

St. Herman of Alaska Orthodox Church

March 20th Weekly Bulletin

60 Clifton Chapel Lane, Stafford, Virginia 22555 –
Mailing Address: P.O. Box 1295, Stafford, VA 22555 –
Website: www.sthermanorthodox.org



✠ Sunday Divine Liturgy 10 a.m. ✠

✠ Saturday Catechumen Class 3 p.m. Vespers and Confessions 5 p.m. ✠

✠ Wednesday Confession, Vespers and Adult Ed. Classes 5 p.m. 6:30 p.m. and 7 p.m.

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Fellowship Hour

March 27 – Fellowship by Team 4
April 3 – Fellowship by Team 1
April 10 – Fellowship Team 2
April 17 – Fellowship Team 3

If anyone would like to join a team or be put on the list of substitutes, or is interested in hosting a particular Sunday please contact Brianna Lessin.

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Reader Schedule

March 23 – Rdr. John Aponte
March 27 – Rdr. Stephen Miroy
March 30 – Sbn. Aaron Lessin
April 3 – Sbn. Stephen Terrell
April 7 – Rdr. Joseph McLeod

If you are interested in assisting with the reading and becoming a tonsured reader please contact Fr. Alexander Laymon.

Liturgical Services/Activities:

Wed. March 23/March 10

Martyrs Codratus, Saturninus, and Rufinus of Nicomedia

6:00 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy

Fri. March 25/March 12

Venerable Symeon the New Theologian

5:00 p.m. Pre-Sanctified Liturgy at St. Demetrios Skete

Sat. March 26/March 13

Parents' Saturday. Remembrance of the dead.

Translation of the relics (846) of St. Nicephorus the Confessor, patriarch of Constantinople

3:00 p.m. Catechumen Class

5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

Sun. March 27/March 14

Veneration of the Holy Cross

9:30 a.m. Reading of the Hours

10:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, Strategic Planning Session following fellowship

**Readings for the Week of
March 20th**

Sunday 3/20

Luke 24:36-53 (6th Matins Gospel)
Hebrews 1:10-2:3
Hebrews 7:26-8:2 (Saint)
Mark 2:1-12
John 10:9-16 (Saint)

Monday 3/21

Isaiah 8:13-9:7 (6th Hour)
Genesis 6:9-22 (Vespers, 1st Reading)
Proverbs 8:1-21 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Tuesday 3/22

Luke 21:12-19 Matins Gospel
Isaiah 9:9-10:4 (6th Hour)
Genesis 7:1-5 (Vespers, 1st Reading)
Proverbs 8:32-9:11 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)
Hebrews 12:1-10 40 Martyrs
Matthew 20:1-16 40 Martyrs

Wednesday 3/23

Isaiah 10:12-20 (6th Hour)
Genesis 7:6-9 (Vespers, 1st Reading)
Proverbs 9:12-18 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Thursday 3/24

Isaiah 11:10-12:2 (6th Hour)
Genesis 7:11-8:3 (Vespers, 1st Reading)
Proverbs 10:1-22 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Friday 3/25

Isaiah 13:2-13 (6th Hour)
Genesis 8:4-21 (Vespers, 1st Reading)
Proverbs 10:31-11:12 (Vespers, 2nd Reading)

Saturday 3/26

Hebrews 10:32-38
1 Thessalonians 4:13-17 (Departed)
Mark 2:14-17
John 5:24-30 (Departed)

Festal Icons

St Herman is blessed to have our very own iconographer in our midst. Matushka Joanna has embarked on a journey to provide the festal icons for our church. Take a moment to look around our church and see the beautiful hand written icons she has provided. St Herman recognizes the value of her labors. The Festal Icons Fund was created to provide recompense to Matushka Joanna for these valuable additions to our church. Please consider supporting her work by making a donation to that fund. We are trying to collect \$2000 for each icon.

Closing Costs for Clifton Chapel

To complete our purchase of Clifton Chapel the parish will need to pay for legal fees, title search and surveys of the property and the road. If you would like to assist in covering these expenses, please indicate "Clifton Chapel purchase" on your gift. Funds collected in excess of these needs will be added to the Clifton Chapel improvement fund.

Interview on Ukraine with Fr. Alexander

Archpriest Alexander F.C. Webster, PhD, was interviewed online by Eric Patterson, PhD, Executive Vice President of the Religious Freedom Institute (RFI) in Washington, DC, on Wednesday, March 9, for a special series titled, "Responding to the Crisis in Ukraine: Three Questions." Previously, on February 9, 2021, Dr. Patterson had coordinated a live online briefing by Fr. Alexander (a retired US Army chaplain with the rank of Colonel) on the ethnic and religious tensions in the Donbass region of southeastern Ukraine for the U.S. European Command (EUCOM) military chaplains. Dr. Patterson invited Fr. Alexander on both occasions to offer a religious and ethical perspective that neither audience had considered heretofore. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4n_gAi7xNbw&t=1628s

Beautifying the Church

Young men! We need volunteers to mow the churchyard. Please find attached the flyer in the email, and sign-up roster that will be posted in the fellowship hall. Some key points: (1) the mowing season begins April 17, 2022, and ends September 25, 2022; (2) volunteers are requested to select at least two dates; (3) volunteering for a week on the schedule indicates that mowing will be completed before that date, such that the grounds are beautified for services on the listed date; and (4) only five men covered the 19 weeks of mowing last year and Rdr. Joseph is looking to the younger men of the parish to show greater initiative.

Church Food Pantry

We need volunteers to help stock up the church pantry! Please contact Sue @ srcasablanca@gmail.com if you would like to get involved. This endeavor would help the whole church so please consider helping out.



Sunday March 20 Epistle Reading – HEBREWS 11:24-26, 11:32-12:2

And: "You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail." But to which of the angels has He ever said: "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him,

WILL WE GO TO HEAVEN OR HELL?

