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CHRIST IS BORN! GLORIFY HIM!

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father John Harvey, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smoly nec, Father Bazyl Zawierucha, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie— young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—21-year-old with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael

Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [child with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Karen Johnson, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Fred DeNorscia, Sandi Anderson, Donald Uebing, Sabrina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Barbara McDougall, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Jeff Jones, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Stella Rossi, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Millie Koss Good, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Michael Pawlyshyn, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Cheryl Pomeroy, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Frances Gebet, Sheryl Smith Haraczy, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Bill Baronie, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy

Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Berceli, Tom Nolan, Noble Wilshaw, Silvia Martin, and Ian Brick. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

2018 Parish wall calendars have arrived—there are four different icons. Please pick up one or two downstairs after Divine Liturgy!

ALL SAINTS CALENDARS ARE IN! If you are interested, they are \$25 each. Please see Pani Gina if you'd like to buy one—or more!

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 21 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; ZACCHAEUS SUNDAY; AFTERFEAST OF
THEOPHANY; VENERABLE GEORGE THE CHOZEBITE, ABBOT, AND SAINT
EMILIAN-ARCHBISHOP OF CYZICUS; VENERABLE DOMINICA OF
CONSTANTINOPLE; HIEROMARTYR CARTERIUS OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA;
MARTYR THEOPHILUS THE DEACON & HELLADIUS IN LIBYA & ELIAS THE
HERMIT OF EGYPT; VENERABLE GREGORY-WONDERWORKER OF PERCHEVSKY
LAVRA; VENERABLE GREGORY-HERMIT OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*****BLESSING OF WATER AFTER SERVICE*****

Tone 8

1 Timothy 4:9-15

Luke 19:1-10

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 28 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF THE PUBLICAN & THE PHARISEE; VENERABLE PAUL OF THEBES &
JOHN CALABYTES; MONK-MARTYR PANSOPHIUS, VENERABLE PROCHORUS &
VENERABLE GABRIEL**

Tone 1

2 Timothy 3:10-15

Luke 18:10-14

**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 04 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF THE PRODIGAL SON; APOSTLE TIMOTHY OF THE 70; MONK-
MARTYR ANASTASIUS THE PERSIAN; MARTYRS MANUEL, GEORGE, PETER,
LEONTIUS-BISHOPS, SIONIUS, GABRIEL, JOHN, LEON TUS, PARODUS-
PRESBYTERS, & 377 COMPANIONS IN BULGARIA; MARTYR ANASTASIUS THE
DEACON OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

Tone 2

1 Corinthians 6:12-20

Luke 15:11-32

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Milton G. Chicka, Daniel Pysh, Sara Chicka, Nikolai
Pivtoraiko, Anne Cherepko Mazock, and Roy Wyke—Fr. Bob***

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 21 JANUARY 2018

**SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY; ZACCHAEUS SUNDAY; AFTERFEAST OF
THEOPHANY; VENERABLE GEORGE THE CHOZEBITE, ABBOT, AND
SAINT EMILIAN-ARCHBISHOP OF CYZICUS; VENERABLE DOMINICA
OF CONSTANTINOPLE; HIEROMARTYR CARTERIUS OF CAESAREA IN
CAPPADOCIA; MARTYR THEOPHILUS THE DEACON & HELLADIUS IN
LIBYA & ELIAS THE HERMIT OF EGYPT; VENERABLE GREGORY-
WONDERWORKER OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; VENERABLE GREGORY-
HERMIT OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

*****BLESSING OF WATER AFTER SERVICE*****

TROPARION—TONE 8

Thou didst descent from on high, O Merciful One!

Thou didst accept the three-day burial to free us from our sufferings!

