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ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Metropolitan Savas, Archbishop David, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, 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 Smolynec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Father George Livanos, Igumen Patrick, Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Father Jim Orr, Father Rick Seilier, Panimatka Laryssa Charest, Fr. Vasyl Sendeha, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, 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, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop 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—young man 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, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowski, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, 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, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, 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, 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 Slaugenhaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Cindy M., Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Andy Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Bill Boretsky, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk

Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Steven—Harry Batch's cousin, Rose Mary Pavlovich—Mary Anne Kuznik's Cousin, Stella McKeag, Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, Dollie Irvin, Joe Mrvos, Alexandra & Bowen, Katherine Kulik, Micky Delans [COVID-19], Pastor Terry Polen, Eleanor Kitt, Stacie & Gary, Dolores Wachnowsky, Maria Warholak, Stacie & Gary, Anna Sekelik, Christy, Mariruth, Rich Previc, Ben Williams, Denis Strittmatter, Deacon Joe Uzar—vocations, Tim—surgery, Archimandrite Raphael—COVID-19, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom.
ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

"God's love surpasses all beauty, because its fathomless power affects change from within. And what changes from within remains." *Father Stel Muksuris*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ... There is NOTHING to keep us from praying...for each other, for our family and friends, and most of all for the first responders—EMTs, nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and members of our military who keep us safe. Be well, and be **SAFE!!! God Bless!**

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, NOVEMBER 22 OBEDNITZA—UPSTAIRS!!! 10:30 AM
24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYRS ONESIPHORUS & PORPHYRIUS OF EPHESUS; VENERABLE MATRONA-ABBESS OF CONSTANTINOPLE; VENERABLE THEOCTISTE OF THE ISLE OF LESBOS; MARTYR ALEXANDER OF THESSALONICA; MARTYR ANTHONY OF APAMEA; VENERABLE JOHN THE SHORT OF EGYPT;

**VENERABLE EUSTOLIA & SOSIPATRA OF CONSTANTINOPLE; VENERABLE
ONESIPHORUS THE CONFESSOR OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

Tone 7

Ephesians 2:14-22

Luke 8:41-56

Litany in Blessed Memory of Paul Popichak—Fr. Bob's dad

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 27

ADVENT [NATIVITY FAST] BEGINS

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29

OBEDNITZA—UPSTAIRS!!!

10:30 AM

**25TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST MATTHEW;
SAINT FULVIANUS-PRINCE OF ETHIOPIA-IN BAPTISM MATTHEW**

Tone 8

Ephesians 4:1-6; 1 Corinthians 4:9-16

Luke 10:25-37; Matthew 9:9-13

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 06

OBEDNITZA—UPSTAIRS!!!

10:30 AM

**26TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; AFTERFEAST OF THE ENTRY OF THE MOST
HOLY THEOTOKOS; SAINT AMPHILOCHIUS-BISHOP OF ICONIUM; SAINT
GREGORY-BISHOP OF AGRIGENTUM; SAINT SISINIUS THE CONFESSOR-BISHOP
OF CYZICUS; MARTYR THEODORE OF ANTIOCH**

Tone 1

Ephesians 5:8-19

Luke 12:15-21

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Thomas Bryan, Pearl Hanczar, John Hanczar, Helen
Pytlak, Mary Blitskan, Marjorie Yarmeak, Mary Sharon, Rose Pynch, Frank
Barankovich, Mary Krevanich, Katherine Holowaty, & Robert Vetosky—Fr. Bob***

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 22 NOVEMBER 2020

**24TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYRS ONESIPHORUS & PORPHYRIUS OF
EPHESUS; VENERABLE MATRONA-ABBESS OF CONSTANTINOPLE; VENERABLE
THEOCTISTE OF THE ISLE OF LESBOS; MARTYR ALEXANDER OF THESSALONICA;
MARTYR ANTHONY OF APAMEA; VENERABLE JOHN THE SHORT OF EGYPT;
VENERABLE EUSTOLIA & SOSIPATRA OF CONSTANTINOPLE; VENERABLE
ONESIPHORUS THE CONFESSOR OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**

TROPARION—TONE 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!

