

HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH



MARCH 2018

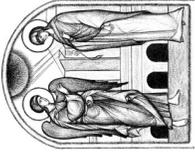


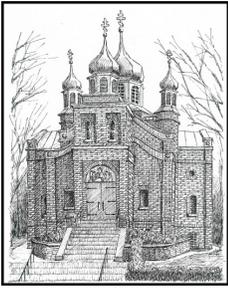
HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

305 Washington Street
P. O. Box 2876
New Britain, CT 06050-2876

HÖLY TRINITY ÖRTHÖDÖX CHURCH

MARCH 2018

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Greeter: R. Delaney	Cleaners: ? ? ? ?	Charity: Archpriest Dimitrie Vincent	 Confession 5-5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts 6:00 PM SOUP 'n BREAD	1 Orthodoxy 101 @ 10:30 AM	2	3 Confession 4-4:30 PM Great Vespers 5:00PM Confession
4 th of Great Lent St. Gregory Palamas Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM Coffee Hour – Santoro Deanery Vespers 4 PM Terryville	5	6	7 Confession 5-5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts 6:00 PM SOUP 'n BREAD	8 Confession 3:00 PM	9 Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts 5:00 PM @ St. Mary's Ukrainian, New Britain	10 Choir Rehearsal 3:00 PM Confession 4-4:30 PM Great Vespers 5:00PM Confession
11 th of Great Lent Veneration of the Holy Cross Church School 8:30 AM Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM Coffee Hour – Delaney FORCC Vespers 4 PM Bridgewater	12	13 Confession 2:00 PM	14 Confession 5-5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts 6:00 PM SOUP 'n BREAD	15 Visitation: 10:00 AM JEROME HOME (for Communion)	16	17 St. Patrick of Ireland Choir Rehearsal 3:00 PM Confession 4-4:30 PM Great Vespers 5:00PM Confession
18 th of Great Lent St. John Climacus St. Nikolai Velimirovich Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM Coffee Hour – Koles/Labas Deanery Vespers 4 PM New Britain	19	20 Visitation: 11:30 AM MSGR. BOJNOWSKI MANOR (for Communion)	21 Confession 5-5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts 6:00 PM SOUP 'n BREAD	22 Confession 4:00 P. M.	23 Akathist to the Theotokos 6:30 PM	24 Pre-Pascha Clean-up 8:30 AM Confession 4-4:30 PM Great Vespers 5:00PM Confession
25 th of Great Lent St. Mary of Egypt Annunciation Divine Liturgy, 9:00 AM Coffee Hour – Everson/Dilger Holy Unction 4 PM Ansonia	26 Parish Council Meeting 7:00 PM	27	28 Confession 5-5:30 PM Liturgy of the Pre-sanctified Gifts 6:00 PM SOUP 'n BREAD	29 Orthodoxy 101 @ 10:30 AM	30 Confession 2:00 P. M.	31 St. Innocent of Alaska Divine Liturgy 9:00 AM Lazarus Saturday VIGIL [Blessing of Palms] 5:00 PM



Monthly Newsletter of HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH

305 Washington Street • PO Box 2876 • New Britain, CT 06050-2876

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MARCH 2018

ONE STEWARDS: March is ONE Stewards



month and the 2018 campaign has begun. Our parish had a wonderful 2017! Our parish over the past years has increased its contributions each year. Also, we had five members in the Bishop's Circle. For those who increased their donation, THANK YOU!! If you were a contributor to ONE

Stewards in the past or are a current "steward" the time has come to step forward and be counted. Our contributions to ONE Stewards goes to support charities, seminarian scholarships, mission support and the diocesan Youth Rally. Please respond to the ONE Stewards mailing when it arrives at your home.

Lenten Soup Sale: The Sisterhood will be making different Lenten Soups which will be available on Saturday, March 10th from 3:00 to 5:00 PM before Great Vespers and Sunday, March 11th during Coffee Hour. Any questions please see Diane Dounouk or Gladys Labas.

GREAT LENT: Please make a sincere effort to attend more services, to fast, to give alms, to read the scriptures or a spiritual book and to participate in the Sacrament of Confession during our journey of Great Lent. Fasting for the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is nothing by mouth (food, drink, smoking, etc.) at least from the noontime meal until after Communion. Those who are physically able to are encouraged to fast the whole day.