Our Lord, our Life and Resurrection, Glory to Thee!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 8

By rising from the tomb,
Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam.
Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,
And the world celebrates Thy Rising from the dead,
O greatly Merciful One!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 8

READER: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!
PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!
READER: In Judah, God is known; His name is great in Israel!
PEOPLE: Pray and make your vows before the Lord our God!
READER: Pray and make your vows.
PEOPLE: Before the Lord our God!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 8

Come let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us make a joyful noise to God our Savior!

Let us come before His face with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to Him with psalms.

Purifying the Heart: Homily for the Feast of the Circumcision of Christ in the Orthodox Church Fr. Philip LeMasters

The great mystery of the Son of God becoming a human being shines brightly today as we celebrate the feast of the Circumcision of Jesus Christ. Like any other Jewish male, He endured the procedure that was the mark of becoming an heir to the promises to Abraham. He is not, of course, simply another child of Hebrew heritage, but also the eternal Word Who spoke the universe into existence. Nonetheless, He humbles Himself today to be circumcised in the flesh as were His forefathers.

St. Paul, a former Pharisee and expert in the Jewish law, strongly opposed requiring Gentiles to be circumcised in order to become Christians. He knew that Christ had fulfilled the promises of the Old Testament such that they were extended to all people who have faith in the Messiah. He writes to the Colossians that "you have come to fullness of life in Him, Who

is the head of all rule and authority. In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of flesh in the circumcision of Christ..." Elsewhere St. Paul teaches that true circumcision is "of the heart, in the spirit, and not of the letter" of the law. (Rom. 2: 29) He knew that Christ's circumcision is a sign that He fulfilled the requirements of the law and enabled all with faith in Him to find a righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees because it extends to the very depths of our existence, to our hearts.

Consequently, the only way worthily to celebrate His circumcision is for us to perfect the circumcision of our hearts. That means purifying them, cutting off their corruption by uniting ourselves to the God-Man from the depths of our souls. And there is no upward limit to this calling. Remember that the Lord interpreted the Old Testament law to forbid not only murder, but also anger and insults—and not only adultery, but also lust. He did not simply call His disciples to limit vengeance to an eye for an eye, but to forgive and bless even their enemies. (Matt. 5:20 ff.) His concern is not simply with outward appearances, conventional morality, or going through the motions. By becoming fully human even as He remained fully divine, He enables us to become perfect in love for God and neighbor even as He is perfect. Such a life cannot be captured by even the best words and ideas.

If we reduce our high calling to legalism or a simple list of deeds to perform, we will have missed the point. For being united with Christ in holiness is not a matter of simply doing this or that by our own will power. As St. Paul reminded the Colossians, "you were buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the working of God, Who raised Him from the dead." We obviously cannot conquer sin and death by even our best actions or thoughts. As St. Paul taught, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2.:8.)

There is no avoiding the truth that the more fully we unite ourselves to our Savior in daily prayer from our hearts, the more we will participate personally in His blessed life. We shape ourselves by what we think about, what we fill our hearts with, and what we love and hope for. Let us celebrate the Circumcision of our Lord by orienting ourselves from the depths of our souls to the One Who has fulfilled and extended the ancient promises to Abraham even to us. That means turning the thoughts of our hearts back to Him in the Jesus Prayer as often as we possibly can. It means opening our hearts to Him in focused prayer each day. It means

keeping a close watch on our thoughts and refusing to accept and fuel those that are corrupt and inflame our self-centered desires and fears.

It means taking our place in the unfolding of God's salvation by cutting off from our hearts and minds all that would separate us from embracing as fully as possible the great mystery of the One Who was circumcised in the flesh on the eighth day. That is how we will find the strength to serve Him faithfully not only in this New Year, but all the years of our lives. That is how our faith will become more than a collection of quaint customs and rituals, but truly our participation in eternal life as whole human beings. That is surely His will for us all as we celebrate this feast of our salvation in the God-Man Who became one of us in order that we might become like Him in holiness. That is the good news that we celebrate this day.