We learn even as small children about going "to heaven" or "to hell." There is a great difference between them in our minds. This distinction comes from the Scriptures. St. John and the other Evangelists speak in glowing terms of eternal life, and St. Paul tells us 'But it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him' (I Cor. 2:9). So we know heaven is indescribably beautiful. St. Paul also speaks of having experienced a vision of paradise or heaven (Cf. II Cor. 12). The other is a place of hopelessness and desolation. St. Basil the Great says (On the Holy Spirit, 40):

"Those who have grieved the Holy Spirit. will according to one of the Evangelists, be completely 'cut asunder,' (Cf. Matt.24:51) which means utter separation from the Spirit. The eternal alienation of the soul from the Spirit. Thus in hell there is no one who confesses, no one in death who remembers God", because the help of the Spirit is no longer available."

We know this also from the story of Lazarus and the Rich man (Luke 16:19-31). Lazarus begged crumbs from the rich man's table and was refused. Both the poor and the rich man died, Lazarus went to heaven, to the arms of Abraham; the rich man to hell, pleading with Abraham to send Lazarus to the rescue. The holy fathers tell us:

"But what do we learn from this? That no man can protect us there, if we are betrayed by our works, not because he will not, but because he cannot. For these too take refuge in the impossibility, this the blessed Abraham also indicated, saying between us and you there is a great gulf,' so that not even when willing is it permitted them to pass it... The end of each one is at the doors, whether he be old or young: and it is not possible for men after they have gone hence, either to buy oil any more, or to obtain pardon by prayers, though he who entreats be Abraham, or Noah, or Job, or Daniel." (St. John Chrysostom).

The parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins, recorded by St. Matthew (Mt. 25:1-13) covers the same subject.

"What are we to understand by that petition for oil which they make to the prudent virgins if not that, in the hour of judgment, discovering their interior want, they seek testimony from without? In that day... the testimony of each one will scarcely suffice for himself.... They will not find pardon then who waste the time now in which they might repent... The prophet says, (Isa. 55:6) 'Seek the Lord while He may be found: call upon Him while He is near' (St. Gregory the Great. Parables of the Gospel).

WHAT MUST WE DO TO FIT INTO HEAVEN

But these parables alone do not tell the full story. They indicate that we will be judged by our works. But in order to "fit into heaven," our whole being - body, soul and spirit - must be prepared during this life. For we learn from many writings of the holy fathers that the key to the difference between God and man and between life and death as we know it is change.

"Every rational creature suffers changes without number, and everyman is different from hour to hour"(St. Isaac of Syria. Directions on Spiritual Training, Text 78. Philokalia Vol.1.)."There is nothing of itself enduring, nothing unchangeable, nothing good but Deity alone, while every creature to obtain the blessing of eternity and immutability, aims at this not by its own nature, but by participation of its Creator, and His grace" (St. John Cassian. Third Conference of Abbot Theonas. Chap.II).

"We are changeable, and we are changed for the better by becoming partakers of the Word: the Word is changeless, and suffered no change for the worse when He became partaker of flesh, by means of a rational soul" (St. Augustine of Hippo. Letters 140,12.)

WE MUST GROW AND CHANGE WHILE ON EARTH

The hereinafter provides no more opportunities for change. So this leaves our life on earth as the only time during which change is possible. St.Paul says 'Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation' (I Cor.6:12). Of this passage, St. John Chrysostom says:

"Let us therefore strive for the mastery in the time of this gift. It is the day of grace, of grace divine, wherefore with ease even we will obtain the crown [of heaven]"

"If you approach now, you will receive both grace and mercy, for you approach "in due season,' but if you approach then, i.e., at the Day of Judgment, no longer will you receive it. Even now it is hard for those to find repentance who sin after baptism of grace.. Now is the time of the gift; let no man despair of himself. Then will be the time of despairing, when the bride chamber is shut...For still are the spectators assembled; still is the contest; still is the prize in suspense," So how do we use this 'accepted time' to benefit us for all eternity? The Church, in her wisdom, has made available to us the sacraments for this purpose: Baptism, Confession, Communion, and Holy Unction. But none of these can help us in the depth of our being or effect the necessary essential change in us without our own contributing effort and without that crowning virtue: humility. A baptism casually buried in the mire of sub-sequent sin, a perfunctory confession, communion taken without the fear and devout love of God, and holy unction received without fervent belief in its power of healing - all these are useless to us. Indeed they are a mockery and a sacrilege.

The change that must take place in us must be in the heart, with much groaning and weeping' (Cf. Rom.8:23). It must be real. For only the real and the pure can enter heaven.



A HARDENED HEART IS A TERRIBLE THING

The Bible speaks in many places of hardened hearts. A hardened heart is a terrible thing, for it cannot change. It cannot make use of the 'accepted time.' Our Lord would rather see an abject sinner like Mary Magdalene who prostrated herself at His feet and washed them with her tears of repentance, than see a proud man who never admits a fault. When an artist models clay, it is pliable; it can be shaped and made into an object of beauty. But once it is baked, it sets and change is no longer possible. A soul with humility is always pliable and it will surely see the Kingdom.

THE PURPOSE OF TIME ON EARTH

This, ultimately, is the purpose of time: to enable us to evolve, to purify, ourselves through change, like a sword honed in a refiner's fire, to make fit for the life to come. Isaiah says "Children have come to the birth, and there is no strength to bring them forth" (Isa.37:3). In the spiritual reflect lions of Father Matta El- Meskeen (Matthew the Poor. The Communion of Love), he says:

"Such also is the state of the sinner when he stands at the gate of repentance, agonizing in the hope of salvation and renewal of life. Yet when he looks back at the past he has defiled he weeps, and when he aspires to the future he desires he faints, for he finds that feebleness has pervaded his entire being, and that he is no longer able to pull himself out of the mire, encompassed as he is by weakness. It is as if sin were the illness of withering that infects a plant, not leaving it till the gloom of death surrounds it from every side. This is exactly the nature of sin, which is cast into the entire being of a man to expel the spirit of life.

"Wherefore I entreat and beseech, and lay hold of your very knees, that whilst we have this scant viaticum of life...that you would become better men; that we may not, like that rich man, lament to no purpose in that world after our departure, and continue thenceforth in incurable wailings. For though you should have father or son or friend or any soever who has confidence towards God, none of these will ever deliver you, your own works having destroyed you," says St. John Chrysostom.

