



**Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**  
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**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yuriy's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, 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 & Pani Mary Anne 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 Smolynech, 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, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, 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, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, 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, 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, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Evelyn Burlack, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam

Grant, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini’s mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our October babies: Rachel Shirley on the 6<sup>th</sup>, Rich Previc on the 8<sup>th</sup>, Mother Alexandra on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Henry “Jack” Tkacik III on the 14<sup>th</sup>, Henry Tkacik on the 20<sup>th</sup>, Harley Katarina Frances Rahuba on the 24<sup>th</sup>, Greg Luciw on the 27<sup>th</sup>, and Michael Sheliga on the 28<sup>th</sup>. May God grant them all Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M’nohaya Lita! God Bless them all!**

**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, OCTOBER 07      OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH      10:30 AM**  
**19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY PROTOMARTYR & EQUAL-TO-THE-  
APOSTLES THECLA OF ICONIUM; VENERABLE COPRIUS OF PALESTINE**

*Tone 2*

2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9

Luke 5:1-11

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Father Theodore Forosty, Johnathan Dorning,  
Katherine Behun, Mary Medich, Betty O’Masta, Daniel Chicka, & Mary Evaniuk—  
Fr. Bob***

***Parastas in Blessed Memory of Nicholas & Catherine Behun—Behun Family***

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 14 OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH 10:30 AM  
20<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; POKROVA—PROTECTION OF OUR MOST HOLY  
LADY THE THEOTOKOS AND EVER-VIRGIN MARY; APOSTLE ANANIAS OF THE  
70; SAINT ROMANUS THE MELODIST OF CONSTANTINOPLE; MARTYR DOMINUS  
OF THESSALONICA; MARTYR MICHAEL-ABBOT IN ARMENIA & 36 FATHERS  
WITH HIM**

*Tone 3*

Galatians 1:11-19; Hebrews 9:1-7

Luke 6:31-36; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

***Parastas in Blessed Memory of George Luciw—Sonia Luciw***

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 21 OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH 10:30 AM  
21<sup>ST</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; FATHERS OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> ECUMENICAL COUNCIL;  
VENERABLE PELAGIA THE PENITENT OF THE MOUNT OF OLIVES; VIRGIN-  
MARTYR PELAGIA OF ANTIOCH; VENERABLE THIAS OF EGYPT**

*Tone 4*

Galatians 2:16-20; Hebrews 13:7-16

Luke 7:11-16; John 17:1-13

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Father John Harvey—40 days—Fr. Bob***

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 07 OCTOBER 2018**

**19<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY PROTOMARTYR & EQUAL-  
TO-THE-APOSTLES THECLA OF ICONIUM; VENERABLE COPRIUS OF  
PALESTINE**

### **TROPARION—TONE 2**

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,  
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead!  
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,  
All the powers of heaven cried out:  
O Giver of Life! Christ our God! 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 2**

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior,  
Seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!  
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam,  
Beheld this and rejoiced with Thee!

And the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever!

**PROKEIMENON—TONE 2**

**READER:** The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

**PEOPLE: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

**READER:** The Lord has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to death.

**PEOPLE: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

**READER:** The Lord is my strength and my song.

**PEOPLE: He has become my salvation.**

**ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 2**

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

**GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA**

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Date: September 28, 2018

**REGARDING THE GRANTING OF AUTOCEPHALY TO THE CHURCH OF UKRAINE**

At its formal session on April 20, 2018, His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople voted to proceed with taking the necessary steps for granting autocephaly to the Orthodox Christians of Ukraine. This decision was made after extensive study and discussion based on the responsibilities and rights of the Ecumenical Patriarchate as enumerated by the sacred canons, and the historical reality that in 1589 when the Church of Russia received its status as a patriarchate from the Ecumenical Patriarch, the Metropolis of Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, was not included but remained under the jurisdiction of Constantinople. Additionally, within the Patriarchal and Synodal "Praxis" (act) of 1686 there is further affirmation that the Ukraine remained under the Ecumenical Patriarchate.