- ◆ Please check the calendar for weekday confession times, also, Wednesdays, 5:00 - 5:30 p.m. and Saturdays, before and after Vespers. Father also is available by appointment at other times. **Please** make your Lenten confession before the end of Great Lent, Friday, **March 30th**.

A note about Confession and frequent Communion:
For those who are receiving the Eucharist every Sunday and on Feast days, an acceptable rule of thumb is to participate in the Sacrament of Confession at least once during each of the four Lenten seasons during the year. Also, in preparation for receiving the Holy Eucharist, especially at Sunday Divine Liturgy, prayer and fasting is the acceptable practice. Prayer, by at-



tending Vespers the night before, and fasting, from midnight until after Divine Liturgy. When we have a weekday Festival Vesperal Liturgy the rules of fasting are the same as for Presanctified. We also should participate in the Sacrament of Confession if we are absent from Divine Liturgy & the Eucharist for three weeks in a row.

LENTEN VESPERS: On Sunday afternoons [all begin at 4:00 p.m.] during the fast, Lenten Vespers will be served at various churches through out the Connecticut Deanery. It may seem burdensome but visiting our neighbors brings great joy to the host parish to fill their temple and we get to pray and have fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ.



Lenten Vesper Schedule:

Mar.	4th	Ss. Cyril & Methodius Church, Terryville
Mar.	11th	St. John the Baptist Church, Mill Hill, Bridgeport
Mar.	18th	Holy Trinity Church, New Britain
Mar.	25th	Holy Union: Three Saints, Ansonia
Apr.	1st	Bridegroom Matins: All Saints Church, Hartford

LENTEN VESPERS HOST: We are the host parish for the 4th Sunday of Great Lent, March 18th. We need everyone's help in feeding the faithful who will journey from around the Connecticut Deanery and pray with us. Please see Sisterhood President Sarah Clark (or she will find you) and offer to make a soup or bread or Lenten desert so that we can share in our blessings and fellowship with our brothers & sisters in Christ.

PARISH COUNCIL: The next meeting of the 2017 Parish Council will be held on Monday evening,

Archpriest David Koles, Rector
9 Frankie Lane
Terryville, CT 06786
Phone: 860-573-0013
Email: frdavid@htocnb.org

March 26th at 7:00 P.M. All council members are reminded of the schedule change and asked to make every effort to attend the meeting.

The March charity collection is for

Archpriest Dimitrie Vincent. Father Dimitrie Vincent, the Parish Priest of St. Thomas Albanian Orthodox Church in Farmington Hills, Michigan, suffered a serious spinal cord injury while playing hockey on Saturday, November 25 at the Redford Ice Arena. Fr. Dimitrie underwent emergency surgery and has been recovering at the Rehabilitation Institute of Michigan in Detroit. Hockey has Heart <https://www.hockeyhasheart.org/> is requesting donations to assist Father D's with his ongoing care. Medical expenses can be astronomical for these types of injuries. The HHH Board of Directors also unanimously approved an immediate distribution of \$10,000 from the general fund for his care. The hockey community - locally, and even NHL players - have responded to his situation in an amazing way. Follow [this link](#) to see Fr. Dimitrie taking time out from rehab to visit with players staging a fundraiser.

The collection will be taken on the last Sunday of the month. Please use the envelope provided in your monthly mailing and be generous!!

GENERAL CONFESSION: is normally held on the last Saturday of each month (except for lenten periods), following Great Vespers. All regular communicants should make every effort to attend each General Confession. The next General Confession will be held after the Pascha season in May.

LITURGICAL NOTE: There has been a little liturgical controversy about the words during the Consecration of the Gifts in the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great. After much research a new service book has been published and this area has been addressed. We will follow this liturgical text for the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil:

PRIEST: Therefore, most holy Master to bless, to hallow and to show ...

[DEACON: Bless Master, the Holy Bread.]

PRIEST: ... this Bread to be the precious Body of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

PEOPLE: Amen.

[DEACON: Bless, Master, the Holy Cup.]

PRIEST: And this Cup to be the precious Blood of our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ.

PEOPLE: Amen.

[DEACON: Bless both, Master.]

PRIEST: Shed for the life of the world.

PEOPLE: Amen. Amen. Amen.