To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise!

For the Myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy.

And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,

To proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 7

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,
For Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers!
Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry:
The Savior has come to those in faith!
Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 7

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

READER: Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 7

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High!

To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night!

ABOUT THE ROUGH PRIESTS

THREE WEEKS AGO...

I meet an elderly parishioner: "I'm glad to see you. Something you haven't been there for a long time..."—"Dak, I've been sick for six months..."—"What is it?" "Stroke happened...right in the temple."—"How is it?"

The woman sighs and, fixing her hair broken out of the braid, says: "I came to a church near the house to pray for my dead people on Saturday. And it became so cute when they sang that I knelt down. And then the rector as he saw, and as he became on me: "So, old, and stupid. They don't kneel yet, they haven't read knee-leaning prayers yet. What are you doing here?" Both in front of everyone and in front of me. Well my blood pressure jumped, I fell here. The ambulance took away from the church. And six months lie. Going out for a little bit now."

I, amazed, ask: "What kind of temple was that?"—"Yes."

"Why doesn't your granddaughter go to the temple?" asks me the father in the temple we go to." "Well, she's somehow resisting—

teenager..." "And I'll take it and cross her off my prayer list. I won't pray for her, then she will..."

I, Father K., cried all night. "What to do?"

I wouldn't make stories like this. But since they were happening and will be happening, I want to say a few words about it.

Friends! Priests were and will be different. As different people, so different and priests. They are just as much as all other people, they have their own human flaws, among them there are: wisdom, rudeness, ignorance, indiscretion.

But what to do? The Church has no other priests. There is an ancient Christian story about how a woman complained about the fathers. This one is bad, this one is different. Christ appeared to her and said: "I don't have any other pastors!"

Do we want the pastor to be beautiful and perfect in everything? Let's raise our son like this and direct him to the path of priestly ministry since childhood. Maybe if he wants to follow this path, we can give the world a beautiful pastor.

But for now, we will be content with what we have. And since they did not show the world in their face, ideal in the face of their children, let's tolerate others.

"And the seminary...After all, they teach to be good priests..." you will notice. Friends, seminarians teach the sequence of actions when committing baptism or singing. And to the inner state of mind: nobility, wisdom, tactics, kindness, etc. seminars do not teach, I assure you. It is laid in a person in a family, and then brought up by self-discipline and constant work on yourself. And not all priests have good starting conditions (upbringing since childhood), and not everyone then draws attention to the upbringing of these qualities.

Experience in my communication with people shows that priests *en mass* are undoubtedly better than ordinary men of their age. This is not bad anymore. Of course, we would like the ideal for everyone to be on the A, but in reality it is difficult to feasible.

It pains me to hear about priests who insult parishioners, offend, about priests who are greedy or behave viciously. Still such things sometimes you have to hear, but let's, if we can't change the priests, properly orient ourselves. Let's learn to understand that the sacraments and priests performed by the priest do not depend on his personal virtues, that, for example, Communion is equal in the hands of Father John of Kronstadt and the most investigative priest, who was sent for alcohol abuse to the monastery for repentance. God performs the Sacrament, not the priest. ***The priest is only a weapon in the hands of God.***

Yes, spiritual advice, we will not receive edification from another father, but the main thing is to join grace! And we can become mentors of good books, sites.

Right, we're not little children to pay attention to such trifles that the salesperson in a candle stall answered us rudely or said some stupidity to the priest. God is their judge. Treat yourself Christianly, friendly, and peaceful.

Yes, you feel good, and for us, the poor... I say so because I know what the rudeness and stupidity of our church servants is. I often go on trips. And everywhere I go in ordinary worldly clothes. I go to temples, communicate with priests, ministers of the temple. I almost never imagine not enjoying the perks of san, so I know how inconsiderate and rude can answer you. But I just don't pay attention to it.

