

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Parish Council President: Matthew Adamcio

V. Rev. Archpriest Andrew Bartek, Rector



Saturday, February 7, 2021

Tone 2

Gospel: St. Matthew 15:21-28

Epistle: 1 Timothy 1:15-17

35th Sunday after Pentecost / Afterfeast of the Meeting / St. Parthenius, Bishop of Lampsacus on the Hellespont / Ven. Luke of Hellas / The 1,003 Martyrs of Nicomedia

February Bulletin Sponsor:

By Father Andrew, In memory of my Grandmother Justina

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, February 7

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy

Wednesday, February 10

Noon: Akathist to St Basil

Thursday, February 11

6:30 pm Lions Club Meeting

Saturday, February 13

3:00 pm: Great Vespers

Sunday, February 14

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy

(NEW NOTE): You must let Fr. Andrew know if you want to attend any service. Please arrive 15 minutes prior to the Divine Liturgy only. All other services will begin at time scheduled.

FEBRUARY CANDLE & BULLETIN SPONSORS

Bulletin: (\$50) From Fr. Andrew - In memory of his Grandmother, Justina

Chandelier: (\$50) From Basil for his parents Anthony & Martha / Fr. Andrew for Fr. James for his b-day (his spiritual Father)

Altar Candles: (\$50) From Fr. Andrew - In memory of First Carpatho-Russian Bishop, Metropolitan Orestes

Candles on the Tomb: (\$25) From Fr. Andrew In Memory of his relatives deceased in month of Feb.

Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (\$25) From Athanasia - In memory of Kurtis, Bobbie, Margaret, Gori, Jeanette, DorothyAnn, Edward, and unborn infants Michael, George, & Alexander.

TENTATIVE READERS

Sunday, Feb 7 Terri

Sunday, Feb 14 Tim

Sunday, Feb. 21 Terri

Sunday, Feb 28 Tim

Join Archbishop Paul in Upcoming Family Life Live stream

His Eminence, Archbishop Paul invites the faithful of the Diocese of the Midwest to join him for the first interactive live stream webinars of 2021 on Family Life at 7:00 p.m. Central Time on Sunday, February 14, 2021.

Archbishop Paul will explore the theme, "Who Is God," and he will field questions and answers from participants throughout the interactive webinar.

Register now to participate in the webinar and to receive weekly website updates.

The Orthodox Family Life site offers a detailed, ongoing account of Archbishop Paul's vision with regard to the centrality of the family in the life of the Church. The site features reflections by His Eminence on a variety of related themes, reader questions and comments, and a growing collection of writings by noted guest authors.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

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info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org

JANUARY 2021: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY

Goal Pledged per month: \$4,825

Sunday, Jan. 3: \$1,055

Sunday, Jan 10: \$1,280

Sunday, Jan. 17: \$1,200

Sunday, Jan. 24: \$1,673

Sunday, Jan. 31: \$810

MONTHLY TOTAL TO DATE: \$6,018

JANUARY, 202: OTHER INCOME

Goal for the month in this category: \$2,670

Sunday, Jan. 3: \$10 candles; \$80 Vigils; \$100 Donation (Christmas Flowers) ; \$25 Candles on the Tomb; \$260 Holy Day Collections; \$50 Bulletin

Week Total: \$525

Sunday, Jan. 10: \$35 Candles; \$85 Vigils; \$320 Holy Day donations; \$41 Bookstore; \$50 Bulletin; \$50 Altar Candles

Week Total: \$581

Sunday, Jan. 17: \$10 candles; \$40 Vigils

Week Total: \$50

Sunday, Jan. 24: \$25 candles; \$95 vigils;

Week Total: \$120

Sunday, Jan. 31: \$20 Candles, \$45 Vigils; \$80 Holy Days

Week Total: \$145

MONTHLY TOTAL TO DATE: \$1,421

RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS RECEIVED

Sunday, Jan. 10: \$100 Building Fund; \$20 Food Pantry; \$115 OCMC Special Collection

Sunday, Jan. 17: \$20 OCMC Special Collection

Sunday, Jan. 24: \$25 Food Pantry; \$250 OCMC; \$100 Restoration

Sunday, Jan. 31: \$45 food Pantry; \$100 OCMC



VIGILS - JANUARY 31, 2021

Laura Kovach (4) For healing of Joe, Andrew, and JC; Safe travel for Ben and other friends; For health of Betty, Ben, Julia, Andrea, Wendy, Mark, Dana, Bodhi, Wayne, David, Kathie, John F, Barb, and Amanda; In thanksgiving for all good things.