Birthdays in MARCH:

2	Mary Camarata	1928
5	Mat. Faith Kuharsky	1936
6	Paul Salina	1948
7	Megan Bartos Stock	1986
15	Kara Ahern	2008
21	Marion Bichun	1942
21	Gabriel Rembisz	2006
23	Julia Bress	1987
26	Jennifer Belonick	1985
31	Diane Dounouk	1945



“WHEN I WAS SICK YOU CAME TO ME”

The following parishioners (and friends) are now home-bound or in long-term care facilities. If there are any names missing, please inform Fr. David. The regular schedule of visitations is included on the monthly calendar. Parishioners are welcomed and encouraged to make regular visitations to nursing homes and shut-ins. Our loved ones **NEED** to feel connected to their parish family.

Jerome Home, New Britain

Sadie Albino

Alexander Dubnansky

Monsignor Bojnowski Manor, New Britain

Mary Camarata

Grandview Rehabilitation and Healthcare Center

[Walnut Hill Care Center], New Britain

Martha Cherpak

At Home: Betty Beck, Jim Dounouk, Jane Gunning, Nicholas Hamisevicz, Joseph Kowar, Stella Liwen, Jennie Pich, Antoinette Rudy and Katherine Szeszakow.



PARISH DIPTYCHS

Please remember our departed brothers and sisters in your prayers.

John Gedz	66	March 1 1954
Anna Zavadsky	63	March 1 1962
Stephen Prigodich	76	March 1 2002
Stephen Shimko	52	March 2 1912
Conrad Filipchuk		March 2 1933
Alexander Kornak	81	March 2 1953
Mary Gel	84	March 2 1978
Julia Jazkevich	93	March 2 1999
Child Antonina Vanuk	1	March 3 1920
Nicolai Jazkevich	86	March 3 1983

Isaiah Zablotzky		March 5 1951
John Dobosz	77	March 5 1963
Mary Makuch	79	March 5 1973
Dina Karanowytch	86	March 5 2010
Benjamin Karanowytch	44	March 6 1996
Elizabeth (Zuk) Zaleski	76	March 6 2000
Helen Finn	86	March 6 2001
John Stepanuk	70	March 7 1919
Child Stephen Wanik	9 mo	March 7 1922
Leonid Matsychsyk	95	March 7 2013
Peter Adamovich	48	March 8 1935
William Burak	63	March 8 1960
Helen Panevich	56	March 8 1961
Naum Martinuk	49	March 9 1942
Sophie Gasukewich	92	March 9 1985
Child Michael Muchko	1	March 10 1909
Child Theodore Sonedayik	2 mo	March 10 1910
Child Eugenia Shakuna	17 days	March 10 1912
Child Constantine Stankevich	23 days	March 10 1918
Lillian Maddaluno	90	March 10 2008
Mary Panish	87	March 11 1997
Kathryn Petriw	83	March 11 2009
Paul Krish	56	March 12 1975
Mary Mick	28	March 13 1928
Anastasia Karpie	63	March 13 1955
Michael Lewchick		March 13 1985
Child Constantine Petrov	3	March 14 1914
Child Constantine Zdanuk	3	March 14 1914
Catherine Uliasz	97	March 14 2002
Roman Zhardetsky		March 15 1915
Thekla Gladky	42	March 15 1937
Alexander Zhdanuk	69	March 15 1942
Anastasia Burak	57	March 15 1952
Tikhon Zuk	72	March 16 1949
Mary (Dobosz) Roman	86	March 16 2000
Stephen Semanchik		March 17 1939
Katherine Pravka	41	March 17 1941
Dorothy Bielomizy	80	March 17 1962
Child Michael Semchik	5	March 18 1903
Child Miroslav Halaytso	8 mo	March 18 1922
Mary Horbal	67	March 18 1970
Child Evan Bashkevich	1	March 19 1936
Peter Horbal	81	March 19 1975
Paul Kozuch	70	March 20 1966
Katherine Kotek		March 20 1989
Eulah (Julia) Chesky	94	March 20 2008
Mary Kislicki		March 21 1970
Mary Stepanuk	34	March 22 1916
Nicholas Halaytso	37	March 22 1926
George Shimchick	74	March 22 1971
George Sachok	85	March 22 1983
Wasył Szestakow	67	March 22 1986
James Tilley	50	March 23 1964
Mary Romanchuk	86	March 23 1974
Helen Stankievtz		March 23 1987
Vasili Ratushinsky	45	March 24 1911
Aleksy Pituk	48	March 24 1930
Mary Zavada	57	March 24 1949

