

SAINT

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APOSTLE



GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST! GLORY FOREVER!

****FLOWERS FOR THIS WEEK****

In front of the Icon of Our Lord, In front of the Icon of The Theotokos,
and on the Center Icon Table are donated by St. George Church

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Altar Candles are offered by Anthony DelNuovo in Loving Memory
of Thy Departed Servants of his family. May their memory be eternal.

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TODAY'S WEEKLY MESSENGER IS SPONSORED BY:

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

WELCOME TO ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH

We welcome all of you to the Divine Liturgy this morning, especially those who are visiting with us here at St. George Orthodox Church. Everyone is invited to the Parish Fellowship Hall following the Divine Liturgy for Christian Fellowship. It is our prayer that your experience this morning was spiritually uplifting and you will return very soon to pray with our parish family. In the Orthodox Church, we do not practice open Communion. However we do invite everyone to come and participate in the Divine Liturgy. Hence only those Orthodox Christians who have properly prepared themselves through prayer and fasting may receive Holy Communion. May the Lord bless you with many years of good health and happiness.

THE WEEKLY MESSENGER

Published weekly in the interest of the
parishioners and friends of Saint George
Orthodox Church, Buffalo, NY a parish of the
Diocese of New York and New Jersey and The
Orthodox Church in America

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21st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 4.

Holy and All-praised Apostle Philip (1st c.).
Ven. Philip, Hermit of Irap near Novgorod (1527).
St. Justinian the Emperor (565), and his wife,
St. Theodora (548). St. Gregory Palamas, Archbishop
Thessalonica (ca. 1360).

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EPISTLE LESSON

GOSPEL LESSON

1 Corinthians 4:9-16
Galatians 2:16-20

John 1:43-51
Luke 10:25-37

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NOVEMBER 14, 2021 NO. 432

Come and See how we are all called to be Stewards of The Church!

- Stewardship is our active commitment to use all our time, talent and treasure for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ's redeeming love.
- Stewardship is caring for the needs of others.
- Stewardship is offering one's self to God as He offered Himself to us.
- Stewardship is what a person does after saying "I Believe . . .", as proof of that belief.
- Stewardship is learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ's Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work, for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God.

If you would like to make a donation to our parish, please feel free to use the QR Code below. Thank you for your continued support and generosity for our parish in bringing The Love and Faith of Our Lord Jesus Christ to all! May God continue to bless and guide you and keep all of you in His loving care today and always!



Tropars/Kontakions for Divine Liturgy

Troparion for The Resurrection — Tone 4

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles: “Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,// granting the world great mercy!”

Troparion for The Holy Apostle St. Philip — Tone 3

Holy Apostle Philip, entreat the merciful God// to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions!

Kontakion for The Resurrection — Tone 4

My Savior and Redeemer as God rose from the tomb and delivered the earth-born from their chains. He has shattered the gates of hell, and as Master,// He has risen on the third day!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Kontakion for The Holy Apostle St. Philip — Tone 8

Thy disciple, friend and imitator of Thy passion, the God-preaching Philip, proclaimed Thee to the universe. By his prayers deliver Thy Church from her enemies; through the Theotokos protect every city, O most merciful Christ!

Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Steadfast Protectress — Tone 6 **(Hymn to the Theotokos)**

Steadfast Protectress of Christians, constant advocate before the Creator. Despise not the entreating cry of us sinners, but in Your Goodness come speedily to help us who call on You in

THE EPISTLE LESSON FOR TODAY

1 Corinthians 4:9-16 and Galatians 2:16-20

BRETHREN:

knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified.

But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly not!

For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God.

I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

BRETHREN:

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored!

To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own

faith! Hasten to hear our petition and to intercede for us, O Theotokos!! For You always protect those who honor You!

PROKEMEINON Tone 3

O Lord, how manifold are Thy works; / in wisdom hast Thou made them all.

v. Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord, my God, Thou art very great!

PROKEMEINON Tone 8

Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, / and their words to the ends of the universe.

ALLELUIA VERSES

Go forth, prosper and reign, for the sake of meekness, righteousness and truth!

For Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest iniquity.

The heavens will praise Thy wonders, O Lord; and Thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

THE HYMN TO THE THEOTOKOS

It is truly meet to bless You, O Theotokos, ever blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim. Without defilement, You gave birth to God the Word, true Theotokos, we magnify You!

COMMUNION HYMN

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! Their proclamation has gone out into all the earth, and their words to the ends of the universe.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel.

THE GOSPEL LESSON FOR TODAY

John 1:43-51 and Luke 10:25-37

Let us Attend!

The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, "Follow Me." Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter.

Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote - Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

And Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!"

Nathanael said to Him, "How do You know me?" Jesus answered and said to him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Nathanael answered and said to Him, "Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you, 'I saw you under the fig tree,' do you believe? You will see greater

things than these.”

And He said to him, “Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.”

At That Time!

And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?”

So he answered and said, “‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,’ and ‘your neighbor as yourself.’” And He said to him, “You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.” But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

Then Jesus answered and said: “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion.

So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him.

On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you."

So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

Upcoming Events within The Life of our Parish/Diocese

NOVEMBER 2021{Nativity Fast Begins: Nov. 15-Dec. 24}

14 – Stewardship Sunday (Special Parish Luncheon and Presentation)

15 – {Nativity Fast Begins: Nov. 15-Dec. 24}

20 –Eve of the Great Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
Great Vespers with Litiya at 4:00 PM

21 – The Great Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple
The Hours – 9:40 AM Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

22 – Monthly Community Healing Prayer Service/Thanksgiving Prayer Service – 6:00 PM

25 – THANKSGIVING DAY
Moleben Service of Thanksgiving – 9:00 AM

***Education Sermon on Sunday November 21:
The Liturgical Colors of The Orthodox Church***

****Bible Study Class – Monday November 8 (6:30 PM)
Monday November 22 (7:00 PM)**

****St. George Book Club – Monday November 29 (6:30 PM)**

****Please refer to the weekly bulletin, monthly calendar
and our church website for any changes to the calendar****

PLEASE SHARE THESE EVENTS WITH EVERYONE!!

**THE SCHEDULE OF
WEEKLY SERVICES and ACTIVITIES**

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 14

STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY
The Hours – 9:40 AM
Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM

Church School Class (in person
and via Google Classroom)
following Divine Liturgy

Stewardship Lunch and
Presentation in the Parish
Fellowship Hall following Divine
Liturgy!

Coffee Hour Host: Parish
Coffee Hour Donation: Kitchen Project

BEGINNING OF THE NATIVITY FAST

MONDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2021

Little Compline – 6:00 PM
St. George Bible Study Class
(Via Zoom) – 6:45 to 8:00 PM

WEDNESDAY NOVEMBER 17, 2021

Daily Matins – 9:30 AM
Paraklesis Service to The Theotokos - 6:00 PM

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2021

Akathist to Our Lord – 9:00 AM

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 20 2021

**EVE OF THE FEAST OF THE
ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS
INTO THE TEMPLE**

Great Vespers with Litiya -4:00 PM

SUNDAY NOVEMBER 21

**THE FEAST OF THE ENTRANCE OF
THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE**

The Hours – 9:40 AM
Divine Liturgy - 10:00 AM

Church School Class (in person
and via Google Classroom)
following Divine Liturgy

Special Coffee Hour Fellowship in
the Parish Fellowship Hall
following Divine Liturgy!

Coffee Hour Host:
Fr. Jason and Mat. Katia

Coffee Hour Donation: Kitchen Project

ANNUAL PARISH MEETING IS POSTPONED UNTIL DECEMBER!!

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

GLORY FOREVER!

Greetings to all of you on this Feast of The Holy Unmercenaries. I trust and pray that all of you and your families are doing well and that everyone is keeping safe and staying healthy.

Our Annual Parish Meeting, scheduled for Sunday November 21, has been postponed until December.

The reason for this postponement is to give the parish council more time to prepare the materials and reports so that we, as a parish family, will have ample time to review them prior to us coming together as a parish for our Annual Parish Meeting during which we will review and discuss the life and mission of our beloved parish of St. George.