Sandy Martin (1) Special intentions

Twarek (8) For God’s grace and blessings on our country; Health and recovery of Ann Turinsky, Bob Snyder, JC Geisman; God’s blessing to Cole, Health of Jewel; Natalie and Morgan and their unborn babies; God’s blessings and good health to Ezra Bottoms; Health and recovery of Jim, Cheryl and Laura; Health of Matt, Wayne, Tom, Ron, Mary, Loren, Joe, Sonya, David, Julia, Tom, Jason, Margi & Joe, Betty, MaryAnn & Bob, Judy, Chuck, Bohdi, Liz, Diane, Stella, Jake, Helen; Special intentions; Special intentions



FINANCIAL MONTH TOTALS

INCOME: \$7,339.00

EXPENSES: \$8,630.25

TOTAL FOR JANUARY: -\$1,291.25

1 Timothy 1:15-17 (Epistle)

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all long-suffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

PRAYER LIST Updated 2-3

HIERARCH'S: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman

CLERGY: Mykola Bondarchuk; John Duranko (Father's home pastor); James Gleason (Father's Spiritual Father); Moses Barry; Gregory Grivna; David Hanes; Emilian Hutnyan; Joseph Von Klarr; Vladimir Lecko; Philip Maikkila; Peter Pawlack; Peter Tutko; John Zabinko / Deacon Paul Gansle

MATUSHKII: Olga Bondarchuk; Pani Patricia Duranko; Virginia Lecko; Maura McCarnthey; Snezana Ruzic; Sonya Tutko; Margaret Zabinko

PARISHIONERS & THEIR FAMILIES: Jonah Adamcio; John Beadle (Elchisco); Kristen (Cassell Daughter); Maryann Cook (cousin to Twarek); John Richard Elchisco; Michael Glovinsky; Shirley Gresh (Glovinsky); Ben Grosik (Hritsko cousin); Judy Hritsko; Julia Guzy; Joseph Habegger (brother-in-law Kovach); Ellie Hritsko (Aunt); Charisee (Hileman); Betty Kovach (Jim's mother); Terri Lariccia (Fr's cousin); David LaValle (Fr's cousin); Helen Lis (fr David's mom); Child Stephanos (Loizos); Jim Mazur; Child Stella Miller (Elchisco); Katelyn Pipenur (Hileman niece); Earl Rindfleisch (Tina's dad); Helen Jean Rofkar (Elchisco); Joe Rose; Sonya Rose; Ron Royhab; Maryann Royhab; Patricia Schritzing (Christi's mom); Steven Schirtzinger (Christi's brother); Christy Schutt (Joe's sister); Dacia Snider (Hileman); Christi Soski; Doris Toth (Hritsko cousin); Peter Truta (Jean's cousin); Diane Tryon; Greg Tyron; Tom Twarek; the child Bodhi (Grandson Cassell)

OTHER REQUESTS: Mark Britton (Hritsko); Joel Butcher (Son); Ernest Cornwell (Hritsko); James Crane (Hritsko); Baby Finn (Cassell); Child Ezra Bottoms; Bredan (Child from Norwalk); Marge Dziama Fr's Dziama's daughter (former pastor); Mary Dziak (Twarek); Ruthe Flewelling, (Former parishioner); Ben Franklin (Kovach); James Geisman (Twarek); Theodore Geletka (Choir director St. Michael's Broadview Heights); Donald Gresh (Glovinsky); Elliot Joy (Former Police chief's son); Andrea Joy (Kovach); Ann Marie Krynock (Timko); Melinda Kuzara (Archbishop's list); Jake Lipstraw (Twarek); Mark Ludvik (Guzy); Mark Masica (Kovach); Pauline Meath (Fr's friend); Karen Muzyka (Fr's friend); Charlie Nowak (Twarek); Sandy Scafaria (Hileman); Arby Shenesky (Pastor B. Daughter); Bob Snyder (Twarek); Gary Steyer (Twarek); Janice Timko; Philip Andy Timko; George Timko; Cheryl Wieber (Twarek); Chuck Wiedenhoft (Twarek); Loren Welch (Fr's friend)

