



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: Father Bob, Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Archbishop Jovan, Metropolitan Savas, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul & Pani Judy Stoll, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynech, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe & Protinica Linda Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Igumen Patrick, Father Jim Orr, Father Rick Seilier, Panimatka Laryssa Charest, Father Vasyl Sendeha, Father George & Dobrodijka Oksana Bazylevsky, Father Angelo Artemas, Father John Haluszczak, Dr. Christina Nellis, Father Joshua [Anna], Father Justin (Todd) Mokhiber, Pani Cathy Danczak, Protopresbyter Gerald Ozlanski, Father James Norton, Monk Andrew, Father Dan & Matushka Myra Kovalak, Father Joe Uzar, Father Deacon James & Diakonissa Kari Rossetti, Pastor Terry Polen, Chaplain Rachelle Zazzu, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, 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, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Yvonne Christy, Father Deacon Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, 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, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [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, 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, 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 Zeliszczyk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], 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 & Terri Berceli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, 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, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, 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 & Jan Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Sharon Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Theresa Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, Rita & Joe Mrvos, Alexandra & Bowen,

Katherine Kulik, Eleanor Kitt, Stacie & Gary, Maria Warholak, Stacie & Gary, Anna Sekelik, Christy, Mariruth, Rich & Judy Previc, Ben Williams, Tim—surgery, John Wakin, Olivia—girl with a brain tumor, Rick & Sharon Morgan, John Stasko, John, Kris, & Kait, Kristi Wilson, Wendy LaGamba, Melissa Gross [hip replacement], Amy Forbeck, David Salazar, Kitty Mary, Dr. Paul Riley, David Hess, Serena, Wyatt, Makenzie, Jennifer, Alexandra Roberts, Candace Irvin, Carol Muschick, Grace Love [knee replacement], Stacie Riley, Joseph Paul Cervo, Jr., Elizabeth, Lillian Skowvron, Sue & Greg Heinen, Paul Simpson [Father Bob's cousin], Sharon Curtis Rivas, Kathy Milcic, Lisa Bolan, David G. [cancer], Donna [dementia] & Darla, Adam Snow, the McKenna family, David Gazella, Brian & Michele Cannone, the Rodrigues family, Michael Welsh, Nick Solominsky, Samantha & Lisa Houser, Sarah Stepanovich Clark, Julia Baloga, Brett Crosby, Randy Lapuh, Henry Tkacik, Diane & Arthur Chaklis, Denny Mader, Zoe Oswalt—Fr. Bob's cousin [cancer], Barbette [cancer] & Scott, Kristin [cancer], Erm Hartmann, Barbara Bookser [cancer], Bob Mazzuca [cancer], Marko, Taylor, Terri Crosby-Vega [knee replacement], Christine Mohamed & family, Sue Demko, Tammy Marsico, Terry & David Hartnett, Jamie Ball, Kay Williams, Hannah Stewart, Jim Wyko—Alex's friend, Dan Losego, Lisa Bruce, Yvette, Barry Bender, Scott McDougall, Andrew Zelleznick, Byron & Cecilia Scott, Vespina, Michelle Russo, Julie Tripodi, Alby Oxenreiter, Debbie—HTUCC Jackie May, Barbara Morvay, David Salsar, N&O, Randy & Adrienne Kuny, Vince Berardinelli, Mason Martin [Karns City HS QB] & family, Martin Mrvos, Jeff McCoy, Lauren & Sloane Valentina Persico, Alexis & baby Colton Rosati, Jessica Shirley, Mark [kidney cancer], Steve Milcic, Wilbert Wagner, Bob Wojciechowski, Ashley, Beth Skowvron, Sharon Svitek, Laura, Christopher, & Baby Jane Dickson, Luke D, Diane Murphy, Kristin Vaughn [Harry's daughter], George Petronsky, Doug & Darcie Burkholder, Michael, Jeane, and Katie Byerly, Acolyte Photios & family [Joanne, Richard, Heather, Keith, James, Debbie, James, Sophia, Zachary, Tabitha, Arqynios, Barbara, Aristotle, Alexander, Kalev, Nina, Elias, Elijah, Jessica], Richard & Daniel Scharba [Metropolitan Antony's brothers], Edie McGrath, Samantha Lopez, Bob [cancer], Syble Elliott, Maria Ancevski, Krystyna, John, & Jeffrey, Dottie & family, Bonny Diver & Ashley Smock, Steve, Aand Jill Morocco. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

In order to avoid this foolish pride of heart and act without any self-reliance, led only by your trust in God, always take care to maintain an attitude in which the consciousness and feeling of your weakness are in the forefront of your awareness as you contemplate the all-powerfulness of God. Fr. Jack Sparks, Victory in the Unseen Warfare p.29

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 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] 956-6626.