"First my mind must become detached from anything subject to flux and change and tranquilly rest in motionless repose, so as to be rendered akin to Him who is perfectly unchangeable; and then it may address Him by this most familiar name and say: Father...The unjust and impure cannot say Father to the just and pure" says St. Gregory of Nyssa. (The Lord's Prayer),

"What is the profit of this present life, when we do not use it for our future gain?" St. John Chrysostom. (Homily XC on Matthew 28).

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE IF WE NEGLECT SO GREAT A SALVATION

Who will give us back this present time if we waste it?.. We are not yet perfect, but at least we desire to be so, and this is the beginning of our salvation.. Someone wanting to acquire the spiritual craft must not interest himself in anything else but, day and night, attend to it... unless a man drives himself and fights against his evil inclinations he readily falls away and diverges from the path of virtues.

- St. Dorotheos of Gaza

Gospel – St. Gregory Palamas Sunday, Mark 2:1-12

And again He entered Capernaum after some days, and it was heard that He was in the house. Immediately many gathered together, so that there was no longer room to receive them, not even near the door. And He preached the word to them. Then they came to Him, bringing a paralytic who was carried by four men. And when they could not come near Him because of the crowd, they uncovered the roof where He was. So when they had broken through, they let down the bed on which the paralytic was lying. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven you." And some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone? But immediately, when Jesus perceived in His spirit that they reasoned thus within themselves, He said to them, "Why do you reason about these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise, take up your bed and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins-He said to the paralytic, I say to you, arise, take up your bed, and go to your house. Immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went out in the presence of them all, so that all were amazed and glorified God, saying, "We never saw anything like this!"

THE PARALYTIC MAN HEALED

In this case, they both approached Him, and had faith required on their part. For 'Seeing,' it is said, 'their faith' - that is, the faith of those who let the man down ..as they evinced such great faith - He also evinces His own power... He first healed that which is invisible, the soul, by forgiving his sins. In fact, in His abundance of counsel, He made use of (the scribes) envy for the manifestation of the miracle.

St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXIX on Matthew IX, l. B#54, pp. 195,

Second Sunday of Lent – Thoughts for Each Day of the Year St. Theophan the Recluse

I am the door: by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved (John 10:9). The Lord says the same in another place: *No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me* (John 14:6). He even more succinctly confirms this when he says: *Without Me ye can do nothing* (John 15:5). A Christian is a person who is wholly in Christ and whose every good quality is from Christ. His justification is by Christ, and his body is also of Christ. He who is being saved is being saved because he is clothed in Christ. The Father is accessible to him only when he is in this state. We have fallen away from God and are therefore subject to His wrath. Only when we draw near in Christ, for Christ's sake, does God's judgment recede and His mercy reach out to us and accept us as we draw near. The seal of Christ is imprinted on the entire nature of a Christian, and he who carries this seal will walk through the valley of the shadow of death and fear no evil (cf. Ps. 22:4). In order to become this way we have the Sacraments Baptism, and Communion -for which Confession acts as a mediator for those who sin after Baptism. But this is from the Lord. We must do our part to cultivate a spirit of acceptance: faith which confesses, "I am lost and can be saved only by the Lord Jesus Christ"; love which fervently strives to devote all to the Lord and Savior, sparing nothing; hope that does not hope in itself, but only in its assurance that the Lord will not abandon us and will help us in every way, both internally and externally throughout all of our life, until our hope takes us to the place where He Himself abides.

ON TRUE FREEDOM – ST. NEKTARIOS, *Homilies During Great Lent*

And so, in order to find true freedom we become followers; conforming our own will to the Lord's will by renouncing evils, by aversion to sin and by an unchanging will to follow the Lord. We act thus so as to do, not our own will, but the will of the Lord; so that we might no longer live ourselves, but that Christ might live in us, as Paul says, "it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me", for indeed such obedience is fitting to rational beings. Thus, it is necessary for our spirit to follow the spirit of the Lord and for our will to seek the will of the Lord; and in so doing, we become His true followers and we walk unhindered along the way of freedom, which is also the way of salvation. Only in so doing so do we utterly deny ourselves, because there is no greater self-denial than the submission of the will of the flesh to the will of the spirit, for this is the true crucifixion of the body, which becomes powerless even in the slightest movement of its will. In this self-denial, the flesh suffers pain, sorrow, and sighing, 'O' but Christ demands this from us and by it we remain free, for any other obedience is delusion. indeed, greatly deceived are those who believe that they are followers of Christ because they hear the commandments of God, learn them thoroughly, and accept His teachings, and look forward to their salvation, but who nevertheless refrain from conforming themselves to the divine will by renouncing sin and refrain from adorning themselves with a Christian way of life and patiently enduring the affliction that comes with it. To believe this is a most grievous error, and they must be delivered from it if indeed they care for their salvation. Christianity is far from being a philosophical system that is merely established in the knowing faculty of man, but impacts the volitive and perceptive faculties as well. For Christianity does not have as its only principle, the search for a knowledge of the ideas and beliefs of a system or of a religion, but it is based in both man's will to receive the teaching which flows from its ideas and other truths - as a power that is sacred and divine and perfects and saves man - and also in man's consciousness to perceive the life-giving power of Christ's words. In a word, Christianity is a religion which requires not only knowledge of its precepts, but also our will and consciousness. Moreover, because the principle of the religion is the revelation of the highest good, we must come to know it, will to do it, and zealously seek to attain it. Christianity is not intended merely to transmit religious and moral truths, but also to awaken a new religious and moral life within us. Thus, Christianity is a religious and moral institution, with the established goal of the formation of the heart and the illumination of the nous, and so it's true followers are not those who only receive its teachings, but those who also arrange their life and their ways in accordance with its principles and teachings. The Lord Himself preaches this truth, saying, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord' shall enter the Kingdom of Heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." Moreover, the Apostle James says, "But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves," Paul says, "for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God but the doers of the law will be justified. "I' So then, Christianity does not intend to form man into a philosopher, but into an image and likeness of God; and this indeed he becomes, so long as man dedicates his heart to be a holy tabernacle, wherein the Lord dwells, abides, and tarries, and which He shall make a dwelling place for Himself. Seeing this, the Prophet-King David besought God with tears and said. "Create in me a clean heart, O Lord, and renew an upright spirit within me."