MILITARY: Alex, Nathan Brown, Craig Cassell, Jake Ellithorpe, Jordan Fulton

CAPTIVES: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo), Archbishop John Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo, The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria; Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world



BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND

Our 125th Anniversary is coming!

Fund Purpose: To collect funds to pay for the restoration, repair and beautification of the building and parish room. This will avoid using general funds which are earmarked for budgetary items.

Please consider contributing generously to the *Building/Restoration Fund*.

For Your Prayers

Julia Guzy (97)
1601 Church Rd
Marblehead, OH 43440

Diane Tryon
109 Joslyn Street
Arcadia, OH 44804

Please remember our shut-ins, especially now during this National crisis.

LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE FOR JANUARY 2021

Thursday, Dec. 31: 9 attended the Vespers for the Feast Day & the Molebian of Thanksgiving

Friday, Jan. 1: 6 attended Liturgy

Saturday, Jan 2: 8 attended Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 3: 15 attended Liturgy (2 guests); 12 received Communion

Monday, Jan. 4: 7 attended Liturgy for Fr. Andrew's father, George

Tuesday, Jan. 5 am : 7 attended Royal Hours & Vespers Divine Liturgy

Tuesday, Jan. 5 pm: 13 attended Vigil & Great Blessing of Water

Wednesday, Jan. 6: 8 attended Liturgy & 8 received Communion

Thursday, Jan 7: 6 attended Akathist Hymn

Saturday, Jan 9: 6 attended Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 10: 17 attended Liturgy (1 guest) / 15 received Communion

Saturday, Jan. 16: No Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 17: 15 attended Liturgy & 12 received communion

Wednesday, Jan. 20: 3 attended the Akathist Hymn

Saturday, Jan. 23: 9 attended Vespers

Sunday, Jan 24: 18 attended Liturgy / 15 Received Communion

Wednesday, Jan 27: 5 attended Akathist Hymn

Friday, Jan. 29: 4 attended Akathist

Saturday, Jan. 30: 6 attended Vespers

Sunday, Jan. 31: 12 attended Liturgy / 9 Received Communion

CATASTROPHIC RELIEF FUND

Purpose of fund: To provide some small financial assistance to a parishioner, family member or community member who has suffered a catastrophic event.

Funds will be offered at the discretion & blessing of the Rector and the discretion of the Board.

This money can also be used for outreach programs in the parish

Metropolitan Tikhon Leads Virtual March for Life

On Thursday evening, January 28, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon led the 2021 March for Life for the faithful of the Orthodox Church in America. This March was held virtually this year because of the present health situation. His Beatitude served a Moleben in Three Hierarchs Chapel at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and then offered a reflection. After his reflection, His Beatitude joined seminarians and watched the rest of the event from St. Vladimir's Seminary.

An address was delivered by Dr. Ana Iltis, professor and director of the Center for Bioethics, Health and Society at Wake Forest University and professor of philosophy at St. Vladimir's Seminary. Orthodox Christian representatives from three organizations that support women in crisis pregnancies, Emily Wilkinson of Orthodox Christians for Life, Kathy Kovalak from Zoe for Life, and Dr. Chris Humphrey from Vision for Life, highlighted their ongoing work. His Eminence Archbishop Michael of New York and New York and New Jersey offered a reflection and a closing prayer.

A photo gallery can be viewed on the OCA website and Facebook page.