As we begin to prepare ourselves for this important meeting within the life of our parish, some of us are putting together our reports and addresses for the meeting, while others are making sure that things are all in place for our meeting to pursue, let us keep in mind the main purpose and focus of us coming together as a family—to focus on how we, as Orthodox Christians, as Brothers and Sisters in Christ are living and proclaiming the Gospel of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ in working for the extension of the Kingdom of God here at St. George Orthodox Catholic Church!

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we must keep in mind that we are “One Body in Christ, and each of us a member of one another.” {Romans 12:5} We are all here working together as a family, as a Body of Christ, as a Body in Christ!

With that in mind, as we draw closer to our Annual Parish Meeting, let us call upon The Holy Spirit to come upon us and to enlighten us and guide us towards salvation. So that, through the Prayers of our Heavenly Patron, Holy Great Martyr George, we may continue not only living but more so proclaiming the Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ!

As part of our overall preparation for the meeting, we will send out a pastoral letter, the Agenda for the Annual Meeting along with the following reports (Agenda for the Annual Parish Meeting, The Pastor’s Report, Minutes from the 2020 Annual Parish Meeting, Minutes from the Special Parish Meetings on the Kitchen Project, The 2021 Financial Report, The Proposed 2021 Parish Budget, The Parish Council Report, Church School Report, and Hall Rental Report). All other reports will be presented orally at the Annual Parish Meeting.

Please review these items and if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me at the Church Office/Rectory. The written reports will not be read aloud during the meeting. So, please read them and review them in advance.

However, the floor will be open for questions regarding all of the reports that have been presented both written (reviewed in email) and oral (presented at the meeting).

If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to see or contact myself, Paul or any member of the parish council. Be assured of my continued love and prayers for you, your families, and our entire parish family.

As always, thank you for your continued love, prayers, support, generosity and stewardship for our beloved parish and for all that you do.

May GOD continue to bless and guide all of you and your families and our entire parish family as we continue the good work of building up the Body of Christ here at St. George and ‘Expanding The Mission’ here in Western New York.

HOLY GREAT-MARTYR GEORGE, PRAY UNTO GOD FOR US!

With Love in Christ,

Fr. Jason

PARISH THEME FOR 2021:

Orthodox Christian Stewardship

Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God. A primary goal of Stewardship is to promote spiritual growth and strengthen faith. Becoming a Steward begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. As Stewards, we affirm that every aspect of our lives comes as a gift from Him. Stewardship calls on the faithful to cheerfully offer back to God a portion of the gifts with which they have been blessed. **Orthodox Christian Stewardship is a way of life, which acknowledges** accountability, reverence, and responsibility before God by teaching and giving examples of a virtuous life to all (St. John Chrysostom). A primary goal of Stewardship is to strengthen our understanding of the teachings and dogmas of The Orthodox Faith through supporting the work of The Church. This can be found in The Divine Services as reiterated by St. John of San Francisco: “The Divine Services in their composition contain all the fullness of the dogmatic teaching of the Church and set forth the path of salvation.” Fulfilling our responsibility of continual learning begins when we believe in God, to whom we give our love, loyalty and trust and act on those beliefs. Through being Stewards of the Gospel and of The Orthodox Church, Education calls on the faithful to cheerfully receive instruction given to the Church by Our Lord, Holy Scripture, The Divine Services, and The Holy Fathers of the Church. Through Orthodox Christian Stewardship, The Church promotes spiritual growth and strengthened faith and calls on all of us to bring the faith and love of Our Lord to every aspect of our lives as gifts from Him through our time,

Also in the Parish Fellowship Hall, we have the Giving Tree! If anyone would like to sign up for Coffee Hour Readers Bulletin Collection, Communion Cloth, Home Blessing, please see or contact Fr. Jason!



A SINCERE AND HEARTFELT THANKS AND APPRECIATION FOR THE FOLLOWING DONATIONS TO THE PARISH FROM OUR PARISH GIVING TREE

Please be sure to check out "The Giving Tree" in the Parish Fellowship Hall as well as on our parish website (www.stgeorgebuffalo.com) to see how we may be able to donate towards the needs of our parish through our continued support and stewardship for our beloved parish.

Some of the items on the leaves are as follows:

Candles
7-Day Vigil Candles
Flowers for Feast Days
Charcoal
Altar Wine
Cups for Zapifka
Snack Baggies for the Antidoron (Church Bread)
Paper Towels
Toilet Paper

If anyone has any questions, please see or contact Fr. Jason or Barbara.

Thank you for your continued prayerful support and stewardship. May God continue to bless and guide all of you, your families and our entire Parish family and keep all of us in His Loving Care!

talents, and treasures. During this year, let us come together as a parish family and recommit ourselves to both spiritual growth of our Life in Christ as well as through Orthodox Christian Stewardship by attending the Divine Services, attending the many opportunities of Education for both Adults and Children through Retreats, gatherings, and fellowship and by supporting our Parish in her many endeavors through which, by the Grace of God, we will bring the light and love of Our Lord to all!

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH NATIVITY PARISH OUTREACH MINISTRY

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:
Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever!

Greetings to all of you, your families, and our entire parish family as we prepare to begin The Nativity Fast in just a few short weeks!

Once again, this year, as part of our parish outreach ministry during The Nativity Fast and Christmas Season, we are holding collections for the following Ministries within our Greater Buffalo Area:

- 1) **Baker Victory** – Christmas Gifts for Children
BY SUNDAY DECEMBER 5
***More information will be emailed out this week**
- 2) **Roswell Park** – New Pajamas for the Patients
(adult men and women s-m-l-xl/ children boys and girls s-m-l-xl)
BY SUNDAY DECEMBER 12
- 3) **Hearts for Homeless** – Christmas Cookies and Canned Goods/Non-Perishable Items –
BY SUNDAY DECEMBER 12
- 4) **Mats for Mission** - Boxed Thanksgiving Dinner (1 boxed stuffing, 1 boxed mashed potatoes, and dessert 2 cans of cans of corn, 2 cans of green beans, 1 can of cranberry sauce, and 1 can of gravy, and 1 box dessert – brownies or cake mix) – **New Pairs of Winter Gloves – AT LEAST 15 PAIRS BY SUNDAY DECEMBER 5**

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH PARISH CHRISTMAS CARD

Continuing with our Annual Parish Tradition with the sending of a Parish Christmas Card, we come to all of you – our dear Parish Family for your support in bringing the Love and Joy of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ to everyone during this Holy Season. The cost is only \$20 per family.

If we would like to have our name in the Christmas Card, please fill out the enclosed form with how we would like our name to appear in the card and hand it in to Fr. Jason, Matushka Katia, or Matushka Fran no later Sunday December 5 along with your payment of \$20.00. Besides our names, we will also have a Nativity Message and Greeting from our parish family.

If anyone has any questions, please do not hesitate to contact myself (716-875-4222)/jvansuch@hotmail.com or Matushka Katia (609-851-3811) / katia.vansuch@gmail.com or Matushka Fran (610-698-1666)/fances.vansuch@yahoo.com

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Thank you for your continued love, prayers, support, generosity and stewardship for our Annual Parish Nativity Outreach Ministry Projects, and for all that you do for our parish and throughout the year as well as for the community in which we live, serve, and dwell.

Looking forward to another wonderful blessed Nativity Season of bringing the joy, the love, and the peace of The Nativity of Our Lord to everyone!

Be assured of my continued love and prayers for you, your families, and our entire parish family. May God continue to bless and guide all of you, your families, and our entire parish family and keep all of us in His Loving Care today and always.