ON TRUE FREEDOM – ST. NEKTARIOS, *Homilies During Great Lent* cont.

He was absolutely right, because what benefit does knowledge by itself bring when it does not save by itself? What does it benefit when it does not serve in the shaping, formation, and transformation of the heart? Does not our heart represent our soul? And is it not from the heart that evil thoughts and evil deeds come forth, as the Lord says? So then, we are obliged to shape the heart if we wish to be followers of Christ and, therefore, truly free, since there is no other means by which we are conformed to Christ. And if there are any who believe otherwise, let us let them do as they please; but as for us, as faithful followers of the Savior and as lovers of true freedom, let us take up our own crosses and follow Christ, Who shall free us from the slavery of sin and make us slaves of God, which is to say, truly free, and shall establish us as "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation" before God the Father, and shall make us sons and joint heirs of His heavenly kingdom; of which may we all be made worthy. Amen.

Monday – Isaiah 8:13 – 9:7

The Lord of hosts, Him you shall hallow; Let Him be your fear, And let Him be your dread. He will be as a sanctuary, But a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense To both the houses of Israel, As a trap and a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And many among them shall stumble; They shall fall and be broken, Be snared and taken." Bind up the testimony, Seal the law among my disciples. And I will wait on the Lord, Who hides His face from the house of Jacob; And I will hope in Him. Here am I and the children whom the Lord has given me! We are for signs and wonders in Israel From the Lord of hosts, Who dwells in Mount Zion.

And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? Should they seek the dead on behalf of the living? 20 To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. They will pass through it hard-pressed and hungry; and it shall happen, when they are hungry, that they will be enraged and curse their king and their God, and look upward. Then they will look to the earth, and see trouble and darkness, gloom of anguish; and they will be driven into darkness.

Nevertheless the gloom will not be upon her who is distressed, As when at first He lightly esteemed The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, And afterward more heavily oppressed her, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, In Galilee of the Gentile, The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. You have multiplied the nation And increased its joy; They rejoice before You According to the joy of harvest, As men rejoice when they divide the spoil. For You have broken the yoke of his burden And the staff of his shoulder, The rod of his oppressor, As in the day of Midian. For every warrior's sandal from the noisy battle, And garments rolled in blood, Will be used for burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end, Upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, To order it and establish it with judgment and justice From that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

FOR UNTO A CHILD IS BORN

Who is there of mortal man in the whole of human history to whom it is possible to apply all these titles, all this power and all this glory? There is no-one. Therefore St. John Chrysostom says: This cannot be understood to apply to any other than Christ.' The prophet here clearly expresses the two natures of the Savior of the world: the human and the divine. 'A Child is born' - this marks purely human nature. 'A Son is given' - this unites the two natures in the one Person; the Son of God who is Son of the Virgin and the Person of the incarnate Lord. The other titles designate the divine nature of the Lord Jesus. His government is upon His shoulders:' that is, the government is His, His own, and is not delegated to others. 'Mighty counsel' - the Holy Trinity, what else? The angel - or messenger or herald of this triune Counsel is the Son of God, the pre-eternal Word. 'Wonderful Counsellor' - for all that is wonderful, all that is new, comes to the human race from Him and through Him. 'The mighty God' - what would Arius say to that, and his modern followers, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus? 'The Prince of peace' - for His is an enduring peace; outside Him is war without and within. 'The everlasting Father' - He is the Lord of the future as He is of the past; and He is, further, the Father of the Church, the Creator of the new world, the Founder of the Kingdom of God. Bishop Nikolai Velimirović. Prolog, 15 August. B#80, p. 635.

PROVERBS 8:1-21

Does not wisdom cry out, And understanding lift up her voice? She takes her stand on the top of the high hill, Beside the way, where the paths meet. She cries out by the gates, at the entry of the city, At the entrance of the doors: "To you, O men, I call, And my voice is to the sons of men. O you simple ones, understand prudence, And you fools, be of an understanding heart. Listen, for I will speak of excellent things, And from the opening of my lips will come right things; For my mouth will speak truth; Wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are with righteousness; Nothing crooked or perverse is in them. They are all plain to him who understands, And right to those who find knowledge. Receive my instruction, and not silver, And knowledge rather than choice gold; For wisdom is better than rubies, And all the things one may desire cannot be compared with her. "I, wisdom, dwell with prudence, And find out knowledge and discretion. The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate. Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, And rulers decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, All the judges of the earth. I love those who love me, And those who seek me diligently will find me. Riches and honor are with me, Enduring riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yes, than fine gold, And my revenue than choice silver. I traverse the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice, That I may cause those who love me to inherit wealth, That I may fill their treasuries.

Reflection on Losing Faith

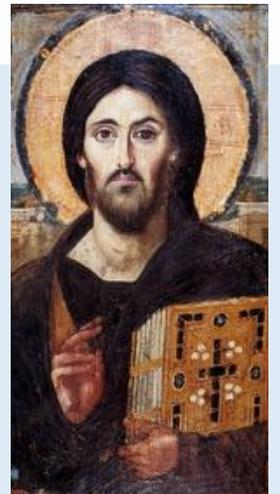
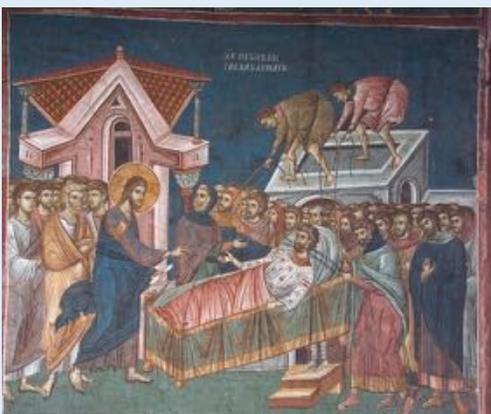
If someone loses his faith in God, he is recompensed with stupidity. Of all the forms of stupidity, it is difficult to say whether there is a greater one than this: that someone calls himself a Christian and then proceeds to gather pathetic proofs for God and eternal life from other beliefs and philosophies. He will he who does not find gold among the wealthy find it among the poor? The revelation of eternal life, the facts, the proofs, the signs and the actual visions of the spiritual world--all of these not only constitute the foundation of the Christian Faith but also constitute the walls, the floors, the ornaments, all the furnishings, the roof and the domes of the majestic building of the Christian Faith. A single ray from the spiritual world shines through every word of the Gospels, not to mention the miraculous events, both in evangelical and post-evangelical times, throughout the entire two-thousand-year history of the Church. Christianity has thrown open the gates of that world to such a great degree that it almost should not be called a religion, in order not to confuse it with other faiths and religions. It is Revelation! God's Revelation!