It's sad that the priests from whom we expect them to be an icon, the highest model of man, behave unworthy. But what to do? At least we can try to be a model for others. Try to behave so that when looking at us, others see an example. An example of love, wisdom, attentiveness, responsiveness, tolerance... everything we sometimes want to see, but do not see in our priests.

P.S. To tell the truth, I was hesitating whether to write this note, but after consulting with my wife, I decided what to write. That's the problem. Painful for many. And I wouldn't want to pretend that there is no problem, and at the same time I wanted to tell you that I don't see problems as such. The question is in our own wisdom and tolerance for others.

When I wrote this essay, I gave it to my wife. She said she agreed with almost everything, just need to finish this: You, say, write that "we are not little children to pay attention to such trifles that the saleswoman in a candle stall rudely answered us or said which one—that stupidity is a priest. Yes God is their judge..." But the problem is deeper here. The problem is that the priest (and every church staff, up to the cleaners and guards) considers himself a keeper and a grace distributor. A man with an open heart comes, open soul, and he is not allowed to the Cup, humiliatingly control the length of the skirt, and make other offensive and offensive remarks. That is, often, a person in our temples is essentially not entitled. That's what's hurtful".

I agree. That's a shame. But I would say this: if we were pushed away from Chasha, prevented from confession...humble yourself and pray peacefully. And the Lord, who sees and understands everything, will give us abundant grace.

And if we get angry, lose our inner world, we will open our soul to demons. Not only will we gain nothing, but we will lose what we had.



"We have been here for seventeen centuries and we always will be." (Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople and New Rome, His All-Holiness Bartholomew I, concerning the opinion that the conversion of St. Sophia (Holy Wisdom) Church into a mosque—once again—might be an unbridled attempt by the Turkish government to force the remaining Christians in the country to finally leave and abandon their historical rights and prerogatives).

This day's broadcasted video and sound of the first Muslim worship service in Hagia Sophia Church, in spite of the expectation of it, was a shock to the physical, mental, emotional and most of all, spiritual essence of people of faith throughout the world and in particular, 300 million Orthodox Christians. In a senseless act designed expressly for the political self-preservation of the present Turkish government, the history of not only Christianity but also of the nation's international relationships is denigrated almost beyond comprehension.

Just across the beautiful public garden square from Hagia Sophia is the Blue Mosque—another huge building that was built as an attempt to recreate Hagia Sophia to prove that the abilities of Muslim architects and builders

possessed equal talents. The effort was not successful, and the completed project is far from an equal to the Great Church of Holy Wisdom. The missing element in the construction plan and process was precisely the Holy Wisdom of God in the Holy Trinity, which inspired the hearts, minds, and souls of the builders of Hagia Sophia. The nation of Turkey has over 3,500 active mosques, which begs the question of why the necessity of returning Hagia Sophia to active status as a mosque.

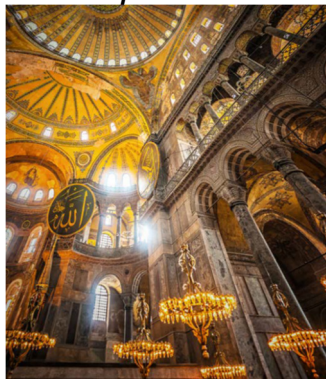
We call upon the great spiritual, political and social leaders of nations throughout the world to make their thoughts known about this senseless act and to demand that the decision be overturned by the Turkish leadership. Even more, we demand that Holy Wisdom Cathedral—a UNESCO site—actually be returned to its rightful owners—the Holy Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople and New Rome as the center of its administration and service and the proper liturgical worship center for His All-Holiness, Patriarch Bartholomew I and his successors, along with all Orthodox Christians throughout the world, in perpetuity.

May God in the Holy Trinity through Holy Wisdom—Jesus Christ himself—open the minds and hearts of Turkish government leaders to the understanding of the futility of their poorly considered political decisions and lead them to positive reconsideration and actions that will enhance peaceful co-existence amongst all mankind. Regardless of their decision in this regard, His All-Holiness' firm belief as expressed above, is real, truthful, and will stand forever.