Fully conscious of the ecclesiastical, political, and geopolitical dimensions of granting autocephaly to Ukraine, the Ecumenical Patriarchate

commissioned a delegation—comprising Their Eminences John Metropolitan Geron of Pergamon, Metropolitan Emmanuel of France, and Metropolitan Bartholomew of Smyrna—to visit its sister Orthodox Autocephalous Churches throughout the world from May through July 2018, in order to inform them and explain its decision. Moreover, within the framework of preparing to issue the Tomos (official document granting autocephaly), the Ecumenical Patriarchate appointed two Exarchs to the Ukraine—His Excellency Archbishop Daniel of Pamphilon (from the United States) and His Grace Bishop Ilarion of Edmonton (from Canada)—in order to deliberate with congregations and communities, as well as all parties and individuals involved in the granting of the Tomos. These two hierarchs of the Ecumenical Throne serve the large Ukrainian Orthodox community in North America, which is under the omophorion of the Ecumenical Patriarchate, attesting to the abiding ties that bind Kiev and Constantinople.

In its ecclesial responsibility and regard for healing divisions and strengthening unity among the Autocephalous Orthodox Churches, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is sometimes obliged to adopt difficult resolutions. In its historical role and right to hear appeals from Churches isolated for diverse reasons from the rest of the Orthodox Church, the Ecumenical Patriarchate is occasionally compelled to assume painful initiatives. Finally, in its traditional consideration and maternal concern not to neglect even a single lost sheep (as in Christ's parable in Luke 15.1-7), the Ecumenical Patriarchate is from time-to-time required to reach out in reconciliation and forgiveness.

The historical reasons in support of the Ecumenical Patriarchate's involvement in seeking a canonical resolution to the ecclesiastical anomaly in Ukraine have been analyzed and elaborated in a number of places, notably in numerous articles found on the following websites and links:

- 1) [The Documents Speak \(Greek and English\) https://www.goarch.org/-/the-ecumenical-throne-and-the-church-of-ukraine](https://www.goarch.org/-/the-ecumenical-throne-and-the-church-of-ukraine)
- 2) [www.archons.org](http://www.archons.org); and <https://www.archons.org/news/archon>
- 3) *The Interview by Archbishop Job of Telemessos*  
<https://panorthodoxcemes.blogspot.com/2018/09/archbishop-job-getcha-of-telmessos.html>

### **The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost Luke 5:1-11**

And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon Him to hear the word of God, He stood by the lake of Gennesaret, and saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets. And He entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little

from the land. And He sat down, and taught the people out of the ship. Now when He had left speaking, He said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught. And Simon answering said unto Him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing: nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net. And when they had this done, they enclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake. And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord. For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken: And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him. (KJV)

### **Sunday after the Exaltation of the Cross Mk.8:34-9:1**

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels. And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.

The Gospel is relevant to each century. The Gospel pertains to every person. Christians are challenged with understanding the Gospel in the context of the Church. Learning God's word in the Church has a place throughout life.

Christians are nourished when they listen carefully to the word of God. How often are our efforts fruitless because we have not listened first to Christ in prayer and for direction?

The fishermen in the current Gospel were enriched by listening to Christ. They were blessed exceedingly with the large catch of fish. Believers will benefit from heeding the example to listen to Christ.

The Gospel records Simon Peter's astonishment and the astonishment of those with him. The large catch of fish was clear evidence of Christ's power. Christ's power greatly affected the fishermen.

Each generation benefits from the experiences of individuals mentioned in the Holy Gospel. Each generation learns from studying the interaction between Jesus and individuals described in the Holy Gospel.

The present Gospel lesson is one example of a miracle attributed to Christ. Other miracles of Christ are described in the Gospels of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke and John

Time is wisely invested in studying Christ's miracles. Careful study will reveal valuable lessons to take to heart. Differences and similarities in the Gospels give believers reasons for considered thought.

The soul's salvation is of primary interest for serious believers. The Gospel provides authentic nourishment for the soul. Studying the Gospel is an investment in the Kingdom of God.

Jesus reassured Simon Peter. Jesus went beyond providing reassurance. Jesus defined a new role for Simon Peter. Simon Peter would advance from being a fisherman to being a fisher of men.

Simon Peter was blessed to be personally authorized by the Lord Jesus to move into this new undertaking. The thought of beginning anew must have greatly affected Simon Peter.

To be enlisted directly by Christ would be enough to completely change Simon Peter's life. The Lord's life-changing words came after Simon Peter prostrated himself before Jesus.