Akulina Kateshenok	76	March 24 1972
Helen Zaiko	87	March 25 2005
Nina Olear	88	March 26 2010
Vasili Lazar	23	March 27 1903
Child Anastasia Dyachuk	2 days	March 27 1922
Victor Raducha	52	March 27 1942
Ignatz Smoluk	75	March 27 1968
Arlene Osuch		March 27 2011
Albert Murr	71	March 27 2011
Walter Gedz	87	March 28 2004
John Wlasuk	88	March 29 1975
Child John Verder	6 mo	March 30 1918
Mary Eroch	67	March 30 1962
Peter Dyranka	56	March 30 1971

ВЪЧНА ПАМАТЬ

ABOUT SAINT EPHREM'S PRAYER

The famous lenten prayer of Saint Ephrem the Syrian summarizes our entire struggle during the forty day fast – that of turning from vice to virtue, sin to holiness, and self-love to love of God and neighbor. This powerful prayer is said every day of Great Lent, except on Saturdays and Sundays. It should be part of our morning and evening prayers, but may also be said at any other time throughout the day – especially in time of temptation.



THE PRAYER OF SAINT EPHREM

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk. (Prostration)

But grant rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to thy servant. (Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen. (Prostration)

O God, cleanse me a sinner. (12 times, with as many bows, and then again the whole prayer from the beginning to end, and after that one great prostration)

Note: If one cannot make prostrations, then make bows, or simply the sign of the Cross.



FEASTDAY IN MARCH:

The Feast of the Annunciation is one of the earliest Christian feasts, and was already being celebrated in the fourth century. There is a painting of the Annunciation in the

catacomb of Priscilla in Rome dating from the second century.

The Greek and Slavonic names for the Feast may be translated as "good tidings." This, of course, refers to the Incarnation of the Son of God and the salvation He brings. The background of the Annunciation is found in the Gospel of St Luke (1:26-38). The troparion describes this as the "beginning of our salvation, and the revelation of the eternal mystery," for on this day the Son of God became the Son of Man.

There are two main components to the Annunciation: the message itself, and the response of the Virgin. The message fulfills God's promise to send a Redeemer (Genesis 3:15): "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and her seed; he shall crush your head, and you shall lie in wait for his heel." The Fathers of the Church understand "her seed" to refer to Christ. The prophets hinted at His coming, which they saw dimly, but the Archangel Gabriel now proclaims that the promise is about to be fulfilled.



We see this echoed in the Liturgy of St Basil, as well: "When man disobeyed Thee, the only true God who had created him, and was deceived by the guile of the serpent, becoming subject to death by his own transgressions, Thou, O God, in Thy righteous judgment, didst send him forth from Paradise into this world, returning him to the earth from which he was taken, yet providing for him the salvation of regeneration in Thy Christ Himself."

The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to Nazareth in Galilee. There he spoke to the undefiled Virgin who was betrothed to Joseph: "Rejoice, thou who art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

In contrast to Eve, who was readily deceived by the serpent, the Virgin did not immediately accept the Angel's message. In her humility, she did not think she was deserving of such words, but was actually troubled by them. The fact that she asked for an explanation reveals her sobriety and prudence. She did not disbelieve the words of the angel, but could not understand how they would be fulfilled, for they spoke of something which was beyond nature.

Then said Mary unto the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" (Luke 1:34). "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee: therefore

also that which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.' And Mary said, 'Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.' And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1: 35-38)."

In his Sermon 23 on the day of the Annunciation, St Philaret of Moscow boldly stated that "the word of the creature brought the Creator down into the world." He explains that salvation is not merely an act of God's will, but also involves the Virgin's free will. She could have refused, but she accepted God's will and chose to cooperate without complaint or further questions.



CONFESSION (3rd sermon) Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

Continuing my short sermons on Confession, I would like to say that in the first place Confession is an encounter and reconciliation. It is our encounter with Christ whose love to us has no limits, who loves us with all His life and all His death, who never turns away from us, but from whom we sometimes, perhaps even often, walk away. It is an encounter that can be pure joy when during a lapse of time nothing separated us from Christ, when our friendship was pure, was whole, when our friendship wasn't broken by any unfaithfulness. Then we can come to Christ joyfully, happily. We can come to Confession and say, "Lord! Thank You for your friendship. Thank You for your love. Thank You for all that You are. Thank You that You allow me to come near You. Thank You for everything. O, my Joy! O, my Happiness! Accept me and bless me to commune to Your Holy Mysteries. That is: to unite to You even more perfectly, for my joy to be perfect.