SERVICES IN SLICKVILLE

SUNDAY, July 21 OBEDNITZA—SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM—UPSTAIRS 10:30 AM
4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY GREAT-MARTYR PROCOPIUS OF CAESAREA IN PALESTINE; NEW MARTYR ANASTASIUS AT CONSTANTINOPLE; MARTYR THEODOSIA-MOTHER OF GREAT-MARTYR PROCOPIUS

Tone 3

Romans 6:18-23; 2 Timothy 2:1-10
Matthew 8:5-13; John 15:17-16:2

SUNDAY, July 28 OBEDNITZA—SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM—UPSTAIRS 10:30 AM
5TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY FATHERS OF 1ST 6 ECUMENICAL COUNCILS; BAPTISM OF RUS-UKRAINE; HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES GREAT PRINCE VOLODYMYR—ENLIGHTENER OF KYIV-RUS; MARTYRS CYRICUS & MOTHER JULITTA; MARTYR ABUDIMUS

Tone 4

Romans 10:1-10; Galatians 1:11-19
Matthew 8:28-9:1; John 10:1-9

SUNDAY, August 04 OBEDNITZA—SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM—UPSTAIRS 10:30 AM

**6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY MYRRH-BEARER & EQUAL-TO-THE-
APOSTLES MARY MAGDALENE; TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF
HIEROMARTYR PHOCAS; SAINT CORNELIUS-MONK OF PEREYASLAV**

Tone 5

Romans 12:6-14; 1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Matthew 9:1-8; Luke 8:1-3

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Father Peter Natishan, Samuel Mrvos, Matushka
Virginia Pynch, David Yenni, M. Denise Lawrence, Rudy Obradovich,
Michael Horvath, John Sheliga, Anna Harte, Mildred Kitch, Agnes Rossi,
Michael Cherepko, & Mary Vigani—Fr. Bob***

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 21 JULY 2024

**4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY GREAT-MARTYR PROCOPIUS
OF CAESAREA IN PALESTINE; NEW MARTYR ANASTASIUS AT
CONSTANTINOPLE; MARTYR THEODOSIA-MOTHER OF GREAT-
MARTYR PROCOPIUS**

TROPARION—TONE 3

Let the Heavens rejoice! Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm!
He has trampled down death by death!
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
And has granted 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 3

On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O Merciful One!
Leading us from the gates of death.
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;
With the prophets and patriarchs
They unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy power!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 3

READER: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King,
sing praises!

PEOPLE: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our
King, sing praises!

READER: Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of
joy!

PEOPLE: Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our
King, sing praises!

READER: Sing praises to our God, sing praises!

PEOPLE: Sing praises to our King, sing praises!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 3

In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame!

Be Thou a God of protection for me, a house of refuge, in order to save me!

The Sunday of All Saints Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven. He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. But many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first. (KJV)

We gather in God's Holy Church today to celebrate the Divine Liturgy. We hear the message of the Holy Gospel. We have the opportunity to partake of the Precious Body and Blood of Jesus Christ.

We are Serbian Orthodox Christians. At Baptism we confessed Jesus Christ as King and as God. On Friday, Vidovdan, we remembered St. Lazarus, the martyrs of Kosovo and all those having lost their lives in defense of the faith.

Today on this first Sunday after Pentecost we remember all the saints and martyrs. We have benefitted beyond measure from the saints and martyrs through the centuries.

Our lives are enriched and shaped by the faith of the saints and martyrs through the centuries. The Divine services throughout the years incorporate the saints and martyrs in the Church's liturgical life.

The lives of the saints and martyrs are included in the history books of the Church. They are depicted in the iconography and frescoes. Hymns and liturgical texts reference and are written in honor of the saints and martyrs.

Today's Gospel emphasizes the importance of taking up our personal crosses and following Jesus Christ. We learn how to take up our crosses and follow Jesus Christ by steadfastly attending the church services and heeding the Gospel.