The Lord Jesus Christ alleviated Simon Peter's fear. Just as the prodigal son was welcomed by the father(Lk.15:11-32), Simon Peter was embraced by the Lord Jesus Christ's love.

Serious believers today look back at the Holy Gospel of St. Luke and find new understanding in Peter, James, and John's life changing experience. This was a new beginning in life.

Believers benefit from thinking about the circumstances in which Simon Peter and James and John came to meet Jesus. Each person benefits from thinking about the way he or she meets Christ.

Simon Peter, James and John left their livelihood and possessions to follow Jesus. They took a courageous step of faith. Simon Peter, James, and John were convinced that following Jesus was the right thing to do.

Following Christ at any time involves sacrifice and change. Simon Peter, James and John followed Jesus without any mention of how they would be provided for.

St. Matthew's Gospel provides lasting assurance to followers of Christ with His words: "Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you." (Mt. 6:33)

The Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost. Sunday after the Exaltation of the Precious Cross. Holy Martyrs Faith, Hope, and Love with their mother Sophia. September 17/30, 2018. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

**Fr. Vaccaro's Homily given at Nativity Catholic Church in Burke, Virginia.** Via Father Steve Repa e-mail



I sought the LORD, and he answered me. When the poor one called out, the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him. Today, these words from the Psalm ring with greater depth as I preach: a homily in time of distress.

As many of you know, over the past weeks, there has been a lot of news about sexual abuse in our Catholic Church: horrible, monstrous, demonic abuse perpetrated by, and covered up by, clergy, priests and bishops and cardinals. For all people of faith, for us Catholics, this has stirred up many reactions: rage and frustration that this was allowed to happen, horror at the type of crime, deep deep sorrow for the victims, most of whom were young and vulnerable, a sense of unspeakable betrayal, a violation of trust.

As a priest, I share all of that. But, I also accept some share in the guilt: I am a priest, I took the same vows as those men, we are bonded by Holy Orders, and so I am implicated in their crimes. My heart breaks: I know the trust that people, especially children put in their priests, and to see it violated, so horribly and for so long and for so many, I can't even begin to express my sorrow for what my brothers have done.

But, I am sorry, and know that I, and all priests, beg your mercy. We are all, at least in this Diocese, called by our Bishop to penance, for the sins of our fallen brothers. We have to pay that price.

Like the Psalmist says, we are in a time of distress. In a world where the Church is supposed to stand for something, it's supposed to be better, to see She is populated by, worse led by, horrible criminals, broken people, ones who have taken advantage of the trust of the faithful for their own gain, what are you, Catholics, to do? You, are angry. I can imagine this has crossed your mind: if this is how the Church acts, then I want no part of it. I don't fault anyone for that reaction. But, today, in these days of distress, I want to offer a spiritual reflection on another way forward.

As I think over the darkness of these days, my heart is brought back to the darkest of days: Good Friday. On that day, the world fell apart. The Savior of the world, He who said He was God, hung, beaten and bloodied on a cross, dying naked like a common criminal.

His followers, the Twelve, who had been given special authority, had enjoyed the limelight of being with Christ in his popularity, each of whom had been entrusted much, had vowed they would stay faithful to end, where were they? 11 of the 12 walked away: broke their vow, literally turned their back on God. The people who had come to believe in Jesus, seeing Him broken, and then watching the men, the Apostles, in whom they

had trusted, whom they were willing to trust as men of God, set apart, walk away, violate everything they had preached, the crowd turned away.

If this is what Christ is all about, let's go. They walked away. Today, in this time, we are right there on Calvary. Betrayed, angry, afraid this is the end, ashamed of the Church as we watch our Apostles betray everything, as it seems Christ fades into the darkness because the sins of His followers have extinguished His light once and for all. We are Tempted to walk away, too.