I remain, with love in Christ
Your Humble Servant,
Fr. Jason

SAFETY GUIDELINES AND PROTOCOLS FOR OUR PARISH

We are celebrating The Divine Services with FULL CAPACITY in The Church. ALL Pews will be open and available for everyone to stand together. So that we can, to the Glory of God, pray together, sing together and stand together as parish family, as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Until further notice, we continue to follow the following guidelines based upon The Diocesan Directives/Guidelines and the new directives and announcements

- To ensure that everyone feels comfortable and safe while attending Divine Services and Fellowship Activities at our parish, we will make the wearing of masks a voluntary decision. If someone wishes to continue to wear a mask, that is their choice and their right to. If someone chooses not to wear a mask, that is their choice not to wear a mask. This is to ensure that we, as a parish family and as brothers and sisters in Christ, minister in every way possible through love to those who come to St. George Orthodox Church to grow in their faith and love of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ. Out of love, care, concern, and the well-being of EVERYONE, The Clergy, when distributing Holy Communion and Holding The Cross at the Veneration of the Cross/Dismissal and whenever there is interaction between The Clergy and parishioners, The Clergy will be wearing a mask to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone. As a parish family, let us continue to love one another, respect one another, and pray for and with one another! As I have mentioned previously, the topic of vaccinated vs unvaccinated has no place in our parish. That is a private and individual matter and choice and above that is a HIPAA Privacy Law!
- We will also continue to have hand sanitizer and masks available for everyone who wishes to use them to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes to St. George Orthodox Church for Divine Services and Fellowship Activities. These precautions are for the health, safety, and well-being of everyone who comes and enters our Church to pray and worship God.

* The choir will continue to sing up front until such time we can move them back to the choir area

* The space in the back of the church (choir area and children's area) will remain open for the 15 chairs socially distant for those who wish to stand there.

* We will continue to use the Common Communion Cloth. However, if anyone wishes to use the individual napkin to wipe their lips after receiving Holy Communion, they may do so.

* We will be passing the Stewardship Collection Plate during The Litany before The Lord's Prayer

* The Church will continue to be cleaned and sanitized every week

* The Parish Fellowship Hall will continue to be cleaned and sanitized every week by hiring our Professional Cleaner (Rocco) who will come in every week on Saturday Night to clean and sanitize the Parish Fellowship Hall and Restrooms. When Hosting Coffee Hour, we will need to be wearing masks as well as use gloves and proper utensils. Following Coffee Hour, the table and chairs will need to be properly sanitized as well as put away properly along with the kitchen and countertops need to be cleaned and properly sanitized.

* With this in mind, we will still need to sign up when we come to Church for THE DIVINE LITURGY on Sundays! This is to ensure the safety, health, and well-being of everyone attending our Parish for the Divine Liturgy. We do NOT need to sign-up beforehand but rather we will need to sign in at The Candle Desk when we come to church. This sign-up is important for us and our parish not only to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to come to Church to pray, participate in The Divine Liturgy and to receive Holy Communion but also to ensure that I have a record of everyone who attends the Divine Liturgy in case, God-forbid, someone becomes ill I would need to contact everyone who was in attendance. We are taking every measure that we can to ensure the health, safety, and well-being of our parishioners and of everyone that comes to our parish to pray. Together, with the Parish Council, we express our most sincere and heartfelt thanks and appreciation for your help, assistance, patience, and understanding and for your continued working together and praying together as a Parish Family for The Glory of God, To the Glory of God, and With the Glory of God!

**If anyone has any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to see or contact Fr. Jason,

Paul or any member of the Parish Council!**

May God continue to bless and guide all of you!**

FIND YOUR SPIRITUAL HOME In The Orthodox Christian Church

Saturday Great Vespers 4:00 PM
SUNDAY Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM

~ All are Welcome ~

Do we have questions about our life, its meaning, purpose, destiny?
Are we desiring to know Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God?
Are we seeking forgiveness, healing, and wholeness?
Do we wonder where to go to find answers?
We can find the answers to these questions and so many other questions
in The Holy Orthodox Church through Her Sacred Tradition,
Holy Scriptures, Her Teachings and Dogmas.

The Orthodox Church is the original Christian Church, the Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ and described in the pages of the New Testament. Her history can be traced in unbroken continuity all the way back to Christ and His Twelve Apostles, empowered and sent forth on the day of Holy Pentecost. Incredible as it seems, for over twenty centuries she has continued in her undiminished and unaltered faith and practice. Today her apostolic doctrine, worship, and structure remain intact. The Orthodox Church maintains that the Church is the living Body of Jesus Christ. Many of us are surprised to learn that for the first 1000 years of Christian history there was just one Church.

Where is "**The Church**" to be found and experienced today? Come Taste and See How Good The Lord is every Sunday by joining us for The Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM.

What is Orthodox Christianity all about? How does it differ from other Christian confessions? This section will attempt to answer these questions and many more.

For a visual introduction to the Orthodox Church, please view the video link below:

http://www.youtube.com/v/Gj4pUphDitA&color1=0xb1b1b1&color2=0xcfcfcf&feature=player_embedded&fs=1

For a brief introduction and in depth study to The Orthodox Faith and to find answers to: 'What we Believe?', "Who we Are?", and "How we Live?", please view the PDF link below:

<http://orthodoxdelmarva.org/files/studies/InquirersClassV1final.pdf>

or you may visit the OCA website by clicking the link below:

<http://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith>

or you can begin a Journey Through Orthodoxy by clicking the link below:

<http://journeytoorthodoxy.com>

To learn more ways that we can teach our children about the Orthodox Faith, The OCA has provided a wonderful website for us to use that provides great resources such as (handouts, texts, articles, stories, and much more)! To see this great website, please view the PDF link below:

<http://dce.oca.org/page/resources/>

If you have any questions or would like to know more about The Orthodox Faith or needs and help or assistance, please contact our parish priest: V Rev. Jason Vansuch (jvansuch@hotmail.com) or 716.875.4222 and he will be able guide you.

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Remember our Loved Ones during Our Daily Prayers

'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

{Matt. 25:40}

As we say our daily prayers, let us also take time out to remember our loved ones who are homebound, who are in hospitals and who are in nursing homes. Let us remember them that GOD will continue to watch over them and protect them. Also, during the Year, let us take to either send them a card, give them a call, or visit them to let them know how much we love them, how much we remember them, and how much we pray for them.

Please refer to the of our Parish Shut-Ins below.

If anyone has any questions or would like to add someone to our List of Parish Shut-Ins, please see or contact Fr. Jason. May God continue to bless you and guide you!

ST. GEORGE ORTHODOX CHURCH PARISH SHUT-INS (2020)

Mrs. Diane Salvamoser 225 B Evans Street, Apt 3 Williamsville, NY 14221 716.276.3471 dogthree1@hotmail.com	Reader Victor Shanchuk McAuley Residence 1503 Military Rd. Buffalo, NY 14217 716.881.3096	Mrs. Luba Japadjief Elderwood Nursing Home (Memory Care Unit) 245 Bassett Road Williamsville, NY 14221 (Room 30)
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Andrew Wityk Ellicott Center 200 Seventh Street Buffalo, NY 14201	Mrs. Tita Abraham 84 Stonington Lane Getzville, NY 14068	Mr. Albert Fadell 314.376.2562
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IMPORTANT PARISH ANNOUNCEMENTS

- We will continue with our on-going collections for The Buffalo City Mission, Hearts for Homeless, Mats for Mission, HomeSpace, Feed More of WNY, as well as Kevin Guest House and our other outreach ministry projects.
- **WE CONTINUE TO CONTACT ALL OF OUR PARISHIONERS ON A REGULAR BASIS TO ENSURE THAT EVERYONE IS OKAY, SAFE AND HEALTHY.**

****Please be on the lookout for emails this week with the following items:**

- 1) **Reader Outlines for ALL weekend SERVICES**
- 2) **Zoom information for Education Classes and Book Club**
- 3) **Updates on Schedule of Services Events**
- 4) **Pastoral Letter for Stewardship Sunday**
- 5) **Pastoral Letter/Schedule of Services for Nativity Fast**
- 6) **Pastoral Video for Parish Monthly Update**

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EACH WEEK WE WILL BE RECORDING

THE WEEKLY INCOME FOR EACH SUNDAY AS WELL AS POSTING THE MONTHLY INCOME and EXPENSE FOR OUR PARISH FOLLOWING THE MONTHLY PARISH COUNCIL MEETINGS!