With prayers,

+*Antony, Metropolitan of the UOC of the USA*

+*Daniel, Archbishop of the UOC of the USA*





ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Message of Hope from the Assembly of Bishops

Звернення Асамблеї Канонічних Православних Єпископів США

We, the Members of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, gathering for our first digital meeting on October 6-7, 2020, offer the perennial message of Christian hope and spiritual encouragement to our clergy and faithful, and all persons of good will, in these unprecedented times of the current global health crisis, political division, and social strife.

The Coronavirus pandemic has affected every human being in the world with some form of trauma: loss of life, debilitating illness, separation from loved ones, financial hardship, or emotional fatigue. And yet, it remains true that through the Cross joy has come into all the world. Through these tragedies, health care workers who have sacrificially cared for the sick, first responders and essential workers who have never ceased to provide for those in need, parents who have had to manage every aspect of their children's education and care from home, those who are without employment and those who are facing financial struggles, and clergy who have maintained the spiritual and liturgical lives of their parishes—all bear witness to the power of love and goodwill to provide solace in these troubled days. At the same time, this health crisis and the energy required to shoulder it have also given rise to an unhealthy increase of polemical opinion related to questions of science, medicine, and civil and ecclesiastical directives. As often happens when human passions erupt, such polemics have infected other areas of society as reflected in the rise in this country of racial tensions, ideological clashes, and political polarization. We remind all that, as Orthodox Christians sojourning in this land, we are not called to base our lives upon the ephemeral convictions that are common in the realm of politics, economics, or ideology.

Rather, we are called to "set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth" (Col. 3:2), placing our trust in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and doing His Holy Will through our efforts to fulfill His life-giving commandments.

In our present circumstances, trying to hold a sensible middle ground between opposing forces of faithless reason on the one hand and spiritualized folly on the other is the greatest challenge of our time. As Orthodox Christians we are called to follow the high "road, [for] I will turn aside neither to the right nor to the left" (Deut. 2:27). Saint Jerome teaches that the high way or royal way is the way of the One who declares, not only that "I am the way, the truth, and the life," but also "Your ways are not like my way" (Commentary on Isaiah).

This means keeping our eyes on Christ and His sacrificial love for the entire world and being humble about our own particular opinions is the time-tested way to walk along the path worthy of the Christian calling.

Certainly, our present physical separation from one another and spiritual isolation from the divine services have complicated our ability to navigate these troubled waters. It is not fitting for us, as Orthodox Christians, to add to the burdens of our brothers and sisters either by condemning them or by appeasing them with insincere flattery. Rather, we ought to honestly fulfill the law of God by bearing one another's burdens, as the Holy Apostle Paul reminds us (cf. Gal. 6:2).

This means that we are called to an authentic life of patient obedience, sincere humility, genuine compassion, and sacrificial love even towards those with whom we differ. This is not an easy task for human beings to accomplish, but by grace and by the power of the Cross, we who are weak are made strong through Christ. With that grace, let us boldly give expression to Christ-like love and Christ-like humility in a world where many are unable to see anything beyond their own opinion. With that power, let us steadfastly remain faithful to the Tradition of the ancient Church in a land of modernity, uncertainty, and confusion. As a guide, let us "lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven" (Lam. 3:41) and make our own the words of the Psalmist who cries out: "O God, thou art my God; I seek thee, my soul thirsts for thee, my flesh faints for thee, as in a dry and weary land where [there is] no water" (Psalm 63:1).



A strong majority, thirty-eight, of the fifty-one canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States of America began their two-day meeting today to discuss Orthodox Christian Unity in the country. The meeting, which took place online due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, was the first since the transition of the chairmanship to Archbishop Elpidophoros.