Homily- "And he that seeth Me seeth Him that sent Me" (John 12:45).

He who sees the light also sees the sun beyond it. For could anyone see the sun and not the light? If the sun did not emit its light, none of us would know about the sun. All of our knowledge about the sun we have received with the help of the rays of light that have come from the sun. No one has ever seen the sun with the help of some other light, other than that which comes from the sun itself.

So it is with our knowing the Father with the help of the Son. He who does not know the Son cannot know the Father. He who knows the Son, knows the Father. He who sees the Son, sees also the Father. God cannot be known without His Light, Who came among men. The Light of the Father is the Son. I am the Light (John 8:2), said Christ. And the Light shineth in darkness (John 1:5). The physical world would be in complete darkness if it were not for the light from the sun. The spiritual and moral world and all the life of mankind would be in darkness if it were not for the Light that is from the Father. That Light is Christ the Lord.

Truly, brethren, there is no true light which illuminates the Being of God as does the Light of Christ the Lord. He who sees Him sees God. He who does not see Him is in darkness. O Lord, Son of God, always help our souls to see Thee, and through Thee, Thy Heavenly Father and the Comforter, the Holy Spirit, the Trinity, one in Essence and undivided. To Thee be glory and praise forever. Amen.



Reflection

"Good works are accomplished not by our efforts alone, but by the power and will of God. Nevertheless, God demands effort on our part in conforming to His will." These are the words of Saints Barsanuphius and John--few words, but much is said in them. We are obliged to labor, cultivate and prepare every good thing, and if some good will take root, grow, and bring forth fruit, that is up to the power and will of God. We plow the furrows, and God sows--if He wills it. We cleanse the vessels of the Spirit, and God pours the Spirit into these vessels--if He wills it. He can do anything if He wills it. And He will do everything that answers to the highest wisdom and wholeness, that is, to His plan of man's salvation. In interpreting the words of our Lord, Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves (Matthew 10:16), St. John Chrysostom writes that our Lord gave this commandment to His disciples that "they themselves should cooperate in some way, so that it will not appear that all effort is of grace alone and so that they will not think that they received the wreaths of glory for nothing." And so, both of them are indispensable for our salvation: our effort and the power of God's grace.

Reflection – On the faith of Muhammed

When the forty-two Greek commanders from Ammoria were in the Hagarene prison (see March 6), certain Moslem sages came to counsel them to embrace the faith of Mohammed and thereby receive their freedom. These sages stressed to the Christian commanders the two advantages of Islam over Christianity: first, Mohammed is a more recent prophet than Christ, and second, the Moslems were victorious on all sides over Christianity, by which God clearly points out the truth of their religion. To the first point, the commanders replied: "If two men are debating over a field, and one has many witnesses that the field is his, and the other does not have any witnesses except his own personal testimony, what do you think? Whose field is it?" To this the Hagarenes replied: "Undoubtedly, the field is his who had many witnesses." To this the commanders replied: "By yourselves you have judged in favor of Christ and against Mohammed, for Christ had with Him the witness of all the prophets and apostles, but Mohammed alone witnesses to himself." To the second point, the commanders replied: "If you would gauge the truth of a faith by victories in wars, then this would mean that all the idolatrous nations who from time to time have conquered the world, such as the Persians, Greeks, Romans and others, possessed the true faith. This, even you Moslems would never acknowledge. And because you have been victorious over the Christians now, this does not mean that your faith is better, but that our sins are great, because of which God punishes us through you."



Reflection – Live everyday like it is your last

We can hardly find a better example of why we should not become lazy or procrastinate in prayer and work until tomorrow, than by this example, which is given to us by St. Ephraim the Syrian: "Once a brother was inspired by the devil to think: 'Give yourself rest today and tomorrow rise for vigil.' But he answered the thought, 'Who knows, perhaps, I will not even get up tomorrow, that is why I need to rise today.' Before work, he was also inspired with this thought: 'Give yourself rest today and complete your work tomorrow.' And again he responded, 'No, I will complete my work today, and the Lord will take care of tomorrow.'" St. Anthony teaches: "Before the dawn of each day, arrange your life as though it is your last day on earth and you will protect yourself from sins."



Homily

"Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven"
(Matthew 26:24).

He who does not see God as the merciful Samaritan on earth will see Him as the dreadful Judge in heaven. So blinded were the leaders of the Jews that, in the Lord Christ, they were unable to see God, or the Messiah, or a prophet, or even simply a good man. They placed Him beneath ordinary good people. Not only that, they placed Him even lower than the thieves. They released Barabbas and they condemned Christ! In general, they did not even consider Christ a man. They spit on Him; they mocked Him; they made a masquerade of Him, as of some cheap and unneeded thing. Exactly at the moment when the Jews maliciously played with Christ as some cheap and unneeded thing, the Lord suddenly opened His mouth and spoke: Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. What a distance there is between what Christ is in truth and what the Jews held Him to be!

The Son of Man, Who sits on the right hand of Power, is the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, Who was seen as such soon after that by the Holy Archdeacon Stephen and many, many others.

The Son of Man, Who comes on the clouds with angels and countless numbers of powers and heavenly hosts, is again that same Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, as St. John the Theologian and Evangelist saw and wrote about in his Revelation.

O my brethren, do not be misled by deluding and illusionary tales of those men who say: "When we see Christ in the heavens as God, then we will believe in Him." That faith will be too late, and that vision will be in vain. With our faith we must see Christ as God in that humiliated, spat upon, beaten, bloodied and ridiculed Man in the court of Caiaphas; in that silent and condemned One Whom the Jews considered as something cheap and unneeded and Whom they turned into a masquerade. This is the Faith that is valued in heaven. This is the Faith that is rewarded by resurrection and immortality. This is the Faith that, until now, nurtured and transplanted to heaven numerous armies of the holiest souls, the strongest characters, the most forbearing heroes, and the most illustrious minds. O humiliated Lord, raise us up to this Faith.