INCOME FOR SUNDAY OCTOBER 17&24 , 2021 – \$1, 678.00

Commercial Savings Account Deposit -\$5008.00

DONATION TO THE CAPITOL IMPROVEMENT FUND (Kitchen) - -\$3,460.00

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MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS YOU AND GUIDE YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUED SUPPORT AND PRAYERS!

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Please refer to the Weekly Bulletin and Church Website for any changes to the calendar!
DAILY FAMILY PRAYER RULE WE CAN PRAY TOGETHER AT HOME WITH OUR FAMILIES

A Prayer Rule must be done in front of the icons and the Gospel in our Icon Corners with a lit candle.. It is important to remember that we must make time for God, for the “Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force”(Matt. 11:12).The best time to pray is in the morning or in the evening when we as a family can come together in prayer. Also, when using a Rule of Prayer, we must be flexible and do what we can and do it attentively and consistently. Our goal is to maintain the connection with God and cultivate a real relationship with Him.

With that in mind, please find below The Rule of Prayer offered by our Diocese for us to use at home especially during this most difficult time when we are not able to be in church together as a parish family.

<https://www.nynjoca.org/files/2020/praying-at-home/A-FAMILY-PRAYER-RULE.pdf>

May God bless you and keep you always in His Loving Care!

ST. ANDREW'S CAMP

**** Saint Andrew's Camp has released a new promotional video for prospective campers!**

The video can be found here on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/saintandrewsorthodoxcamp/videos/357928144820497/>

****Be sure to check it out...you may recognize the priest:)**

For more than sixty years, St. Andrew’s Camp has offered the young people of our parishes an incredible summer camping experience. Children and teens have been instructed in prayer and the divine services, the reading of Scripture and the teachings of our Orthodox Church. They have been nourished with the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion. They have had fun swimming, horseback riding, playing sports, singing and learning musical instruments, creating in the visual arts, learning to safeguard the planet, and exploring the stars. And they have established friendships that last a lifetime, met their future spouses, and nurtured their vocations to serve the Lord in ministry.

As a token of gratitude for the labors of love extended by the administration and staff, both clergy and laypersons, of St. Andrew’s over the past six decades, it is now time for us to help the Camp in an especially needed way.

Please join us in raising funds for the new multi purpose building which will include new kitchen, dining hall and activities center. The cost of this new building is \$300,000. To become a reality, the completion and furnishing of this much-needed center will require great generosity of individuals, organizations and parishes.

You can click on the link below which will take you to the gofundme.com page.

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/st-andrew039s-camp-fundraiser-by-ss-peter-and-paul>

As we continue to fulfill the work of Our Lord by living and fulfilling His Gospel Message, let us open our hearts and minds by providing support and assistance to our Diocese, to our children, by taking a moment to reflect upon what God has given us, and to discern how we might be able to return to God a portion of the blessings we have received.

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to all of you and your families for your continued prayers, support and generosity.

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****Also, make sure we check out the promotional video for prospective campers!**

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****Be sure to check it out...you may recognize the priest:)**



THE HOLY APOSTLE PHILIP

NOVEMBER 14

THE HOLY APOSTLE PHILIP

NOVEMBER 14

The Holy and All-praised Apostle Philip was a native of the city of Bethsaida in Galilee. He had a profound depth of knowledge of the Holy Scripture, and rightly discerning the meaning of the Old Testament prophecies, he awaited the coming of the Messiah. Through the call of the Savior (John 1:43), Philip followed Him. The Apostle Philip is spoken about several times in the Holy Gospel: he brought to Christ the Apostle Nathaniel (i.e. Bartholomew, April 22, June 30, and August 25. See John. 1:46). The Lord asks him where to buy bread for five thousand men (John. 6: 5-7). He brought certain of the Hellenized Jews wanting to see Jesus (John. 12:21-22); and finally, at the Last Supper he asked Christ to show them the Father (John. 14:8).

After the Ascension of the Lord, the Apostle Philip preached the Word of God in Galilee, accompanying his preaching with miracles. Thus, he restored to life a dead infant in the arms of its mother. From Galilee he went to Greece, and preached among the Jews that had settled there. Some of them reported the preaching of the Apostle to Jerusalem. In response, some scribes arrived in Greece from Jerusalem, with one of the Jewish chief priests at their head, to interrogate the Apostle Philip.

The Apostle Philip exposed the lie of the chief priest, who said that the disciples of Christ had stolen away and hidden the body of Christ. Philip told instead how the Pharisees had bribed the soldiers on watch, to deliberately spread this rumor. When the Jewish chief priest and his companions began to insult the Lord and lunged at the Apostle Philip, they suddenly were struck blind. By his prayer the Apostle restored everyone's sight. Seeing this miracle, many believed in Christ. The Apostle Philip provided a bishop for them, by the name of Narcissus (one of the Seventy Apostles, January 4).

From Greece the Apostle Philip went to Parthia, and then to the city of Azotus, where he healed an eye affliction of the daughter of a local resident named Nikoklides, who had received him into his home, and then baptized his whole family.

From Azotus the Apostle Philip set out to Syrian Hieropolis (there were several cities of this name) where, stirred up by the Pharisees, the Jews burned the house of Heros, who had taken in the Apostle Philip, and they wanted to kill the apostle. The apostle performed several miracles: the healing of the hand of the city official Aristarchus, withered when he attempted to strike the apostle; and restoring a dead child to life. When they saw these marvels, they repented and many accepted holy Baptism. After making Heros the bishop at Hieropolis, the Apostle Philip went on to Syria, Asia Minor, Lydia, Emessa, and everywhere preaching the Gospel and undergoing sufferings. Both he and his sister Mariamne (February 17) were pelted with stones, locked up in prison, and thrown out of villages.

Then the Apostle Philip arrived in the city of Phrygian Hieropolis, where there were many pagan temples. There was also a pagan temple where people worshiped an enormous serpent as a god. The Apostle Philip by the power of prayer killed the serpent and healed many bitten by snakes.

Among those healed was the wife of the city prefect, Amphipatos. Having learned that his wife had accepted Christianity, the prefect Amphipatos gave orders to arrest Saint Philip, his sister, and the Apostle Bartholomew traveling with them. At the urging of the pagan priests of the temple of the serpent, Amphipatos ordered the holy Apostles Philip and Bartholomew to be crucified.

Suddenly, an earthquake struck, and it knocked down all those present at the place of judgment. Hanging upon the cross by the pagan temple of the serpent, the Apostle Philip prayed for those who had crucified him, asking God to save them from the ravages of the earthquake. Seeing this happen, the people believed in Christ and began to demand that the apostles be taken down from the crosses. The Apostle Bartholomew was still alive when he was taken down, and he baptized all those believing and established a bishop for them.

But the Apostle Philip, through whose prayers everyone remained alive, except for Amphipatos and the pagan priests, died on the cross.

Mariamne his sister buried his body, and went with the Apostle Bartholomew to preach in Armenia, where the Apostle Bartholomew was crucified (June 11); Mariamne herself then preached until her own death at Lykaonia.

The holy Apostle Philip is not to be confused with Saint Philip the Deacon (October 11), one of the Seventy.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

The parable of the Good Samaritan is well known to many of us from childhood. It is customary to think that we know it well. But do we? On the face of it, we sort of know it. But really, it is only possible to spiritually know some parable, some teaching of Christ when His words become a rule of life for us.

Christ uttered the parable of the Good Samaritan as an answer to a lawyer's question about what he should do in order to receive eternal life. All Jews knew the answer to this question, which was already given by God in the Old Testament - in the books of Deuteronomy (6:5) and Leviticus (19:18). The answer lies in love toward God and neighbor. Christ makes the lawyer answer his own question aloud. The Saviour confirms the correctness of the answer and adds: This do, and thou shalt live (Luke 10:28).