<https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/easternchristianinsights/2017/01/01/purifying-heart-homily-feast-circumcisionchrist-orthodox-church/>

Your Highness, we've been defeated: Basil the Great

By Pemptousia Partnership in Pemptousia Partnership ***Stylianos G. Papadopoulos***

Until then, Orthodoxy in Cappadocia seemed very much like an islet in the East. Valens let loose the evils of heresy everywhere. The combination of his brutality and cunning brought shocking results. He swept through Orthodoxy and then dug his claws into Caesarea. It's true to say that the Cappadocians hadn't really experienced Valens' savage cruelty yet. When they heard what had happened elsewhere their blood curdled.

The various centers of the empire were subject in reality to the policy of the Arian emperor. This came about because the Orthodox were persecuted; their assets were confiscated; they were harassed and violently constrained. Anyone resisting was removed.

The hate and ferocity knew no bounds. It reached the point where, in Nikomedia, they burnt Orthodox priests on board a ship. In fact, the nearer they got to Caesarea the more vicious their ferocity became. Henchmen of the emperor desecrated the churches. In one city they entered the church, climbed onto the holy altar and danced on top of it. In another church, where the Orthodox priest was doing his best to hinder the desecrators, they murdered and poured human blood onto the holy altar itself. It was the priest who was the victim. Accounts of this violence assailed the ears of the Caesarean Orthodox on a daily basis.

It must have been around November or December time. The pressures on Saint Basil were unrelenting. One day they insulted him, the next they promised him much.

Before making a decision as to the timing of his final onslaught, Valens attempted various means of winning Saint Basil over. Understandably, he felt the fact that Basil remained the Orthodox Metropolitan of Caesarea was a sign of the failure of his policy, a mockery of his royal prestige. A significant role in the build up of pressure was played by the magistrates, who had entirely become instruments of the emperor. Not that the army was any better.

His stratagems were getting him nowhere and Valens was becoming impatient. He wanted to be finished as quickly as possible with this last remaining locus of resistance, with Basil. So he decided to subdue Cappadocia, Pontos, and Armenia immediately. Of necessity, therefore, the emperor played his last card. He sent Prefect Modestos, the captain of the Praetorian Guard, to Caesarea as his envoy. He knew what he was doing.

Now, Modestos was one of the worst types of people who, in order to keep his position, acted more imperiously than the emperor. In order to serve his master, he was unscrupulous and inhumane. The Church in the East was very well aware of his atrocities.

Once in Caesarea, Modestos took up residence in the Government Headquarters. The confrontation, however, probably took place in the Courts. He ordered them to bring in Saint Basil, who was already prepared. The bishop had spent the whole night praying. At one point he felt weak at the knees from fear. How would he manage? Would he be able to stand his ground before this beast? A bitter cup is no less bitter even for great people. However, his trepidation passed. The Holy Spirit strengthened him and he began to feel better.

And Modestos? Once he was told, he went to the official hall and sat on the throne, aggressive or, perhaps more, vindictive. He had, from the outset, to catch Saint Basil off guard. All that he had heard about this man with the sparse frame made him feel less certain. He felt suddenly awkward and a nameless fear stabbed at his heart and refused to let go.

He therefore had to make him succumb from the beginning, in a brusque, arbitrary and harsh manner. To get it over and done with.

Just behind the prefect stood certain official personages: a governor, eunuchs, passed-over judges.

They brought Saint Basil into the chamber. He went boldly up to the throne, but not was not provocative. Goodnatured, but not smiling.

Modestos tensed, put iron and ice into his voice and spoke: "Basil, how dare you- you alone- go against the will of our emperor? Who are you to dare to show your contempt for him?"

Basil understood the tactic: attack and surprise. He was not to be swayed, however. He would impose his own pace on these dreadful proceedings. He would become the rock against which the anger and hatred of the heretics would shatter. He would loom as a symbol for the rights of the Church in the face of the authorities of this world. He therefore demanded specific facts, a clear charge:

Basil "What am I charged with? Where am I at fault, because I don't know?"