But, while we stand here on Calvary, before we turn and go, Christ Crucified calls us to remember something amazing. The night before He died, the night He was betrayed by these Apostles, He sat down and with them and He celebrated the first Mass. Knowing that these men, 11 of his 12 closest friends would leave Him, betray Him, He offered them, not just bread and wine, a passing meal: He offered them Himself, everything, His Body broken and His Blood poured out, He offered the price He paid. And, it wasn't because Jesus was a fool, that he didn't know what was coming. He was God: He knew what lay ahead on Good Friday, in all of its horror. And, He knew that in the centuries to come, the horror of Good Friday would be repeated over and over again: Apostles would sin, violate their vows, Crucify Him, and lead countless people to flee from His Church because of their evil decisions. He knew, on that Holy Thursday, that He was entrusting His Church to sinners. He had said this from the beginning: I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners. I came to save the Lost Sheep, to find the Prodigal Son. I came to gather around myself not just Saints, but the worst of sinners, because this is My task: to save, to forgive, to heal.

My church is not a fortress of saints, it is field hospital for sinful humanity. And the price of being with sinners, calling sinners my children is that they may not accept my love, they may not allow Me to save them, they may return to their evil ways. But that is the risk I am willing to take: I shed every drop of My Blood for every sinner, no matter how horrible. And, in times of darkness, caused by the sin of my followers as Good Friday was, just remember Holy Thursday: how I gave myself in the Eucharist. The Bread of Life is my pledge that sin never wins, evil never conquers. I gave myself in the Eucharist to remind you that while the Gates of Hell, which may loom large, will never prevail.

I remain with you in the Eucharist to remind you that this is MY Church: it is not the Church of any individual bishop or priest, no matter how good or bad. I remain with you in the Eucharist that you will have the

strength, not to walk away, but to stand close to the Cross, to know that this time of trial is the price that we pay to save the world, that to leave it is to leave behind all hope.

I remain with you in the eucharist so that you may know that, the darkness and pain and sorrow of today will give way to a new Easter, a new Pentecost. I gave you the Eucharist so that you could see clearly, in times of great sin, sin in the world, and sin in the Church, that this is why I came: to save all sinners.

I know these words don't solve anything. But, I hope they offer some spiritual perspective. I don't feel worthy to make this plea, but I will: don't turn away because some of the Apostles are unfaithful. Rather, by the power of Jesus in the Eucharist, stay near Cross: be protected by Him. Use this time to renew your faith: you follow Christ, not any one bishop. Pray for the victims, and the perpetrators, demand accountability from the church. But, more, demand holiness from us, your clergy: demand that we live like Christ, that we keep our vows of prayer and celibacy, pray for us and help us. May Jesus in the Eucharist be for us what it was for the faithful ones on Good Friday: our strength to remain through the darkness. Today, May we taste and see that the Lord is good, and may He have mercy on His hurting Church.

## **THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS** (Saturday, September 30, 2017)

Coffee with Sister Vassa

*"And behold, men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they sought to bring him in and lay him before Jesus; but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. And when he saw their faith he said, 'Man (ἄνθρωπε), your sins are forgiven you (ἀφέωνται σοι).' And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, 'Who is this that speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God only?' When Jesus perceived their questionings, he answered them, 'Why do you question in your hearts? Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of man (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου) has power on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the man who was paralyzed—'I say to you, rise, take up your bed and go home.' And immediately he rose before them, and took up that on which he lay, and went home, glorifying God." (Lk 5: 18-25)*

The Pharisees are wrong, presuming that "God only" can forgive sins. Christ, Who calls Himself "the Son of man" (ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ ἀνθρώπου), and Who here addresses one of us paralytics as "Man (ἄνθρωπε)," reveals to us that, in communion with Him, we all share in this "power" of forgiveness. That's why He doesn't say to the paralytic, "I forgive" your sins, but—your sins

"are forgiven" you, in this encounter between you and Me, in our shared humanity. Christ shares with us His empowering, forgiving, grace-filled humanity with our paralyzed humanity, enabling us to rise and "go home," when we are willing to show up for that encounter and to share in His kind of humanity, empowered through forgiveness.

That's why He teaches us to pray, with Him, "Our Father...forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." In Him and with Him, we are all sons and daughters of God, empowered by grace to forgive our "debtors," including ourselves, that we may rise and go forward, free of the crippling self-loathing and doubt that hinders us from responding to God's call, in usefulness to ourselves, to Him and others. "Our Father," I say to God today with so many others, "forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," that we may come "home," to You.

**IOCC Collection update: We collected an additional \$65 last week, bringing our Hurricane Francis Relief collection total to \$278! Thank you all and God Bless you for your generosity! One more collection today to add!!!**