In his opening remarks, The Archbishop stated, "we have all faced tremendous trials and tribulations, but we do so in the joy of the Holy Spirit, Who is the root of our authority and the fruit of our labors on behalf of the People of God...we are the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the USA, Hierarchs who represent disparate communities, but One People of God. Our oneness is a gift, a blessing that is not ours to refuse. There is so much that we can do together for the sake of all our faithful."

Furthermore, the august body adopted the 2021 budget, re-elected Metropolitan Gregory as Secretary and Archbishop Michael as Treasurer, and passed a number of motions set forth by the Executive Committee, the Committee for Agencies and Commissions, Affiliated Ministries and Associations, and the Committee for Youth. More detailed information pertaining to said motions will soon be released.

Finally, recognizing the youth as the future of the Church, the Assembly of Bishops declared 2021 the Year of the Youth. A number of initiatives are expected to be launched that will bring together Orthodox Youth from across the nation.

Tomorrow, October 7, 2020, the Bishops will re-convene to discuss their Strategic Vision for the Assembly.

Contact: communications@assemblyofbishops.org

The Assembly of Bishops, comprised of the 51 canonical Orthodox Bishops in the United States of America, is the premier and official forum for Orthodox Christian Unity in the United States of America.

Its purpose is to preserve and contribute to the unity of the Orthodox Church by helping to further her spiritual, theological, ecclesiological, canonical, educational, missionary and philanthropic aims.



Silent

Psalm 21/ 22:2-O my God, I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not; and in the night season, and am not silent. (KJV)

There are times in life to be silent and listen to God and times to speak in earnest. Take time to be silent and listen carefully to the Lord God to speak to the heart. Be diligent in speaking from the heart to the Lord in devout and serious prayer. Do not waste the time of life in frivolous speaking, but seek to speak the truth. Measure the words to the Lord and to the people in daily life that they are prudent. Avoid saying words which are harmful to the soul or to relationships with others.

Psalm 27/28:1-Unto thee will I cry, O Lord my rock; be not silent to me: lest, if thou be silent to me, I become like them that go down into the pit. (KJV)

Be constant in prayer to the Lord God even in those moments of deep silence. Seek the Lord God in times of silence and direct the mind to God's daily presence. Look for the Lord God in everyday life and be alert to God's existence in nature. View the Lord God at work in each person's life in quiet and very eventful ways. Be ever grateful to the Lord God for the way God quietly enters and changes life. Value moments of silence to give thanks to the Lord God for countless blessings.

Psalm 29/30:12-To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent. O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee forever. (KJV)

The hunger of the soul is never silent and always cries for nourishment from God. Give voice to the needs of the soul to the Lord and silently wait for fulfillment. Be patient and confident in prayer to the Lord expecting God to give the answer. Praise and be grateful to the Lord even when others may remain hesitantly silent. God is always good and the discerning believer sees the goodness even in silence. Every moment is an opportunity to silently contemplate the Lord God's goodness.

Psalm 30/31:17-Let me not be ashamed, O Lord; for I have called upon thee: let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in the grave. (KJV)

Be joyful and share the joy of the Lord and remain not silent about His goodness. Balance silence and speaking in personal life that reveals being rooted in the Lord. Draw wisdom from the Lord God as to when to speak and when to remain silent. Fully trust in the Lord for personal direction in conducting the affairs of daily life. God blesses individuals with voices to speak and the wisdom as to when to speak. Give gratitude to the Lord God for the benefits of remaining prayerfully silent.

*Holy Apostles Stacys, Amplias, and Companions. October 31/November 13, 2020.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*

I want to tell you a story about boys and girls, sent off to a camp. There, they run, jump, exercise. They swim, they tie knots, and shoot guns. Throughout it all, they build camaraderie. And trust. And love.

Then, they take a trip on an airplane. Or a ship. To unforgiving terrain, foreign to them and foreign by nature. To beachheads, to deep forests. To deserts, by water, by air. To barren seas. A new home, sometimes temporary, sometimes permanent. Throughout it all, they build camaraderie. And trust. And love.