Modestos: "You don't have the emperor's faith, even though everyone's submitted to him now".

Basil: "I'm behaving like this because my own emperor doesn't stoop to the faith of Valens, who worships something created (the Arians believed that the Son was created). How can I do so, when I, who am created, have been called upon to become God? I worship the Son as God, not as a created being".

Modestos: "And what are we, then, who believe the same as the emperor?"

Basil: "Nothing, as long as you order such goings-on!"

Sweat, anxiety and fury fought in the troubled spirit of the prefect. He began to become confused, as well. This explains his naïve question.

Modestos: "Why don't you think it important to be on our side, to have us for friends?"

Basil: "Of course, you're prefects and among the most powerful, to be sure, but I don't hold you in higher esteem than God! As the children of God that you are, it's important for me to have you as friends. Just as important as it is for me to have your subordinates as friends. Christianity doesn't depend on office, but on the faith of the persons involved".

With these words, the saint illumined the powerful magnate. He showed him how insignificant he really was and how comical his insolence was becoming.

Modestos realized what was going on. He felt he'd been stripped bare. That the power he used to terrify lesser people had been taken away from him. His anger flared. His veins stood out. All of a sudden he stood up from the throne and, almost inarticulately, menaced the saint.

Modestos: "So, you're not afraid of my power?"

Basil: "What can you do to me. What'll happen?"

Modestos: "What can I do? One of the many things within my jurisdiction".

Basil: "What's going to happen to me. Tell me. I want to hear".

Modestos: "Confiscation of your property, exile, torture, death".

Basil: "Threaten me with something else. That doesn't scare me".

The furious prefect felt those words as a stab to his vitals. His eyes became red, his voice hoarse. His nerves were shot to pieces and nothing around him made any sense. From powerful, he'd gone to weak. He felt he was shrinking. He became what he really was: petty. He gathered his strength, however, and whispered:

Modestos: "How is it that you're not afraid?".

Basil: "Because if you've got nothing but shabby old clothes and a few books, you don't fear them being confiscated. That's all I've got in the world, Modestos. Exile doesn't frighten me, because I have no place of my own anyway. Even Caesarea, where I'm living now, isn't mine. So wherever you cast me will be a place of God and I'll be a pilgrim and a stranger. Torture? How would that affect a body like mine? At the first blow, it would be all over. That's something you'd be able to do. You threaten me with death? You'll be doing me a good turn. It's what I desire, to go quickly to God, for Whom I live and struggle. I'm in a hurry to get to my God, my Father!".

Modestos: "Nobody has ever been so outspoken to Modestos. Nobody has ever shown so much boldness towards me".

Basil seized his opportunity.

Basil: "That's because you've never met a real bishop. If you had, he'd have spoken in the same way, because he'd be struggling for such important things". (Basil saw how affected the prefect was and toned down his language and lightened the atmosphere). We Orthodox, Prefect, are kinder and more humble than other people. We're not arrogant towards the emperor, nor to the least of his subjects. If our faith in God is in jeopardy, though, we ignore everything else and cleave to it. Then the fire, the executioner's sword, the wild animals, the torturers tearing at our flesh with their nails all bring us more satisfaction than fear. So do your worst; whatever it lies in your power to do. Curse me, threaten me as much as you want. But let the emperor be made aware of this, too: you'll never make me accept a false faith, however much you threaten me".

This was the final damper the tragic prefect received from Basil at this dreadful and historic encounter. Numbed, Modestos, like a beaten animal, made a sign to the guards to allow Basil to go free.

What happened to Modestos? He rose and went to the emperor, who was arriving in Caesarea.

He did not hesitate to tell the truth: "We've been defeated, my liege, by the bishop of this Church here. He's not afraid of threats. He's more stable than our words, more powerful than our convictions. Let's threaten some coward, but not Basil. If we want to get anywhere, we'll have to resort to enforcement" (i.e. to exile him).