The lawyer is not satisfied with the answer. He asks: "Who is my neighbor?" At that time, the question arose as to whom one should consider to be a neighbor. The lawyers considered only Jews to be their neighbors; the Pharisees considered as their neighbors only such men who were as righteous as they considered themselves to be, and all others they considered to be sinners (as we saw in the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee), and that is why they did not acknowledge them as neighbors. The Lord Jesus Christ introduced an essential complement to this moral law of the Old Testament. Jesus Christ explains to the scribe just whom one should consider to be one's neighbor by the parable of the Good Samaritan, which the Evangelist Luke has preserved for us:

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two

pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise (Luke 10:30-37).

The Samaritans and Jews were at enmity with one another on the basis of religion. A Samaritan was for a Jew a man unclean and despicable. But the Samaritan knows better that in the performance of works of mercy there is no distinction between men.

According to the Gospel, every man is a "neighbor", irrespective of his race, tribe or convictions. A "neighbor" for a Russian is not only a Russian, or for an American, an American, and so forth; that is, not only a like-minded person, not only a colleague and not only a fellow countryman. A neighbor for us may prove to be also our public, political enemy, our ideological opponent, a man who does not agree with us on religious and other questions, a man who is psychologically and physically alien to us and even offensive.

Every man is a "neighbor" - whether he is one of our own or a stranger. Love for one's "own" must not fill up our whole heart to such an extent that no place remains in it for showing consideration to "strangers". The parable of the Good Samaritan, as also the whole Gospel, erases the boundaries between our notions of who is "near" and who is "far". For God, no one is far. For God, all men are near, all are his precious creations

Few there are who can love everyone equally; but we can engender in our hearts a new consciousness of the absolute value of each human individual. Perhaps it is beyond our strength to love an enemy; but we can look on an enemy through the prism of Divine love. It is entirely within our power to convince ourselves that Christ died on the Cross for him also. Consequently, he, our enemy, is worthy of this! There is something in him worthy of Christ's death. He is not a blank, but God's creature, bearing His image and likeness. God became man so that man might become a god, that is, god-like. God-manhood is the basis of religious life and the basis of the life of the whole world - in as much as man is a microcosm. God Himself is humane; that is why man too must be humane. In men's humaneness, their divine likeness is manifested.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us that any human individual, any man - be he sick, poor, a thief, an enemy - is higher in value than an abstract idea of good, an abstract idea of the common, public welfare, an abstract idea of churchliness, generally accepted traditions, regulations and canons.

The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches us a hierarchy of values: man comes first, and the Sabbath second. Public, social and ecclesiastical institutions exist for man, and not the other way round. We, like the Samaritan, must first of all see the man, his status in society notwithstanding, his splendid clothes or pauper's rags notwithstanding.

The Lord gave us the parable of the Good Samaritan in answer to the lawyer's question about what he should do in order to receive eternal life. When Christ answered with the commandment on love, the lawyer again turns to Him with a question: "And who is my neighbor?" This was the question of the minimalist, who wanted to know the minimum that needs to be fulfilled in order to enter into Life. By the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ shows both the lawyer and us that the question is not correctly put forth. The parable of the Good Samaritan goes further than a teaching on whom to consider our neighbor. It shows us how to become a neighbor ourselves for each man in need of mercy.

The Patristic interpretation of the parable is highly instructive. According to the thought of the Fathers, the man going down from Jerusalem to Jericho is Adam, who in this case represents all mankind. Our primogenitors, who did not stand firm in good and fell into sin, were banished from Paradise, from the "Heavenly Jerusalem", and had to live in the world, where they were forced to contend with various difficulties. The thieves are a symbol of the demonic powers who envied the purity of the first people and pushed them onto the path of sin, depriving our primogenitors of faithfulness to God's will and of life in Paradise.

The wounds are the consequences of sin, which make us spiritually weak. The priest and the Levite represent the law of the Old Testament, given by Moses, and the priesthood of Aaron, which by themselves could not save man.

The Good Samaritan is Jesus Christ, Who gave us the New Testament and the grace of God (the oil and wine in the parable) for the healing of our infirmities. The inn is the Church of God, where we find everything necessary for our recovery. The innkeeper is an image of the Church's pastors and teachers, whom God charged to care for the flock.

The departure of the Samaritan in the morning symbolizes the appearance of Christ after his Resurrection and also His glorious Ascension. The two denarii, given to the innkeeper, are the Divine Revelation, given in Sacred Scripture and Tradition. Finally, the Samaritan's promise to return to the inn for a final reckoning is a prophesy of the Second Coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, when to each man will be given according to his works.

Here then is a small portion of the rich content of the parable of the Good Samaritan, which teaches us who our neighbor is and how to become neighbors ourselves for others. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God (I John 4:7).

Can There Any Good Thing Come Out of Nazareth?

John 1: 43-51

From The Explanation of the Gospel of St. John

by Blessed Theophylact, Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

43-45. The day following Jesus would go forth into Galilee, and findeth Philip, and saith unto him, Follow me. Now Philip was of Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found Him, of Whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Andrew, by listening to the Forerunner, and Peter, by listening to Andrew, both followed Christ. But it appears that Philip, without the prompting of another, obeyed Jesus at once when He said to him, Follow me. How was he convinced so instantaneously? It appears, first of all, that the voice of the Lord stung his soul with love. The sound of the Lord's voice was not like that of any other; for those who were worthy, it immediately kindled within them a burning love for Him. As Cleopas and the other disciple on the road to Emmaus said, Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way? (Lk.

24:32) Furthermore, Philip had pondered earnestly within his heart, and continuously studied the books of Moses, and was always waiting for the coming of the Christ; therefore, as soon as he saw Him, he was convinced. This is why he said, We have found Him! which shows that he had always been seeking Him. Perhaps he had learned something about Christ from Andrew and Peter. Because they were of the same city, it is likely that they had talked together and discussed the Lord. The Evangelist seems to imply this when He says, Now Philip was of the city of Andrew and John. This was a very small city, more like a village. Therefore, we should marvel at Christ's power, that from such insignificant places He chose His pre-eminent disciples. Philip does not keep this good thing to himself, but shares it with Nathanael. Because Nathanael was a diligent student of the law and knew it thoroughly, Philip refers him to the law and the prophets. Philip calls the Lord the son of Joseph, because they thought He was his child. And he names Him of Nazareth, although He was, properly speaking, of Bethlehem. He was born in Bethlehem and raised in Nazareth. Because the manner of His birth was hidden from most, while His upbringing was apparent, they called Him Jesus of Nazareth.

46-48. And Nathanael said unto him, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip saith unto him, Come and see. Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile! Nathanael saith unto Him, Whence knowest Thou me? Jesus answered and said unto him, Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee.

Philip had said that Christ was from Nazareth. But Nathanael, astute in the law, knew from the Scriptures that the Messiah should come from Bethlehem. This is why he said, Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth? Philip answered, Come and see, knowing that once he tasted Christ's words, he would never leave Him. Christ commends Nathanael for being a true Israelite, who said nothing either to curry favor or to cause enmity. Nathanael's words stemmed not from disbelief, but from a discerning mind well-versed in the law, which knew that the Christ would come from Bethlehem and not from Nazareth. How then does Nathanael respond to the Lord? Does he become conceited from these words of praise? Not in the least. Persisting in his desire to establish clearly and certainly the identity of this Man, he asks, Whence knowest Thou me? Then the Lord reveals His very divinity by speaking of things which no one could have known except Nathanael and Philip, because they had spoken and acted alone. Although He was not present, Christ knew all that had taken place when Philip spoke with Nathanael. This is why He says, when thou wast under the fig tree. Before Philip drew near, the Lord spoke these words concerning Nathanael, lest anyone should suspect that Philip had told Him of the fig tree and his conversation with Nathanael. At once Nathanael understood Who the Lord was, and confessed Him to be the Son of God. Hear what he says:

49-51. Nathanael answered and saith unto Him, Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God; Thou art the King of Israel. Jesus answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? Thou shalt see greater things than these. And He saith unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.