We learn about Jesus Christ by being attentive to the content of the Divine services and teachings of the Church. Our lives are enriched when we read the Holy Scriptures and the lives of the saints and martyrs.

The lessons of the lives of the saints and martyrs have endured through the centuries. The fallen world's heroes are not anchored and centered in the Lord Jesus Christ, worldly heroes come and go. Worldly heroes are soon forgotten.

Saints and martyrs withstand the test of time. They shine the light of Jesus Christ through their lives. Each of us decides who to follow, to look up to, and admire.

We each decide whose lives we will study to learn life's lessons.

Wisdom prevails in turning to the lives of the saints and martyrs. Jesus Christ exists in and shines through the lives of the saints and martyrs. Lasting lessons for life exist in the lives of the saints and martyrs.

The lives of the saints and martyrs teach us how to deal with life's problems and challenges. The Church has preserved the lessons and teachings of the saints and martyrs down through the centuries.

We know from the Scriptures that "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever." (Heb.13:8) The saints and martyrs realized Jesus Christ's Divinity and certainty. The saints and martyrs embraced Jesus Christ completely.

Believers have the opportunity each day to conform to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ. Constant repentance and embracing Jesus Christ are possible for each person.

The saints and martyrs conclusively prove that repentance and change are possible for anyone willing to embrace and follow Jesus Christ. Hardened criminals and flagrant sinners have become saints.

Today believers hear about the saints and martyrs of the Church. Now is the time to forsake ways of life that have nothing to do with Jesus Christ. Embracing Jesus Christ requires a conscious desire to fill the heart, mind, and soul with Christ.

Love for Jesus Christ is the most secure investment in the Kingdom of God. Love for each other and forgiveness in personal life facilitate the journey to God's Heavenly Kingdom and eternal life.

Parishes go through changes during the years. Believers are expected to mature in Jesus Christ as they go through the life-cycle. Jesus Christ is ever-ready to lead believers from the Baptismal font to God's Heavenly Kingdom.

The saints and martyrs have defined and opened the path to travel to God's Kingdom and eternal life. Wise believers garner strength from the lives of the saints and martyrs. Wise believers follow the path of the saints and martyrs.

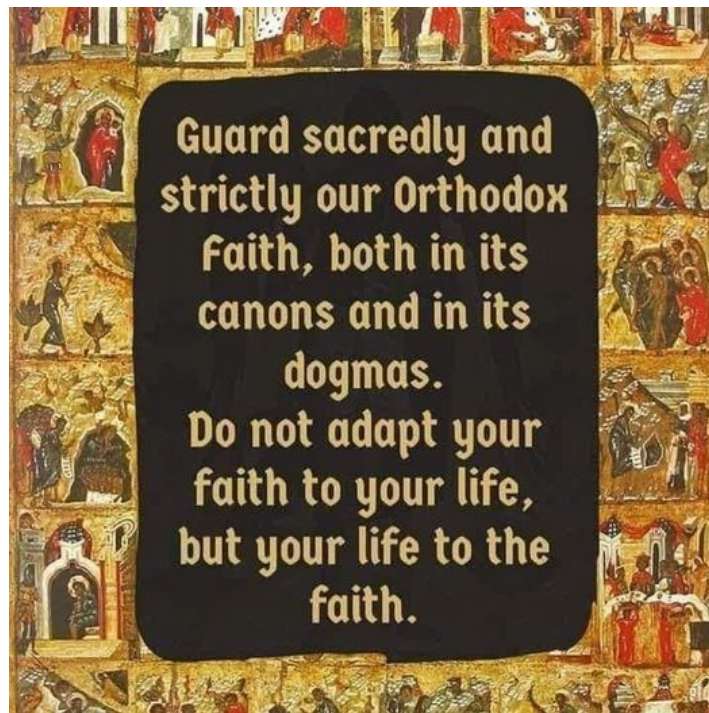
Parents do well to use the saints and martyrs as examples of soul-enriching heroes for their sons and daughters. Families benefit from praying to and honoring their patron saints in their homes on a consistent basis.

Parish churches normally honor the saint or martyr for which they are named. The patron saint or martyr of the parish church is a soul-enriching and protecting resource for the parishioners during their entire lives.