The emperor, who had in the meantime learned everything there was to know about Basil's power, didn't agree. He had the courage to admire people's virtues. He gave an order that force was not to be used.

<http://myocn.net/highness-weve-defeated-basil-great/>

MAKING THE SIGN OF THE CROSS

(Wednesday, September 27, 2017

OC-Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross)

"We bow down before Your Cross, O Master, and Your holy Resurrection we glorify!" (Byzantine Hymn, on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross)

Why the cross? Why would God choose a "cross," of all signs, as the sign of His (and our) victory; as the instrument by which He trampled, and we, in Him, continue to trample, death and darkness?

For one thing, when I make the sign of the cross, I become bigger than myself. Because the cross branches out, extending beyond me. As Chesterton noted in his brilliant comparison of the (Buddhist) circle and (Christian) cross: "The circle returns upon itself and is bound. The cross opens its arms to the four winds; it is a signpost for free travelers."

Indeed, paradoxically, the "yoke" and "burden" of the cross-carrying Way make me "free." Free of what, exactly? Of the fear and anxiety of a life without meaning, which goes around in circles, closed in on itself without Christ, and without His Way. He teaches me and enables me to walk through things, rather than avoid them; to face my responsibilities, my shortcomings, and my gifts not in self-centered fear, but in humble reaching out to Him and others, in "communion." So I move forward, and outward, toward God and others. Because, as Chesterton notes in that same context, "Christianity is centrifugal: it breaks out."

Thank You, Lord, for breaking us out, – out of hell, and out of the bondage of self. Glory, O Lord, to Your honorable Cross and Resurrection!

YOUR OWN OF YOUR OWN, WE OFFER (Sunday, September 3, 2017)

Priest (quietly): *"Remembering, therefore, this saving commandment and all that has been done for our sake: the Cross, the tomb, the Resurrection on the third day, the Ascension into heaven, the enthronement at the right hand, and the second and glorious coming again..."* (Aloud): *"Your own of Your own (Τὰ σὰ ἐκ τῶν σῶν, Твоя от Твоих) we offer to You, in all and for all."* (Eucharistic Prayer, Byzantine Divine Liturgy)

We "offer" to God what is God's at Divine Liturgy, by 1. Remembering "this saving commandment" (that is, "Take, eat, this is My Body..." and "Drink of this, all of you..." proclaimed by the priest just before the above-quoted words), and 2. Remembering "all that has been done for our sake," including, surprisingly, the future "second and glorious coming again." In faith, the Church "sees" as God "sees," beyond space and time, particularly in His intimate presence to us, and our presence to Him, in the Divine Liturgy.

How and what is it that "we" are "offering" (προσφέρωμεν)? First of all, by saying "we," we mean first and foremost Christ Himself, in our midst. He offers Himself, by the hands and gifts (of bread and wine) of the celebrating Church. Because He is "the One Who both offers and is offered" (ὁ προσφέρων καὶ προσφερόμενος, as it says in the Prayer of the Cherubic Hymn). We also "offer" ourselves, in response to Christ's Self-offering, whenever we bring ourselves wholeheartedly, with all our strengths and weaknesses, into communion with Him; to be "consecrated" in and by Him. That's why the priest will also pray (shortly after the above-quoted words), that the Holy Spirit be sent down "upon us, and upon the gifts here presented." So – when we proclaim that we "offer" to God what is God's, "Your own of Your own," we also mean ourselves. He receives us, along with our gifts, and then returns us and our gifts back to us, consecrated and transfigured in the Holy Spirit. Thank You for that, O Lord. "It is proper and right to worship the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Trinity One in being and undivided." Amen!