Prophecy has great power, even greater than miracles, to move a man to believe. The demons are able to simulate miracles and appear to do them. But no one can have clear foreknowledge of future events, and predict them accurately, not even an angel, and even less so, the demons. Therefore the Lord drew Nathanael to Himself by telling him the place where he had been standing, and that Philip had called to him, and that he was a true Israelite. When he heard these things Nathanael sensed the greatness of the Lord, as much as he was able to at that time, and confessed Him to be the Son of God. Yet his confession was not the same as Peter's (See Mt. 16:16-18). Peter confessed Him to be the Son of God,

that is, true God. Therefore the Lord blessed Peter, and entrusted the Church to him. But Nathanael confesses Him to be merely a man Who by grace and His own virtue has been adopted as a son of God. This is made clear by what he says next, Thou art the King of Israel. Do you see? Nathanael has not yet attained to the perfect knowledge of the true divinity of the Only-begotten. He believes in Him as a man beloved by God, and as the King of Israel. If he had confessed Him to be truly God, he would not have called Him the King of Israel, but the King of all. Therefore the Lord does not bless him, as He did Peter, but corrects him, and leads his thoughts upwards to comprehend something of His divinity. Ye shall see, He says, the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. He is saying, "Do not understand Me to be merely a man, but rather the Master of the angels." He Whom the angels serve cannot be merely a man, but only true God.

All these things did, in fact, take place at His Crucifixion and Ascension. As the time of His Passion approached, an angel from heaven strengthened Him; at His Tomb there was an angel, and again at His Ascension, as Luke relates (see Acts 1:10-11). Some have understood the fig tree to represent the law. Like the fig, the law contains sweetness, but it is hard to get at, covered over, as with leaves, by the harshness of the legal observations and the difficulty of the commandments. They say, then, that the Lord saw Nathanael, that is, looked down graciously upon him, and knew his thoughts, while he was still under the law. Consider this interpretation as well, O reader, if you find it pleasing: the Lord saw Nathanael under the fig tree, that is, under the law, or, within the law, searching out its depths. If he had not been searching out the depth of the law, the Lord would not have seen him. Know this as well, that Galilee means "rolling down." The Lord, then, went forth to that place in this world which is sunk low, that is to say, to our human nature. And while we were still under the fig tree, under the sway of sweet sin, which is mixed with much bitterness on account of the regret and the punishments which follow, the Lover of man saw us, and chose those who confess Him to be the Son of God and the King of each one who sees God (for Israel means "seeing God"). Indeed, if we persevere with zeal, He will count us worthy to see greater things than these. We shall behold angels ascending to the height of divine knowledge of Him, and descending again, because they cannot know His unknowable essence. In another sense, a man ascends when he immerses himself in the study of the divinity of the Only-begotten, and he descends when he delights in the contemplation of His Incarnation and descent into hades.



November 14, 2021
Stewards of the OCA Sunday

Whatever your task, work heartily, as serving the Lord and not men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward; you are serving the Lord Christ. (Col 3:23-24)

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America:

Christ is in our midst!

I greet you today on this Sunday, November 14, 2021 which has been designated as Steward Sunday for 2021.

I am grateful for the hard and diligent work of the many men and women who serve the Orthodox Church in America in its many departments, offices, and boards. Without their efforts, we would not be blessed with the many resources that are regularly made available to us. The music downloads, brochures, weekly liturgical texts, and various other resources have become staples in our parishes.

In addition, we see special projects such as the Clergy Synaxis groups, the Clergy Wives Ministry, Church Planting Grants, Music training sessions, Clergy Continuing Education seminars, all made possible by many different groups all working towards a common purpose: "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ" (Eph 4:12).

It is this work which I am inviting you to support on this Sunday, November 14, 2021 and I ask that parishes take a special collection for the Stewards of the Orthodox Church in America. For those of you who want to offer your support but are unable to do so financially I encourage you to support the ministries of the Orthodox Church in America by getting involved in other ways. Most especially, I ask that you continue to pray for all those who labor in Christ's vineyard.

May the Lord continue to bless your efforts for His Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tikhon".

Tikhon
Archbishop of Washington
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

P.O. Box 675 Syosset, New York, 11791
516-922-0550 - metropolitan@oca.org - www.oca.org

LET ALL THAT YOU DO BE DONE IN LOVE. 1 Cor.16:14

YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. Matt. 22:37

YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. Matt. 22:39

LOVE YOUR ENEMIES AND PRAY FOR THOSE WHO PERSECUTE YOU. Matt. 5:44

LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND, LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, LOVE IS NOT PROUD, LOVE IS NOT SELFISH, LOVE IS NOT PROVOKED. 1Cor. 13:4

LOVE BEARS ALL THINGS, LOVE ALWAYS HAS FAITH, LOVE ALWAYS HAS HOPE, LOVE ENDURES ALL THINGS. LOVE NEVER FAILS! 1Cor. 13:7,8

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=== Scriptural Readings for the Week ===

Monday	Colossians 2:13-20	Luke 14:12-15
Tuesday	Colossians 2:20-3:3	Luke 14:25-35
Wednesday	Colossians 3:17-4:1	Luke 15:1-10
Thursday	Colossians 4:2-9	Luke 16:1-9
Friday	Colossians 4:10-18	Luke 16:15-18, 17:1-4
Saturday	2 Corinthians 5:1-10	Luke 9:57-62
Sunday	Hebrews 9:1-7	Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28
	Galatians 6:11-18	Luke 12:16-21

GUIDELINES FOR A FAMILY PRAYER RULE

(Taken from *Acquiring the Mind of Christ*,
by Archimandrite Sergius (Bowyer),
Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA)

- A Prayer Rule must not and cannot be said in the car. It is certainly good to pray when traveling, but the daily Prayer Rule must be done in front of the icons and the Gospel, preferably with a lit candle, and if possible, the room lights dimmed. It is important to remember that we will never have time for God, but rather must *make* time for God, for the "*Kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force*" (Matt. 11:12). The best time to pray is in the morning or in the evening when it is darker.
- Also, when using a Rule of Prayer, we must be flexible and do what we can do attentively and consistently. Our goal is to maintain the connection with God and cultivate a real relationship, not just fulfill our "rule" of prayer.
- The tempo of saying the Jesus Prayer can vary; if we are distracted, then we pray quickly; if we are relaxed, slowly.
- The Jesus Prayer is not a mantra or vain repetition. The words are a profoundly meaningful confession by which we begin our dialogue with God in fulfillment of the Lord's words: "*Whatever you ask in My Name, that I will do*" (John 14:13).
- We need to read the words of our Lord every day, at least one chapter. A consecutive reading of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John throughout the year greatly aids us in understanding and doing God's will.

A FAMILY PRAYER RULE

The Trisagion Prayers

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Glory to Thee, O God, glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life: Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. *(three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, cleanse us from our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Lord, have mercy. *(three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Come let us worship God our King. Come let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God. Come let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

- *Psalm 50 (if desired)*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of Thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee only have I sinned and done this evil before Thee, that Thou mightest be justified in Thy words, and prevail when Thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, Thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of Thy wisdom hast Thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn Thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and with Thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors Thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto Thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Thy righteousness, O Lord, Thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Thy praise. For if Thou hadst desired sacrifice, I would have given it; with whole-burnt offerings Thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in Thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

- *The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed*

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things, visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and on the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, and He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the Prophets. In One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church; I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

- ***The Jesus Prayer***

(Then 5 or 10 prostrations [or bows, if we are not able], saying the Jesus Prayer:)

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me.

(We pray for ourselves, for our loved ones, or for those with whom we have ill will. We cross ourselves each time and say the prayer slowly as we bow to the ground).