ST. GREGORY PALAMAS

He was probably born at Constantinople of a noble Anatolian family. From his youth, he was attracted to the monastic ideal, and successfully persuaded his brothers and sisters, along with his widowed mother, to take up the monastic life. Around 1318 he and his two brothers went to Mount Athos, where they learned firsthand the traditional hesychastic way of contemplative prayer. With the encroachment of the Turks, he was forced to flee to Thessalonica, being ordained a priest there in 1326. Afterward, he took up the eremitic life at a mountain near Beroea, and eventually returned to Athos in 1331. Six years later, he became involved in a controversy with Barlaam, a Greek monk from Calabria, Italy. He was initially asked by his fellow monks on Mount Athos to defend them from the charges of Barlaam. Barlaam believed that philosophers had better knowledge of God than did the prophets, and he valued education and learning more than contemplative prayer. He stated the unknowability of God in an extreme form, having been influenced by a reductionist interpretation of the writings of St. Dionysius the Areopagite. As such, he believed the monks on Mount Athos were wasting their time in contemplative prayer when they should instead be studying to gain intellectual knowledge. When St. Gregory criticized Barlaam's rationalism, Barlaam replied with a vicious attack on the hesychastic life of the Athonite monks. Gregory's rebuttal was the *Triads in defense of the Holy Hesychasts* (c. 1338), a brilliant work whose teaching was affirmed by his fellow Hagiorites, who met together in a council during 1340-1341, issuing a statement known as the *Hagioritic Tome*, which supported Gregory's theology. A synod held in Constantinople in 1341 also supported St. Gregory's views, condemning Barlaam. Later, in 1344, the opponents of hesychasm secured a condemnation for heresy and excommunication for Gregory, the saint's theology was reaffirmed at two further synods held in Constantinople in 1347 and 1351. Collectively, these three synods in Constantinople are held by many Orthodox Christians and several prominent theologians to constitute the Ninth Ecumenical Council. Between the latter two synods, Gregory composed the *One Hundred and Fifty Chapters*, a concise exposition of his theology. In 1347, he was consecrated Archbishop of Thessalonica, but the political climate made it impossible for him to take up his see until 1350. During a voyage to the Imperial capital, he was captured by the Turks and held in captivity for over a year. He died in 1359 and was subsequently glorified by the Orthodox Church in 1368. Contrary to Barlaam, Gregory asserted that the prophets in fact had greater knowledge of God, because they had actually seen or heard God himself. Addressing the question of how it is possible for humans to have knowledge of a transcendent and unknowable God, he drew a distinction between knowing God in his essence and knowing God in his energies. He maintained the Orthodox doctrine that it remains impossible to know God in his essence (God in himself), but possible to know God in his energies (to know what God does, and who he is in relation to the creation and to man), as God reveals himself to humanity. In doing so, he made reference to the Cappadocian Fathers and other early Christian writers. St. Gregory Palamas Cathedral, Thessaloniki, Greece, where the saint's holy relics are enshrined Gregory further asserted that when the Apostles Peter, James and John witnessed the Transfiguration of Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor, that they were in fact seeing the uncreated light of God; and that it is possible for others to be granted to see that same uncreated light of God with the help of repentance, spiritual discipline and contemplative prayer, although not in any automatic or mechanistic fashion. He continually stressed the Biblical vision of the human person as a united whole, both body and soul. Thus, he argued that the physical side of hesychastic prayer was an integral part of the contemplative monastic way, and that the claim by some of the monks of seeing the uncreated light was indeed legitimate. Like St. Simeon the New Theologian, he also laid great stress in his spiritual teaching on the vision of the divine light.

The Holy Hieromartyr Theodoretus, Priest of Antioch

The Emperor Constantine built a cathedral church of special beauty in Antioch. The people called this church "the golden church" because of the gold-plated exterior and interior and because of the many appointments of gold and silver housed in it. The emperor donated a great deal of land to this church for the upkeep of the clergy whose number was significant. The custodian of these appointments and all other precious items in the church was the presbyter Theodoretus, (*) and rare devotion. When Julian the Apostate began his reign, he denied Christ and, even though he was baptized, stirred up a persecution against Christians. Julian, his uncle of the same name, came to Antioch and began to plunder the "golden church." He summoned Theodoretus, the custodian of the treasury, to court and counseled him to deny Christ. Not only did Theodoretus refuse to deny Christ, but he also insulted the Emperor Julian because of his apostasy from the True Faith and his return to idolatry, as a dog returning to his own vomit. When the wicked judge, out of rage, urinated in the "golden church," St. Theodoretus prophesied a horrible death for him, which shortly happened. Theodoretus was beheaded by an axe for his faith in Christ. From the time that Judge Julian had urinated in the church, he felt pains in the lower part of his body. The entire lower half of his body was eaten away by worms, so that he vomited up his apostate soul in the most horrible pains. Also, according to the prophecy of Theodoretus, Felix, Julian's assistant, died of a hemorrhage from the mouth immediately after the beheading of this righteous man. St. Theodoretus was beheaded in the year 362 A.D. and was translated to the All-glorious kingdom of Christ the King.]



Reflection on Confession

Be more trusting in the Lord than in your own mother. Confess all to Him. He will not betray you. Embrace all of His commandments as beneficial. They will not deceive you. In as much as you trust in God, so also be vigilant toward your enemies, toward your body, the world and demons. All of this was expressed much better by the glorious saint of God, Ephrem the Syrian, saying, "In embracing the commandments of God, have simplicity, and in warding off hostile intrigues, have the cunning (the dove and the serpent)."

St. Caesarius

St. Caesarius (+369), the brother of Gregory the Theologian, was also a theological writer. Among other things he attempted to answer the question: How long a time did Adam and Eve spend in Paradise before their expulsion? Some have determined the time to be six hours; others, twenty-four hours; and still others, three days. St. Caesarius was of the mind that the length of time was forty days. "Because," he says, "our Lord fasted forty days in the wilderness and during that time He was tempted by the devil. Since the old Adam could not resist the temptation of the devil in the abundance of Paradise, the new Adam resisted the devil valiantly in the hungry and thirsty wilderness."