"It Was the Left Eye, Wasn't It?!" A few stories about St. Gabriel (Urgebadze) [Constantine Tsertsvadze](#), [David Chikadze](#)



[St. Gabriel \(Urgebadze\)](#)... Everyone who knew Elder Gabriel remembers that he was extraordinarily simple, humble, and loving, and at the same time formidable. When he was angry or rebuked someone, you could feel that the Almighty was speaking through his mouth—such Divine authority and power his words possessed; but when he noticed that someone was repenting, he would embrace him, press him to his chest, and instill hope and love into the heart of his beloved. The "[foolish](#)"^[1] elder today, in our day, continues to strengthen people in faith, and to infuse love into their hearts invisibly, and sometimes visibly, appearing among believers, regardless of religion, simple people, beginning the thorny path of salvation known as Orthodoxy.

Fr. Gabriel was born on August 26. Honoring his memory, we have chosen a few stories about him, one of which occurred during the elder's life, the others taking place after his repose. They confirm that Fr. Gabriel's presence is truly felt today, in our rebellious times.

"Well, what do you say, Nodar?"

Nodar, a [spiritual child](#) of Elder Gabriel:

Fr. Gabriel spent a few days with my family. After our home blessing, we spoke the whole night about various things, and we prayed. The elder said to me, "Nodar, my brother, I have to be at the monastery by 6:00. Can you take me to Mtskheta?" I, of course, agreed. This was the time when they were controlling absolutely everything. We headed for Mtskheta. On the way out of Tbilisi, seven armed men blocked our road and demanded we stop the car. Remember, this was the 1990s.

Despite this, Elder Gabriel told me not to stop, but I was wary, and stopped the car anyways. Fr. Gabriel sat very quietly. I got out of the car to show my documents to these unknown men, but it turns out they wanted not my documents, but my car. I resisted, although I realized that to fight with seven "knights" armed to the teeth was fraught with risk. Then I saw Fr. Gabriel get out of the car and head towards us. Something unusual happened: A huge pillar, glowing in the dark, descended as if from Heaven, followed by a supernaturally tall, beautiful, and unearthly man with a staff

and a white beard. He struck his staff on the ground, and his extraordinary voice rang out: "Who has dared to stop us?! How are you not ashamed?!" It was a truly supernatural manifestation that shook everyone. Frightened, the armed men ran off in every direction. One man, frozen in place, started shoving our documents into our hands and asked us to leave more quickly.

We left. Fr. Gabriel looked at me and asked, "Well, what do you say, Nodar? Did we do a good job?"

"It was the left eye, wasn't it, Leila?!"

Leila Sikharulidze, the editor of the Georgian version of the book about St. Gabriel The Elder's Diadem:

Having finished the work on the book, we were sitting with several of Fr. Gabriel's spiritual children in his cell. We were joking, and recalling various stories from the life of the fool-for-Christ, and all were smiling involuntarily. I also wanted to tell a joke and I said, "This is the end of the work on the book, and Fr. Gabriel will give me in marriage!" And I was already seventy! And suddenly... Fr. Gabriel winked at me from the photograph! I was stunned and couldn't utter a word. Nun Paraskeva asked me, "It was the left eye, wasn't it, Leila?!" It turns out others had noticed it too, and one of those present said, "That's nothing—sometimes he even flicks us on the forehead!"

"Get the candles out of here!"

Lasha Tsaishvili: Several years ago, my sister and I were vacationing with our relatives. One night, Fr. Gabriel appeared to my sister in a dream. He was standing near the house where we were staying, holding extinguished candles in his hands, and he said, "Get them out of here!" When my sister told us about the dream, we were very surprised, for candles are a symbol of faith. But when we told our neighbor about the dream, she said there had been a woman in that house a few days before, using the candles for fortune telling. It all became clear to us. My sister showed us the place where Fr. Gabriel was standing in the dream, and we saw the ashes from the candles the woman was using for fortune telling. Fr. Gabriel had helped us, and protected us from evil forces.