Thank God for the saints and martyrs through the centuries. Thank God for the Church preserving the knowledge about the lives of the saints and martyrs. Today is a day of great joy in God's Holy Church as we celebrate the saints and martyrs.

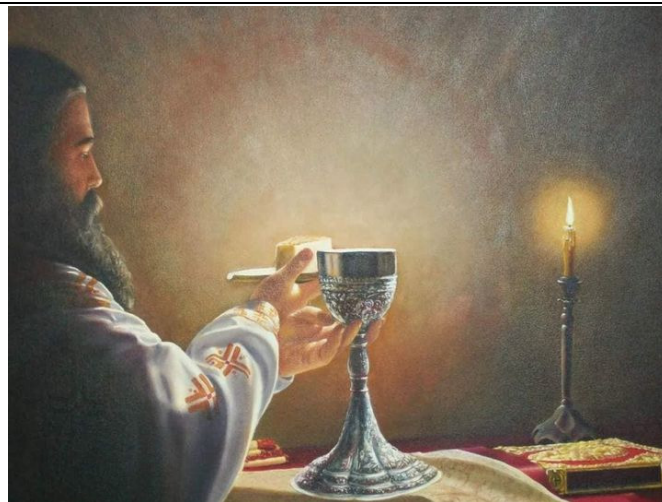
The Sunday of All Saints. Holy Martyrs Manuel, Sabel, and Ismael. June 17/30, 2024. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic

Therefore all of us, and especially those who have a family household under their charge, must learn to "commit ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God." When we fully believe that God will help us if we turn to Him from our heart, He comforts us. **Elder Thaddeus (Strabulovich) of Vitovnica**, Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives: The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica p.173



In our fast-paced society based on instant gratification, people want spirituality instantly. Caught in a morass of refined sensuality; they seek spirituality in a sensual way. Hypnotized in their false identities, they seek spirituality which only gets them deeper into hypnosis—now with a spiritual veneer. They expect to be comforted in their filth. They cannot go deeper, because they will do anything except face their filth. **Hieromonk Damascene (Christensen)**, Christ the Eternal Tao p.300

Rejoice, O mountains of Pennsylvania;
leap for joy, O waters of the Great Lakes;
rise up, O fertile plains of Canada;
for the elect of Christ who dwelt in you are glorified,
men and women who left their homes for a new land!
With faith, hope, and patience as their armor,
they courageously fought the good fight.
Comforted by the beauty of the Orthodox Faith,
they labored in mines and mills, they tilled the land,
they braved the challenges of the great cities,
enduring many hardships and sufferings.
Never failing to worship God in spirit and truth
and unyielding in devotion to His most pure Mother,
they erected many temples to His glory.
Come, O assembly of the Orthodox,
and with love let us praise the holy men, women, and children,
those known to us and those known only to God,
and let us cry out to them://
"Rejoice, all Saints of North America and pray to God for us!"



Orthodox Christian Catacombs
THE POWER OF THE PROSKOMIDIA PRAYERS

There was a young couple in Greece in the 1940s. They had only been married for 6 months.

The young man was a miner, and there was a terrible accident in the mine. Everyone got out, except him. Back then they did not have the equipment to be able to excavate quickly.

So the foreman went to the young bride & told her "We are very sorry. But by the time we dig through, it will probably take about a month, and your husband will definitely be dead by then. The area is so small...no food, no light, no water. Nothing to help him survive."

So she did what a good wife would do. She did the *σαράντα-Λειτουργία*, where she had the priest serve Liturgies for 40 days for her husband's soul. And every day she would go to church and she would light a candle for her husband. And she would give a Phosphora and wine to the priest. This went on for 37 days. And the end of the 37th Liturgy, an old woman came to the church from a village about a day and a half away, and said to the priest, "Father, we need you. We don't have a priest and someone is about to die."

So the priest turned to the young bride and told her, "I'm sorry. We are going to have to stop at 37 days. There is an emergency I have to attend to & I will need to leave."