It may happen. Perhaps it doesn't happen often. But sometimes such an encounter can fill all our life, be an inspiration for all our life, and give us the strength and power to live.

But more often we come to Christ after some kind of separation. Sometimes the separation was not a cruel one; not inimical; sometimes the separation was because we have forgotten Him, life has submerged us, we didn't have time to remember Him. There was so much in life. And all of a sudden we remember that apart from all that was our inspiration, our joy for some time, there is Christ, there is such a friend who never forgets us, from whom we walked away and who is now alone. Then we must hurry to Him and say, "Lord, forgive — I was



submerged by life, I was carried away by this, by that and something else. Accept me back. You know that this enthusiasm is superficial but that the true thing is our friendship.” But before we can say that, we must ask ourselves a question: is it true that my friendship with Christ is deep enough so that my temporary forgetfulness cannot overshadow, even less destroy it?

But it happens that we have sinned before God. We have sinned by unfaithfulness not in something small but in something very deep. It can be a moment that has separated us in a very deep manner. You remember what happened when Christ was facing the Sanhedrin. A servant came to Peter and said, “But this one also was with Him!” And Peter became afraid. He was frightened by what they would do to him because of the fact that he was with Christ; and he began to swear that, “No, I do not know this man!” He could no longer stay in this yard and see through the window Christ undergoing judgment. And at that moment Christ turned His head and looked at Peter. The All-Knowing Son of God didn’t hear with His ears those words but they hit Him in His soul: one of His nearest disciples had declared that he didn’t know Him, didn’t want to know Him, that he preferred life, that he preferred tranquility. This look hit Peter in his soul in such a manner that he began to weep and went out.



It was just one moment of radical, frightful unfaithfulness. And later on, when Mary Magdalene met the Savior in the garden after His resurrection, He instructed her, “Go to My disciples and Peter and tell them that I am risen,” — because Peter couldn’t any more consider himself as one of the disciples, he was a traitor. He had renounced Christ, and that is why Christ mentioned him especially for him to know that he was not rejected, that the disciples fled away in fear, but without renouncing, and he fled away and renounced; but the love of Christ held him firmly. He can meet Him face to face. Oh, he can fall down at His feet, he can ask for forgiveness, but he knows that he is loved as he was loved in the most faithful times.

And there are also times when we come to Confession — I use this word reluctantly, as a matter of routine — because we want to renew the closeness that so to speak has been shaken. At those moments we must come to Christ knowing that we are loved by all His life and all His death, that we are loved forever, to the depths of our hearts; and that we can come, but in order to become friends anew we must open our souls, tell Him everything for Him to know from us what is wrong with us, what is the infringement of our friendship. And here we should not have recourse to lists of sins, we should not search even in the Holy Scriptures for the sins we might have committed; but we should ask ourselves a question: in what have I personally sinned before God, in what have I personally revealed myself unfaithful?

And to do this there is a simple means. First of all, look at

one’s conscience. What have I preferred to Christ? I will not give you lists, but every one of us can say: yes, to my closeness with Christ I have preferred this or that — shame! But apart from that, we can ask ourselves: what am I constantly, invariably? To do this we can take and read the Holy Gospel and mark in it not the passages that accuse us, but things about which we can say as the disciples said, going with Christ to Emmaus: didn’t our hearts burn within us when He was talking to us on the road?

So, look in the Gospel for the passages that made your heart burn, even for a moment, passages that touched you in the depths of your soul, passages which made you feel that you and Christ, you and Christ, are sharing the same feelings, the same thoughts, that you are one — yes, we are one with Him, that there are passages of which we can say that His thoughts are our thoughts, His feelings our feelings, that we are one with Him, one with Him at that moment. And when of a sudden we discover that we have transgressed this moment, trampled it under our feet, turned away from it, that we were at one with him and turned away - it means that we renounced the little perhaps, but the most holy that is in us. In a sense it is of no importance that we have transgressed some rules, but here we have transgressed in a most frightful way our unity with the Beloved and the One Who loves us. And we should re-read these passages, check ourselves against them; not seeking in what way we are guilty, but in what way we have lost our faithfulness, our friendship, our love in what exists already; because on the part of Christ it is inalienable, it is we who have renounced it.