After Fr. Gabriel's repose, we feel his spiritual support. One time I was very concerned about my physical condition and I was praying to God to give me back my sight. One night Fr. Gabriel appeared to me in a dream, sternly rebuking me: "Why are you asking for a speedy recovery? Wait, the Lord knows, everything has its time!" When I woke up, I appealed to the priest and asked him to give me a sign, whether this dream was from the Lord or not. After a while, my relative, who was staying with us, told us that

when she was cleaning the room, a strange glow suddenly appeared behind her. She turned around and saw that the icon Fr. Gabriel had given me was lying on my bed, although the icon could not of itself have fallen off the wall and wound up on my bed, because the distance from where it hung to my bed was quite large. It was a sign from Fr. Gabriel. It was also amazing that when I described the man who had come to me in a dream, his image exactly coincided with that of Fr. Gabriel. And I had never been able to see Batiushka...

I often want to speak with Fr. Gabriel, to hear his living, gracious words, to be filled and penetrated with that Divine feeling which Elder Gabriel bore—that feeling which we call love!

[Constantine Tsertsvadze](#), [David Chikadze](#) Translated by Jesse Dominick
[Pravoslavie.ru](#) 8/26/2017

[1] St. Gabriel at times took upon himself the rare asceticism of foolishness for Christ's sake in which people feign extreme foolishness and even insanity, in order to preserve and deepen their humility.

[Susanna Schneider](#) August 29, 2017, at 6:35am

If I am an Orthodox person, I must understand that there are no random people in my life, and every person whom God sends to me is the person necessary to me, even if he is irritable, angry, angry, but my reaction to him shows, That I differ little from him. As the holy fathers say, the most important thing is that I must see what is happening inside me. And then it becomes clear that the most important enemy is sitting inside of me - these are my passions, my irritability, my anger, the spirit of malice, which I often do not notice. And the person whom God sends, awakens these hidden qualities in me, that is, he shows me my sins. But this is a great happiness, because seeing your sins means seeing the beginning of your salvation, the beginning of your correction, the beginning of your purification. Therefore, the holy fathers also commanded us to pray for our enemies. *Archimandrite George Shestoun*

[Susanna Schneider](#) September 4, 2017 at 6:08am

August 22 / September 4 - the celebration of the Georgian Icon of the Mother of God.

In 1622 the Persian Shah Abbas conquered Georgia. Many Christian shrines were abducted and many were sold to Russian merchants who were

in Persia. Thus, the Georgian icon of the Mother of God came to a merchant Stefan, who reverently guarded her. At that time in Yaroslavl the merchant Georgy Lytkin, on whose business affairs Stephen was in Persia, received in his dream a revelation about the shrine acquired by Stefan and the order to send her to the Montenegrin Monastery of the Archangel Diocese, founded in 1603. When Stefan returned to his homeland in 1629 and showed the icon to Georgy Lytkin, he remembered his vision and went to the Dvina borders to Montenegrin cloister (it was named so because it was built on a mountainous and gloomy place, known since ancient times as the Black Mountain, later the monastery was renamed Krasnogorsk). There the icon also became famous for miracles. In 1654, during the pestilence, the icon was brought to Moscow, and those who prayed before her avoided the deadly ulcer. A lot of lists from the icon indicate its deep reverence. In 1658, with the blessing of Patriarch Nikon, an annual celebration of the Georgian Icon of the Mother of God was established. The service was compiled in 1698 by the inspector of the Moscow printing house Feodor Polikarpov.

2018 Parish wall calendars have arrived—there are four different icons. Please pick up one or two downstairs after Divine Liturgy!

ALL SAINTS CALENDARS ARE IN! If you are interested, they are \$25 each. Please see Pani Gina if you'd like to buy one—or more!

2018 Parish Donation Envelopes are available downstairs in the church hall. Please see Andy, Harry, or Bill if you have not received your envelopes. This is our main mechanism to pay our parish expenses.