THE HOLY MARTYR CODRATUS OF CORINTH AND OTHERS WITH HIM

During the time of the persecution of Christians, many of the faithful fled to the mountains and into the caves. So did the mother of Codratus. She was pregnant at the time, gave birth to Codratus in the forest, and died shortly thereafter. Growing up alone in the wilderness, Codratus was nurtured, fed and guided by divine providence and guardian angel. He Who gave manna from heaven to the Israelites in the wilderness dropped from the clouds a sweet dew onto the mouth of the child Codratus. When he was twelve years old, he entered town. There a benevolent man took a liking to him and provided him with an education. He studied medicine and healed the sick with natural cures and, more often, with the spiritual power of prayer, which had been present with him from childhood. When a new persecution arose under Decius, Codratus was brought to trial and cast into prison. Five companions joined him and confessed the name of Christ. They were Cyprian, Dionysius, Anectus, Paul and Crescens. They were all dragged through the streets by the pagans, especially by their children. They were beaten with rods and stoned until they were eventually dragged to the scaffold. There, the martyrs prayed to God and were beheaded. A spring of water gushed out of the ground at that spot, which is called "Codratus" even today and is a reminder of the heroic deaths of these six holy innocents of Christ. They honorably suffered for the truth in the year 250 A.D., in Corinth, during the reign of Emperor Decius and his governor, Jason.

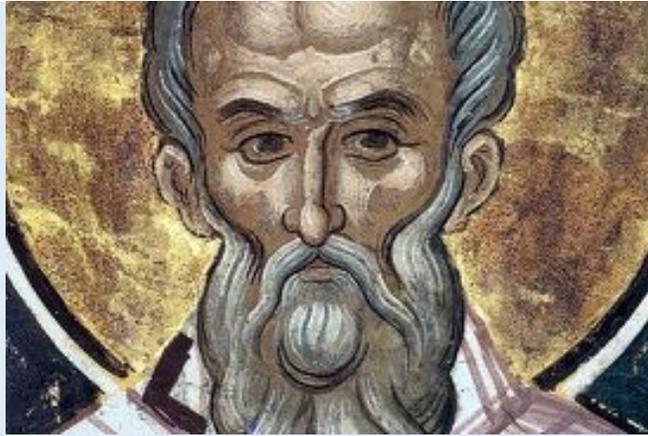


THE HOLY MARTYR PIONIUS AND OTHERS WITH HIM

Pionius was a priest from Syria. He suffered in Smyrna during the time of persecution under Decius. He was condemned to be crucified, for which he was exceedingly glad. As soon as the soldiers formed a cross and laid it upon the ground, Pionius freely laid himself upon it, stretched out his arms and ordered the soldiers to nail him in the hands with spikes. The cross was inserted in the ground upside down, and a fire was ignited under the head of the martyr. Many people gathered around. Pionius closed his eyes and prayed to God within himself. The flames of the fire did not even set aflame the hairs of his head. When at last the fire was extinguished and when everyone thought that Pionius was dead, he opened his eyes and cried out rejoicing, "O God, receive my soul," and expired. This saint wrote The Life of St. Polycarp of Smyrna, with whom he rejoices in the Kingdom of Christ. He suffered and was glorified in the year 250 A.D.

SAINT GREGORY THE DIALOGIST, POPE OF ROME

He was the son of Senator Gordianus and afterward a senator himself and mayor of the city of Rome. As soon as his father died, Gregory surrendered himself to the spiritual life. From his wealth he built six monasteries in Sicily, and built a seventh in the city of Rome in honor of St. Andrew the Apostle, where he was tonsured a monk. Sylvia, his mother, entered a convent and was tonsured a nun. After the death of Pope Pelagius II, Gregory was chosen pope. He fled from this honor and authority, hiding himself in the mountains and ravines. Nevertheless, the Lord revealed him to those who were seeking him in the following manner: a fiery column arose from earth to heaven at the place where Gregory hid himself. He was exceptionally charitable. All of his income was used for building shelters and hospices for the needy. Often he invited less fortunate men and served them at the table. He spent his time writing beneficial books. He is also called the Dialogist because he wrote a book called The Dialogues, in which he extolled the miracles of the Italian saints. He also composed the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, which is celebrated on Wednesdays and Fridays of Great Lent. His Archdeacon Peter saw a dove flying above Gregory's head as he was seated writing. He presented himself to the Lord in the year 604 A.D



HOW ST. GREGORY THE DIALOGIST STOPPED A LAUGHING WOMAN

“A woman, well-known in Rome, brought prosphora to the Divine altar; His Holiness Pope Gregory was serving the Liturgy by himself at the time. When he was distributing Divine Communion to the people, this woman approached to commune of the Holy Mysteries. But when she heard St. Gregory’s words, ‘Receive the life-giving body of our Lord Jesus Christ,’ she began to laugh. Then Pope Gregory, holding back his hand, asked her, ‘What are you laughing at?’

“‘It’s strange to me, Vladyka,’ she responded, ‘that the bread baked from flour with my own hands, you called the Body of Christ.’

“The saint, seeing her disbelief, prayed to God, and immediately the bread turned into real human flesh in appearance. And not only did this woman see this bloody human flesh, but everyone present in the church; everyone, seeing this miracle, glorified Christ God and was further established in the faith, not doubting at all that in the Most Pure Mysteries, under the appearance of bread, is distributed the real Body of Christ, and under the appearance of wine, His true Blood.

Afterwards, the saint again prayed, and the appearance of the human body turned again into bread. Then this woman communed with great fear and firm faith, receiving the bread as the Body of Christ, and the wine as the Blood of Christ.