If they're lucky, they come home. Changed. Forever. Back to work, back to school. Back to the mountains of West Virginia, the beaches of Delaware, Maryland, and Virginia. The cities of Philadelphia and Washington D.C. To a plant in Wheeling, a factory in Johnstown. The office on H, the courthouse in Norristown. The beat in Pittsburgh, the base at A.P. Hill. The university in Morgantown, or Richmond, or Newark. Back to work, back to school.

At the end of their day, when they lay their heads on their pillows, a new day starts. That's when they hear the screams, they see the visions. You hear cars backfiring and they hear bombs. They hear noises you and I don't. They see things you and I don't see. They have stories we want to hear that they don't, can't, won't tell. They've seen the world.

What kind of world? Surely not one many of us are used to living in.

The life of a Veteran is one many of us will not understand, no matter how hard we try.

They have sacrificed. Now what can we do to sacrifice for them?

We can hear their screams, their night terrors, and their fears. We can listen and talk, we can help them walk. We can welcome them home with loving arms, not sneers and jeers. We can understand when no one else does, we can say thank you just because. We can do normal American things, like volunteer and vote; we can sacrifice ourselves to help them cope. Their mornings and nights can often run into each other, we can be their sun and moon.

Boys and girls going to camp, full of innocence, turning into men and women before our very eyes. That evolution and their lessons are not to be taken for granted.

And, we can learn from their lessons.

In 1982, Billy Joel wrote *Goodnight Saigon*. Written about Marines during the Vietnam War, the song evolves into an ode for soldiers who have fought in every war, and while Joel couldn't have predicted in 1982 that we would eventually end up in places like Nicaragua, Grenada, Iraq, and Afghanistan, it was surely meant to apply to those soldiers as well.

About the song, Joel has said: *Time has a way of healing wounds or making them easier to look at to see if they've scabbed up. The guys came home from Vietnam and that's it? It doesn't end until these guys are absorbed into the mainstream and we deal with our feelings about it.*

Now, it's our turn to sacrifice. For them. Because:

***...we would all go down together
We said we'd all go down together
Yes, we would all go down together.***

To you, for us. Thank you.

John DiSpaldo

Teracore, Federal Emergency Management Agency—Region III

Father Joseph Cervo *The Nativity Fast in the Orthodox Church*
(November 15/28 through December 24/January 06)

The Nativity of Christ Fast (known in Western Christendom as Advent) is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Orthodox Church year. This is a joyous fast in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ (Christmas). That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods.

The Purpose of Fasting and Abstinence

Abstinence includes refraining from specified food and drink, as well as from harmful habits. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from all food and drink after bedtime, before partaking of The Holy Eucharist (Communion) at the morning Divine Liturgy. The purpose of Fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We Fast and Abstain faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

Fasting and Abstinence in itself is not a means of pleasing God. They are not a punishment or payment for our sins. Nor are they a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.

We are to practice Fasting and Abstinence to be delivered from temporal passions, that often control us, so that God's gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.

We fast and abstain as a means to turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting, Abstinence, Prayer, Repentance, and acts of Compassion go together.

Fasting and Abstinence are not irrelevant. These are not obsolete or unnecessary, even though such disciplines are greatly ignored in Western Christian Churches. Fasting and Abstinence are not disciplines from the past, but timeless spiritual aids. Fasting and abstinence are not just for the clergy or for "religious fanatics." Fasting and Abstinence are from Christ and continued by His faithful followers, for us, right here and right now.

Most of all, we should abstain from "devouring one another." We ask God to "set a watch and keep the door of our lips."

By embracing Fasting and Abstinence during this period before the Feast of Christ's Nativity, we can expect spiritual growth that will make the celebration of Christ's Incarnation, more meaningful and beneficial unto the salvation of our souls.

ORTHODOX CHURCH FATHERS



**Patiently accept your falls and,
having stood up, immediately run
to God, not remaining in that place
where you have fallen.**

St. Nektarios of Aegina