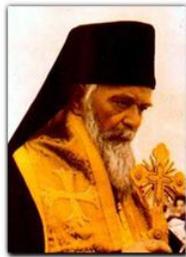
So, that is what we should bring to Confession. And it can be something quite frightful, like the renouncing of Him. So when we prepare for Confession, let us ask ourselves a question: here is the encounter with our closest friend, the beloved one, with the One with Whom we want to be at one, inseparable, forever, completely, in our depths. And we have transgressed this friendship of ours where it already existed as is witnessed by our heart, our memory, our mind, when we remember those passages that made our heart burn, our mind become clear, our will move towards good, our body grow quiet, forgetful that it is flesh and become body, a sacred thing, sacred because through Baptism it has united with the humanity of Christ, through Chrismation it has become a vessel of the Holy Spirit, through our Communion it has become the Body of Christ, however incipiently.

That is what we should bring to Confession. May God give us to come that way, and then we will be able to repent, we will be able to regret not that there is in some list a sin that we have touched in passing, but that something has been broken in my friendship, in my unity with Christ, my Savior, Friend, Beloved. Amen.



**St. Nikolai Velimirovic (1881-1956) from
The Prologue of Ohrid, March 11th 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 St. 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 fruit, that is up to the power and will of God. We plow the furrows, and God sows - 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 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.



NOTE: St. Nikolai of Zicha is commemorated on March 18th.



Advice to Those Living in the World
From Step 1 of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

Some people living in the world have asked me: "We have spouses and are beset with social cares, and how can we lead the spiritual life?" I replied to them: "Do all the good you can; do not speak evil of anyone; do not steal from anyone; do not hate anyone; do not be absent from the divine services; be compassionate to the needy; do not offend anyone; do not wreck another man's domestic happiness, and be content with what your own spouse can give you. If you behave in the way, you will not be far from the Kingdom of Heaven."

The 30 Steps of the Ladder of Divine Ascent

- Steps 1–4: renouncement of the world and obedience to a spiritual father
- Steps 5–7: penitence and affliction as paths to true joy
- Steps 8–17: the defeat of vices and acquisition of virtue
- Steps 18–26: avoidance of the traps of asceticism (laziness, pride, mental stagnation)
- Steps 27–29: acquisition of stillness or peace of the soul, of prayer, and of dispassion
- Step 30: the union of faith, hope, and love

THE AKATHIST HYMN

THE AKATHIST HYMN is one of the most well-loved services of devotion in the Orthodox Church. Although there is some debate concerning the particulars of its authorship, many scholars agree with the pious tradition which states that the Akathist was composed in the imperial city of Constantinople, "the city of the Virgin," by St. Romanos the Melodist, who reposed in the year 556. The Akathist Hymn has proved so popular that many other hymns have been written following its format, particularly in the Russian Orthodox Church. These include Akathists to Our Lord Jesus Christ, to the Cross, to various saints, etc.



The word "*akathistos*" literally means "not sitting," i.e., standing; normally all participants stand while it is being prayed. The hymn is comprised of 24 stanzas, alternating long and short. Each short stanza (kontakion) ends with the singing of "*Alleluia*." Each longer stanza (ikos) ends with the refrain: "*Rejoice, O Bride Unwedded*."

The majority of the hymn is made up of praises directed to the Mother of God, always beginning with the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice." In each of them, one after the other, all the events related to our Lord's incarnation pass before us for our contemplation. The Archangel Gabriel (in Ikos 1) marvels at the Divine self-emptying and the renewal of creation which will occur when Christ comes to dwell in the Virgin's womb. The unborn John the Baptist (Ikos 3) prophetically rejoices. The shepherds (Ikos 4) recognize Christ as a blameless Lamb, and rejoice that in the Virgin "the things of earth join chorus with the heavens." The pagan Magi, (Kontakion 5) following the light of the star, praise Her for revealing the light of the world.

As the hymn progresses, various individuals and groups encounter Christ and His Mother. Each has his own need; each his own desire or expectation, and each finds his or her own particular spiritual need satisfied and fulfilled in Our Lord and in the Mother of God. So too, each generation of Orthodox, and each particular person who has prayed the Akathist, has found in this hymn an inspired means of expressing gratitude and praise to the Mother of God for what she has accomplished for their salvation.

In the same way, may the readers of this booklet find the Mother of God to be a help and consolation for their souls as well.

Fr. Michael Carney

http://www.fatheralexander.org/booklets/english/m_akathist_e.htm
NOTE: We will celebrate the Akathist on Friday, March 23rd at 6:30 p.m.