THE VENERABLE BENEDICT

Benedict was born in the Italian province of Nursia in the year 480 A.D., of wealthy and distinguished parents. He did not remain long in school for he realized himself that through book-learning he could lose "the great understanding of his soul." He left school "an unlearned wise man and an understanding fool." He retreated to a monastery, where he was tonsured by the monk Romanus, after which he withdrew to a steep mountain, where he remained in a cave for more than three years in a great struggle with his soul. Romanus brought him bread and lowered it down the steep mountain on a rope to the opening of the cave. When Benedict became known in the vicinity, he withdrew from this cave in order to retreat from the glory of men. He was merciless toward himself. Once, when an unclean and raging passion of the flesh seized him, he removed all his clothes and rolled around naked in the thorns until he repelled every thought of a woman. God endowed him with many spiritual gifts: clairvoyance, healing, the expelling of evil spirits, the raising of the dead, and the ability to appear to others from a distance in visions and dreams. Once, Benedict perceived that a glass of wine served to him was poisoned. When he made the sign of the Cross over it, the glass burst. In the beginning he established twelve monasteries, and in each of them he placed twelve monks. Later he compiled the special "Benedictine" rule, which is followed even today in the Roman Church. On the sixth day before his death, he ordered that his grave, which had been prepared earlier, be opened, for the saint foresaw that his end was near. He assembled all the monks, counseled them, and then gave up his soul to the Lord, Whom he had faithfully served in poverty and in purity. Scholastica, his sister by birth, lived in a convent, where, in imitation of her brother, she great subdued herself and reached a high state of spiritual perfection. When St. Benedict gave up his soul, two monks, one traveling on the road and one at prayer in a faraway cell, simultaneously saw the same vision. They saw a path extending from earth to heaven, covered with a precious woven fiber and illuminated on both sides by rows of men. At the head of the path, there stood a man of indescribable beauty and light, who said to them that this path was prepared for Benedict, favored by God. As a result of this vision, these two brothers learned that their good abbot had departed from this world. He reposed peacefully in the year 543 A.D. and entered into the Eternal Kingdom of Christ the King.

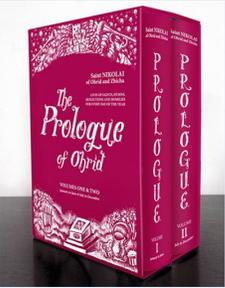


ST. HERMAN'S FAVORITE READS



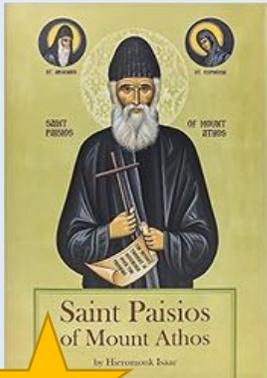
The Bible and the Holy Fathers for Orthodox

Based on the sequence of daily scriptural readings (NKJV) from the liturgical calendar of the Orthodox Christian Church, this resource includes comments from the church fathers on each Epistle and Gospel passage. Sections of the Old Testament are also included to support the church lectionary for major feast days, Great Lent, and Holy Week. Additionally, writings from contemporary Orthodox theologians and scholars are included.



The Prologue of Ohrid

An inspirational source-book of the Orthodox Faith, it contains within its pages a summation of the Church's wisdom and its experience of sanctity through the grace of Christ. Lives of Saints, Hymns, Reflections and Homilies are presented for every day of the year. Detailed lives of the saints for every day of the year, as well as reflections, homilies and other spiritually-enriching "thoughts upon which to ponder."



St. Paisios of Mount Athos

Saint Paisios of Mount Athos (1994) is perhaps the greatest and most revered Elder of the Orthodox Church of our time. Even though he lived the monastic life in obscurity on the Holy Mountain of Athos in northern Greece, he became a shining light for thousands of faithful who flocked to see him. His life, miracles, and teachings continue to touch the hearts of people throughout the world to this day. Unquestionably, this present biography (written by his spiritual disciple Elder Isaac), which is the most authoritative account of his life, will inspire readers forevermore. **This is a Second Edition of the book originally entitled Elder Paisios of Mount Athos.**

Back in print,
and on Amazon
for only \$47!

2022 Finances
The Parish needs TBD/week to meet budget

| <u>Week</u> | <u>Amount Received</u> | <u>Difference from amount needed</u> |
|-------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| March 6 | \$ 3,675.97 | TBD |
| March 13 | \$ 3,544.00 | TBD |

Attendance: 175



Intercessory Prayer List

Metropolitan Jonah requests that you send him the full name and general reason for intercessory prayer (such as health or illness, unemployment, family issues, military deployment to Afghanistan, etc.) for his pastoral care. Only the names of the living (and recently deceased) will be included in the prayer list in the weekly bulletin. He also requests that the faithful who have requested intercessory prayers for various persons let him know when there is no longer a specific need for prayer, so that we may keep the list current.

LIVING: Sarah, Emmanuel, Mark, Claudia, Katherine, Erika, Victoria, Michael, Tate, Renate, Dieter, Rebekah, Sofia, Ioannis, Anastasia, Elizabeth, Georgia, John, Elena, Alice, Matthew, Boris, Elizabeth, Davis (Columba), Moses, Emma, Kristin, Monk Sergius, Priest John, Priest David, Priest Costa, Priest Michael, Presbyteria Cindy, Priest George, Presbyteria Areti, Nun Aimiliane, Priest Charalambos, Monk Serapheim, Elizabeth, Katje, Rachel, Mandi, Clive, Claire, Rebecca, Janis, Paisley, George, Archpriest Alexander, Matushka Kathleen, Emma Nicole, Alexa Kate, Steven, Millicent, Archpriest Victor, Matushka Masha, Pdn. Patrick, Matushka Joanna, Matushka Sophia, Mother Theodora, Archpriest Alexander, James, Leonidas, Sophia, Maria, Larry, Bill, Modestos, Ephraim, Reader Moses, Jo Ann, Sarah, Paul, Brianna, Robert, Baby Nina, Charley & Alexandra, Irina & baby, Rebecca, Priest Alexander Laymon, Archpriest Michael Sekela, Fr. Filipe and his family, Irene and John, Inna and Emma, Ronin O'Neill, Anastasia and Mila, Brody (Anthony) Lessin, Sophia Stylianopoulos, Olga Petrova and the baby, Mary Zupan and the baby, Glen & Mich Mine, Sarah Francis, Jeanine Karam

MEMORY ETERNAL: Anita Sanford, Roy Patrick St. Clair