Solovki and brought him many alms. Sabbatius did not accept any of it, but rather told the donor to distribute all of it to the needy. John became very sad at this, and the saint, in order to comfort him and make everything clear to him said: "John, my son, stay here and rest until tomorrow, and then you will see the grace of God." John obeyed. The next day, John entered the cell of Sabbatius and saw the elder in final repose, and sensed a wonderful fragrance in the cell. He who foresees the end of his life does not think of worldly goods.

### **Contemplation**

Contemplate the righteousness of King Uzziah, and God's reward (II Chronicles 26):

1. How the king did that which is right in the sight of the Lord;
2. How, as long as he sought the Lord, God made him to prosper.

### **Homily: on Christ's last prayer for the faithful**

*That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee (John 17:21).*

Brethren, God's mercy is great. When a righteous man feels it, he weeps; but when a sinner feels it, he is ashamed. By the mercy of God, we are cleansed, illumined, saved, adopted and united with God Himself. However, no one should construe that, by this unity with God, we

become of the same Essence with God and equal to God. We will never be of one Essence with God, nor equal to God, in the way in which the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are of one Essence and equal in being. That they all may be one the Saviour says to His Father on behalf of His disciples, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, and here He is thinking of the unity of love and not of the unity of nature. From love flows mutual obedience, mutual help, mutual mercy, meekness, humility, goodness, good will and sacrifice. And when the Lord says, Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect (Matthew 5:48), He does not mean that men can be equal to God, but means to show them the supreme example of perfection in every good thing. For many teachers of men have pointed to examples of perfection in some thing or some person, but not in God. Often enough, they have taught men evil, and pointed to it as an example of perfection. That is why the Lord teaches men to take the Heavenly Father as an example of every perfection, and to labour and strive for that true perfection, and not some other. By the grace of God, we are all adopted of God and become one in Christ Jesus (Galatians 3:28). However, we do not become gods; we do not become equal with the Persons of the Holy Trinity. Do not forget that it is said in the Scriptures: The heavens are not clean in His sight (Job 15:15). The majestic powers of the heavens are not even equal to Him, so what then of man? However, by the grace of God, and because of the sufferings of the Lord Jesus, the faithful are raised up into unity with God, in love and spirit. Therefore, let us make an effort to do the will of God, that we in truth may be raised up to such majestic heights.

O Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who art the God of every mercy and goodness; uphold us in Thy mercy to the end, and be not angry with us, but rather forgive us.

**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*



The honorable cross is brought out for veneration in the middle of Great Lent in order to inspire those who toil in fasting to patiently bear the yoke they have taken to the end. Why is this done in September? Is it accidental? But there are no accidents for the Providential Wisdom that arranges all things. This is why: [in Russia], at least, in September the harvest is taken from the field. And so that some of the Christians might not feel too satisfied and say: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry!" and so that others might not fall in spirit because of scarcity, the elevated cross is brought before all. It reminds the former that the support of well-being is not possessions, but their bearing of the cross in a Christian, inner way, should God's goodness bring external plenitude; and it inspires the latter to possess their souls in patience, through the certainty that they will go from the cross directly to heaven. Therefore, may some endure, knowing, that they are travelling a smooth path to the heavenly kingdom; and may the others enjoy external comforts with fear, not sealing the entrance to heaven against themselves

### ***THE REALITY OF GOD***

#### ***Experiencing the reality of God***

My own experience with God is many fold, with everything from witnessing the healing of illnesses of many people, including my own heart condition (I was on the operating table, awaiting bypass surgery, but was healed), to standing before numerous myrrh streaming icons, watching the myrrh well up. I once witnessed a cross (about 12 inches long), held by a Coptic priest friend, literally pouring myrrh into a bucket. Miracles like this are not easily dismissed when you are watching it happen. Perhaps the most impressive miracles I have witnessed over my thirty some years as a monk, have been the healing of people's hearts. Previously evil people, totally focused on themselves, and hateful to others, have been miraculously transformed into loving, caring, individuals who have become filled with the desire to serve others.

It is important to remember that our God did not create us as puppets, but rather as persons

with the freedom to respond, or not, to His invitation to enter into communion with Him. Just as a loving dad, desiring to help his child take those first steps on his own, will let go of the child's hands, as the mother reaches out from a few feet away, allowing their child the freedom to move independently, so does our God withdraw our sense of His presence, that we might freely reach out to Him. This is because, just as the child is given freedom to make that first step, so we are given the opportunity to respond to God's invitation, by our own free will.

I have been able to experience the presence of God because of the freedom I've been granted by a loving God Who has reached out to me, with grace and mercy. I, like everyone, can experience the presence of God through the joyful and awesome encounter with Christ while participating in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. I've experienced God while hearing a good confession, and witnessing the results of the outpouring of God's grace upon the penitent sinner. I experience the presence of God while witnessing the wonder of discovery in the faces of college students who are hearing of the mystical theology of Orthodoxy, for the first time. I experience the presence of God while visiting the old woman who has walked with God her whole life. I experience the presence of the Lord when witnessing the giggle of a child, who is being hugged by his grandmother. I witness the love of God in the face of my confessor, and the fellowship of my brother monks. I experience the love of God while concelebrating with my archbishop, and my brother priests. I experience God in the early hours of the morning, while I do my cell rule.

I experience God in the sunrise, and in the sunset. I experience God in the freshly picked rose, and the lapping of the water while standing at the sea shore. I experience God as I taste the fresh corn from the stalk. I experience God in the purring sound of our cat, Hammi, while holding him in my arms. Finally, I experience God in the solitude of my heart.

And He said, "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest." Exodus 33:14

With love in Christ,  
Abbot Tryphon