- ***Prayers for our Family and Loved Ones***

Grant rest eternal in blessed repose, O Lord, to the souls of Thy departed servants, the ever-to-be-remembered *(their names)*, and make their memory to be eternal! Memory eternal! *(three times)*

O Physician of souls and bodies, with a contrite and humble heart, we ask Thee to bring to an end the physical and spiritual pain and suffering of Thy servants *(their names)*, and as Thou did raise up the daughter of Jairus and Peter's mother-in-law by Thy divine touch, raise up Thy servants unto renewed strength and good health, and grant them many, blessed years! Many Years! *(three times)*

- ***Prayers from our Prayer Book***

(Here we can say prayers from the Prayer Book, especially Prayers in Preparation for Holy Communion, Prayers of Intercession for Others or Special Intention, etc.)

- ***A Chapter from the Scriptures***

(Then we read a chapter from the Gospel, or another book of the Bible, perhaps according to the Church calendar, or also a portion of Orthodox spiritual reading.)

- ***Morning Prayer (if desired)***

I thank Thee, O Lord, that Thou hast again shown me the Light of a new day. Grant me to greet this day in peace. At all times, help me to rely upon Thy holy will. In every hour of this day, help me, teach me, and reveal Thy will to me. Bless, help, and save all those who surround me. Teach me to treat everything that comes to me throughout this day with peace of soul and with firm conviction that Thy will governs all things. In all my deeds and words, sanctify, bless and correct my thoughts and feelings. In unforeseen events, let me not forget that everything is sent by Thee. Teach me to act firmly and wisely without embittering or embarrassing others. O Lord, give me strength to bear the fatigue of the coming day with all it shall bring. Direct my will, teach me to pray, and Thyself, come, grant me Thy blessing, be with me, and pray within me. Amen.

- *Evening Prayer (if desired)*

O Eternal God and King of all creation, Who hast kept me safe to attain to this hour, forgive me all wherein I have sinned today in deed, word, and thought. Cleanse, O Lord, my transgressions and faults and make me a Temple for Thy Holy Spirit. Vanquish the enemies, both bodily and bodiless, that fight against me, and keep and deliver me from the vain thoughts and evil desires which tempt me. Receive my prayers in Thy great mercy. Shine into my heart the Light of the Holy Spirit. Grant me to live according to Thy commandments. Teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. O Lord, I thank Thee for all the things that Thou hast brought me this day and I commend it all into Thy hands, trusting that through Thy mercy all things will turn out for the good and for my salvation. Grant me also, as I go to sleep, rest for my body and soul, and preserve me from the passions of the flesh and the dark evil spirits. Amen.

- *Rite of Forgiveness*

(Each member of the family lines up from the eldest to the youngest, and coming before each person, asks forgiveness of one another, offering the Kiss of Peace:)

Forgive me, a sinner. *(The other person responds:)* God forgives, and I forgive.

(You might also want to say to each other:) God loves you ... and I love you.

- *Concluding Prayers (if desired)*

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, ever-blessed and most pure and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without corruption thou gavest birth to God the Word: True Theotokos, we magnify thee!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. *(three times)*

Through the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

Through the prayers of Thy most pure Mother, my holy Guardian Angel, my patron saint *(name)*, and of all Thy Saints, have mercy on us and upon Thy world.

O Lord, into Thy hands I commit my spirit. Amen.

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Please find below - The 2020 Nativity Fast Planner Calendar (**adapt to this year by following the date and not the day**). May this calendar be a good source for all of us as an instrument which we can use to grow spiritually in our life in Christ, with Christ, and through Christ during this Nativity Fast. May the God Who loves us more than we love ourselves, bless each and every single one of us during this Nativity Fast and enrich our lives as we grow closer to Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ through prayer, fasting, reading Holy Scripture, attending the Divine Services, and loving the Gospel Message and ministering to our brothers and sisters in need during this Holy Season.

MY ADVENT PLANNER

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov. 15 <i>Beginning of Advent</i> Begin the Fast which concludes after Liturgy on Christmas Day ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Write a prayer list of people you want to remember, place the list near your icon(s) ___ Say your evening prayers	16 <i>Apostle Matthew</i> ___ Read from the Bible: <i>Matthew 2:18-25</i> ___ Pray for members of your family Today I helped:	17 <i>St. Lazarus the Iconographer</i> ___ Read Psalm 23 ___ Pray for your school classmates My favorite icon is:	18 <i>Martyr Basilissa the Deacon</i> ___ Read Galatians 3:23-29 ___ Say a prayer to St. Romano for your parish deacon(s) Today I learned about:	19 <i>Prophet Isaiah</i> ___ Read 1 Kings 18:1-46 ___ Pray for the homeless At the divine liturgy I like:	20 <i>Reverend of the Biry</i> ___ Place the festal icon in your icon corner ___ Pray for your departed relatives ___ Attend vespers (or vigil) for the fast	21 <i>Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Say a prayer to the Virgin Mary for a friend at church ___ Read the pre-communion prayers with your parents/guardian
22 <i>Postfast of the Biry</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Give thanks to God for the blessing of receiving the Eucharist ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns	23 <i>St. Alexander Nevsky</i> ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/st_alexander-nevsky ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns Today I helped:	24 <i>St. Catherine the Great Martyr</i> ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/st_catherine ___ Pray for members of your family ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns	25 <i>Annunciation (Apokalif) of the feast of the Biry of the Theotokos</i> ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns one last time ___ Pray for your school classmates One of my favorite saints is:	26 <i>St. Innocent of Alaska THANKS GIVING (US)</i> ___ Celebrate the holiday of Thanksgiving with a prayer of thanks to God for your family asking God to care for those less fortunate My favorite Thanksgiving food is:	27 <i>Greatmartyr Jovian</i> ___ Read Psalm 143 ___ Pray for your departed relatives ___ Make a donation to IOCC, helping those in need.	28 <i>Martyr Stephen the New</i> ___ Look on Google to find the Church of Bethlehem, where St. Stephen was baptized in 715 AD. ___ Help your parents at home ___ Attend vespers (or vigil)
29 <i>St. Abba of Nitria</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Give thanks to God for the blessing of receiving the Eucharist ___ Find the Nitria Monastery on Google Maps, to see where St. Abba lived in the 6th century	30 <i>St. Andrew the Apostle</i> ___ Read Mark 1:16-20 ___ Say a prayer to the Apostle Andrew for work of the Orthodox Christian Mission Center (OCMC) Today I helped:	Dec. 1 <i>Prophet Nahum</i> ___ Read Nahum 1:12-15 ___ Pray for members of your family Today I learned about:	2 <i>Prophet Habakkuk</i> ___ Read Habakkuk 3:1-19 ___ Pray for those in prison In church, I like:	3 <i>Prophet Zephaniah</i> ___ Read Zephaniah 3:14-20 ___ Pray for the unemployed Today I helped:	4 <i>Greatmartyr Barbara</i> ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/st_barbara ___ Pray for your departed relatives ___ Make a donation to a local food pantry or grocery charity box	5 <i>St. Sava the Sanctified</i> ___ Pray for those in hospitals ___ Attend vespers (or vigil) ___ Put your shoes out for St. Nicholas
6 <i>St. Nicholas of Myra</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/st-richard-feast ___ Talk with your parents/guardians to decide when you'll go to confession before Christmas	7 <i>St. Andrew of Milan</i> ___ Watch a video of the Hymn of St. Andrew: https://youtu.be/_OMQ3Zgh8 ___ Pray for members of your family Today I helped:	8 <i>St. Patapius of Tiber</i> ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/st-patapius ___ Pray for your teachers at church and school What decorations are you putting up for Christmas?	9 <i>Prophets Haggai & Zechariah</i> ___ Read 1 Samuel 1:2-2:11 ___ Pray for your school classmates Today I learned about:	10 <i>Blessed John of Serbia</i> ___ Read Luke 6:17-23 ___ Pray for the homeless Today I helped:	11 <i>Venerable Daniel the Sifter</i> ___ Read Psalm 63 ___ Pray for your departed relatives ___ Make a donation to IOCCUS North America, helping those in need.	12 <i>St. Sphrick the Wonderworker</i> ___ Plant seeds in cotton with water for St. Sphrick Day... watch them grow 'til spring! ___ Help your parents at home ___ Attend vespers (or vigil)