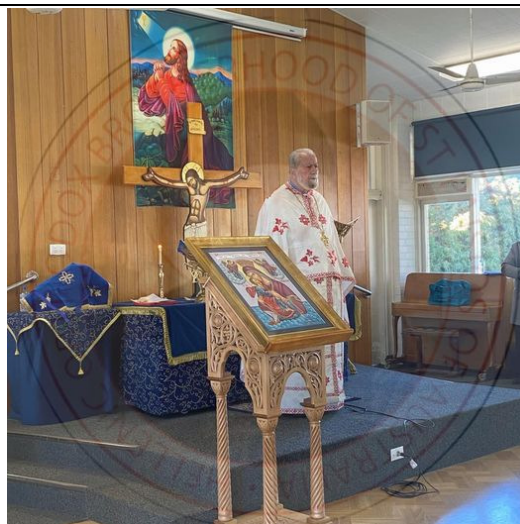
Well, on the 40th day, the mine workers broke through the collapsed mine. And they discovered the young man still alive! Everybody was amazed! "How can you still be living?" The young man said, "Brothers, I cannot explain it. But at a certain time in the morning I received a candle, some wine & some bread. But during the last 3 days none of those things happened & I felt that as if I was going to die."

The prayers of the Church saved him... The Proskomidia prayers. And that old woman...that was the Devil. He could see what was going on, and he did not want that young man to live.

Prayer has great power.

The most powerful prayer is the Proskomedia. When the priest takes a piece of the offered bread, the Proforo, puts it on the paten....and that piece represents us.

✝️ Papa Demetrios (Carellas)



PAPA LEFTERIS - MAN OF THE PEOPLE
Hellenic Orthodox Brotherhood of St Paisios

The devil appeared to three monks and said to them: "If I gave you the power to change something in the past, what would you change?"

The first of them, with great apostolic fervor, replied: "I would like to prevent you from leading Adam and Eve to sin, so that humanity does not separate from God."

The second, a man full of mercy, said to him: "I will prevent you from straying from God and condemning you forever."

The third of them was the simplest and instead of answering the tempter, he knelt down, made the sign of the cross, and prayed: "Lord, deliver me from the temptation of what might have been and what was not."

The demon, screaming and trembling with pain, fled.

The other two were surprised and said to him: "Brother, why did you react like this?"

And he answered them: "First, we should never talk to the enemy."

"Secondly, no one in the world has the power to change the past."

"Third: Satan's interest was not to prove our virtue, but to trap us in the past, so that we neglect the present, the only time God gives us His grace and we can cooperate with Him to fulfill His will."

Of all the demons, the one that most holds men back and prevents them from being happy is "what could have been and was not."

The past is left to the mercy of God and the future to His providence.

Only the present is in our hands.

Live today loving God with all your heart.

Sister Vassa [Larin]: **THE DATE OF MY FATHER'S DEATH, JULY 5**

My father died on July 5, a date that had no particular significance in my family, as far as we knew, - until soon after he died. In the final week of his life, when dad was dying in the hospice care center, we half-expected him to pass away on July 2, which is the day of the repose of his beloved mentor, St. John of Shanghai. But dad hung on until the first few minutes of July 5, and breathed his last shortly after midnight: he suddenly coughed, then let out what sounded like a burp, and stopped breathing. I happened to be there, sleeping on the couch next to his bed, with my mom, who had stayed awake in the reclining chair next to the bed, and who woke me up shortly before the nurse called the time of death, 12:10 am. I read the prayer of St. Simeon (Now You let Your servant go, O Master, in peace..) in Slavonic, sang the Paschal Stichera (Let God arise), then mom told me to shut up because we had to call people. 😊

My father's side of the family lives in Australia, where dad lived in his teens and twenties. I don't know who informed them that he had died, but here's what we learned about July 5, when the family in Australia was notified: It was the very day, last year, when my father's only brother, Serafim Larin, died. We didn't know this, because the two brothers had been estranged since 2007 when our church (the ROCOR) entered into communion with the Moscow Patriarchate. Uncle Serafim was against this, while my dad, who was initially against it but got on board with it after Metropolitan Laurus did, supported it. The two brothers tried talking about it, but stopped talking after a while. I know this weighed heavily on my father, although he never talked about it.

Many families in my church were divided in this way, which is why I am sharing this story. I think it has a sort of happy ending. The two brothers died on the same day. Call me superstitious, but I think it's hard *not* to see a sign here, of them being brought together in the end that has no end. And of God's merciful perspective on our divisions in this life: it is He Who has all the power over our life and death, and He alone Who has the power to bring us together, in the end, even while He suffers our divisions in this life. Glory be to Him, and may my dad and his beloved brother rest in peace, in the Heavenly Kingdom.