Adapted from the Nativity Fast Planner Calendar by the Holy Trinity Monastery, Skete of the Holy Trinity, New York. All rights reserved.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Dec. 13 <i>Sunday of the Forerunners</i> <i>St. Herman of Alaska</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/8e-herman ___ Say a prayer to St. Herman for monastics in North America	14 <i>Martyr of Apollonia</i> ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/8e-apollonia ___ Pray for members of your family Today I helped:	15 <i>St. Nicetas of Bulgaria</i> ___ Read Proverbs 3:1-35 ___ Pray for your school classmates One of my favorite saints is:	16 <i>Prophet Haggai</i> ___ Read Haggai 2:1-9 ___ Pray for our civil authorities Today I learned about:	17 <i>Prophet Daniel</i> ___ Read Daniel 3:1-30 ___ Pray to the youths Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael to watch over you Count how many days it is until Pascha:	18 <i>St. Modestus of Jerusalem</i> ___ Find the Church of the Holy Sepulchre on Google Maps ___ Pray for your departed relatives Donate a shirt, pants, or shoes to a local shelter for less fortunate children	19 <i>St. Blaise of the Kyiv Caves</i> ___ Look on Google Maps to find the Kyiv Caves Monastery ___ Help your parents at home ___ Attend vespers (or vigil)
20 <i>Sunday before Christmas</i> <i>St. John of Kronstadt</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Say a prayer to St. John for your parish priest(s) ___ If you haven't already make sure you get to confession soon!	21 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>St. John of Nicomedia</i> ___ Read Psalm 91 ___ Pray for the unemployed Today I helped:	22 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>Great Martyr Anastasia</i> ___ Read the life of http://bit.ly/8e-anastasia ___ Pray for the homeless One of my favorite hymns from liturgy is:	23 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>St. Niphon of Cyprus</i> ___ Read the Royal Hours http://bit.ly/8e-royal-hours ___ Pray for those in prison Today I learned about:	24 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>St. Agapeta of Rome</i> Strict Fast Day ___ Attend Vespers Liturgy ___ Pray for your departed relatives ___ Attend the Festal Vigil	25 <i>Nativity of our Lord</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Break the fast after liturgy (after celebrating the feast!) ___ Greet everyone with "Christ is born!" The reply is: "Glorify Him!"	26 <i>Feast of the Theophany</i> <i>Baklava Day (Canada)</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Pray for members of your family ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns
27 <i>Sunday after Christmas</i> <i>St. Joseph, James, and David</i> <i>St. Stephen the Deacon</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns My favorite part of Christmas liturgy is:	28 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>St. Nicetas the Deacon</i> ___ Read Acts 6:1-7 ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns Today I helped:	29 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>St. Ambrose of Mediolanum</i> ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns ___ Pray for your choir and chanters ___ Get the ingredients for making the vasilopita (see the link on Dec. 31 for details)	30 <i>Feast of the Nativity</i> <i>Wrighteous Anaparsia of Greece</i> ___ Read Psalm 122 ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns Today I learned about:	31 <i>Leontobabing (Apollonia) of the feast of the Nativity of our Lord</i> <i>St. Anicetus of Romania</i> ___ Pray the Nativity festal hymns one last time ___ Make the vasilopita with your family: http://bit.ly/vasilopita-recipe ___ Read Psalm 150 and give thanks to God for the blessings received in the past year, glory to God!	Jan. 1 <i>Circumcision of our Lord</i> <i>St. Basil the Great</i> New Year's Day ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Pray for your family, asking God for good health in the new year ___ Cut the vasilopita and enjoy the feast of St. Basil!	2 <i>Sunday before Theophany</i> <i>St. Simeon of Samaria</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Say a prayer to the Virgin Mary for your parish community ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns
3 <i>Sunday before Theophany</i> <i>St. Genevieve of Paris</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Say the post-communion prayers with your parents after liturgy ___ Say your evening prayers	4 <i>Feast of the Theophany</i> <i>Synaxis of the 70 Apostles</i> ___ Read Psalm 1 ___ Pray to the Holy Apostles to guide our bishops in these lands Today I helped:	5 <i>Feast of the Theophany</i> Strict Fast Day ___ Read the Royal Hours http://bit.ly/8e-theophany-royal-hours ___ Bring a note to school for an excused absence tomorrow morning's festal liturgy One of my favorite saints is:	6 <i>Theophany of our Lord</i> ___ Attend Liturgy ___ Bring your family's holy water bottle to church and refill it ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns	7 <i>Synaxis of St. John the Baptist</i> Strict Fast Day ___ Attend Vespers Liturgy ___ Pray to St. John the Baptist for your family and friends ___ Sing (or pray) the festal hymns Keep doing the good habits you adopted during the advent season!		

Also, please find information on why we Fast during the Nativity Fast in preparation for The Great Feast of The Nativity of Our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ According to the Flesh:

The Nativity Fast – Why We Fast

November 15, marks the beginning of the Nativity Fast (40 days before Christmas). The following article offers some thoughts on the purpose of fasting.

Fasting is not very alive and well in the Christian world. Much of that world has long lost any living connection with the historical memory of Christian fasting. Without the guidance of Tradition, many modern Christians either do not fast, or constantly seek to re-invent the practice, sometimes with unintended consequences.

There are other segments of Christendom who have tiny remnants of the traditional Christian fast, but in the face of a modern world have reduced the tradition to relatively trivial acts of self-denial.

I read recently (though I cannot remember where) that the rejection of Hesychasm was the source of all heresy. In less technical terms we can say that knowing God in truth, participating in His life, union with Him through humility, prayer, love of enemy and repentance before all and for everything, is the purpose of the Christian life. Hesychasm (Greek Hesychia=Silence) is the name applied to the Orthodox tradition of ceaseless prayer and inner stillness.

But these are incorrectly understood if they are separated from knowledge of God and participation in His life, union with Him through humility, prayer, love of enemy and repentance before all and for everything.

And it is the same path of inner knowledge of God (with all its components) that is the proper context of fasting. If we fast but do not forgive our enemies – our fasting is of no use. If we fast and do not find it drawing us into humility – our fasting is of no use. If our fasting does not make us yet more keenly aware of the fact that we are sinful before all and responsible to all then it is of no benefit. If our fasting does not unite us with the life of God – which is meek and lowly – then it is again of no benefit.

Fasting is not dieting. Fasting is not about keeping a Christian version of kosher. Fasting is about hunger and humility (which is increased as we allow ourselves to become weak). Fasting is about allowing our heart to break.

I have seen greater good accomplished in souls through their failure in the fasting season than in the souls of those who “fasted well.” Publicans enter the kingdom of God before Pharisees pretty much every time.

Why do we fast? Perhaps the more germane question is “why do we eat?” Christ quoted Scripture to the evil one and said, “Man does not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.” We eat as though our life depended on it and it does not. We fast because our life depends on the word of God.

I worked for a couple of years as a hospice chaplain. During that time, daily sitting at the side of the beds of dying patients – I learned a little about how we die. It is a medical fact that many people become “anorexic” before death – that is – they cease to want food. Many times family and even doctors become concerned and force food on a patient who will not survive. Interestingly, it was found that patients who became anorexic had less pain than those who, having become anorexic, were forced to take food. (None of this is about the psychological anorexia that afflicts many of our youth. That is a tragedy) It is as though at death our bodies have a wisdom we have lacked for most of our lives. It knows that what it needs is not food – but something deeper. The soul seeks and hungers for the living God. The body and its pain become a distraction. And thus in God’s mercy the distraction is reduced.

Christianity as a religion – as a theoretical system of explanations regarding heaven and hell, reward and punishment, is simply Christianity that has been distorted from its true form. Either we know the living God or we have nothing. Either we eat His flesh and drink His blood or we have no life in us. The rejection of Hesychasm is the source of all heresy.

Why do we fast? We fast so that we may live like a dying man – and in dying we can be born to eternal life.