Matthew 15:21-28 (Gospel)

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

FEBRUARY Celebrations

Anniversary	Birthday	
2-10-1973: Retired Metropolitan Herman	4- Nathaniel Bremer	16- David Mazurik
2-14-2004: The Most Blessed Tikhon	5- Christi Soski	16- Silas Issler
14- Jim & Rita Mazur	5- Thomas Hileman	19- Jonah Adamcio
18- Joe & Sonya Rose	5- Zoland Zile	20- Julianna Kusinski
	6- Alex Zarynow	22- Wayne Golob
	8- Thomas Hileman	24- Sonya Rose
	10- Fr. Eli Bremer	25- Heidi Golob
	12- Fr. James Gleason	26- Bill Glovinsky
	12- Michael Sumner	26- Pani Bernadette Zarynow
	14- Sandy Martin	27- Andy Schlotterer
	14- Mat. Ann Lardas	

If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

Archbishop Paul's Travel Schedule: Jan 30 to Feb 21

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL February 6th to 7th

Ss. Cyril & Methodius, Milwaukee, WI February 12th to 14th

St. Raphael Mission, Quincey, IL February 19th to 21st

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

Feb. 7: Methodist Pastor from TX / Archpriest Rodion / Police officers killed in Capitol riots / Rod Rodney

Feb. 21: James Doyle

Feb. 28: Rosie Foster / Police officer from Toledo / Archpriest Joseph Gibson / Mitred Archpriest Daniel Ressetar

March 7: Archimandrite Alexander [Cutler] / Jane

March 14: Two FBI agents killed in FL

FEBRUARY Reposed

2- Nancy Pipenur (2018)	20- Infant Linda Sue Alber (1969)
3- Ann Sature (2012)	20- Dc. Mike Cinalli (2020)
5- Peter Kowal (2004)	21- Mary Tomka Matso (1956)
6- Steve Michael Mazur (1970);	21- Fr. Michael Shuster (2020)
6- Elizabeth Kravetz Mc Mahon (1984)	22- Metro Mazur (1973)
12- Glenn Schoonaker (2002)	22- Fr. Andrew Hutnyan (2004)
12- Lawrence Beck (2018)	23- George Elchisco Sr. (1961)
13- Bishop Varlaam (2020)	26- Elizabeth Millie (1998)
14- Rose Polosky (1953)	27- Steve Basala (1985)
15- Justina Popodich (grandmother)	29- Mary Uka Kosteary (1996)
16- Albert Bartek (1952)	Helen Hritsko (1908)
17- Metropolitan Orestes (1977)	Alexandra Brendza (1909)
17- Stanley Guzy (1986)	Steve Danchisen (1909)

**The Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus
Christ in the Temple
Commemorated on February 2**

Today the Church commemorates an important event in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the God-Infant was taken to the Jerusalem Temple, the center of the nation's religious life. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty days. At the end of this time the mother came to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb or pigeon to the Lord as a purification sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement. However, she humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he should behold the promised Messiah. By inspiration from above, Saint Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Joseph had brought the Infant Jesus to fulfill the Law.

The God-Receiver Simeon took the divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). Saint Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was the 84-year-old widow Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. She arrived just when Saint Simeon met the divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in

Jerusalem" (Luke 2:37-38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth."

Before Christ was born, righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous people of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet the Savior in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by the holy bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the sixth century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. In thanksgiving to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: Saint Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; Saint Cosmas Bishop of Maium, Saint John of Damascus, and Saint Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century; and Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica in the ninth century.

On this day we also commemorate the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Simeon's Prophecy." The Mother of God is depicted without Her Child, with seven swords piercing her breast: three from the left side, three from the right, and one from below.

A similar icon, "Of the Seven Swords" (August 13) shows three swords on the left side and four from the right.

The icon "Simeon's Prophecy" symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of the righteous Elder Simeon: "a sword shall pierce through your own soul" (Luke 2:35).

The Vaccine as the “Mark of the Beast?”

There has been some controversy about the vaccine for Covid 19. People are of different mindsets as to whether it is a good idea to get the vaccine. I think the recent statement from the Episcopal Assembly of Orthodox Bishops in America is a good statement to follow to help you decide. That link can be accessed here:

<https://domoca.org/statement-regarding-developments-in-medicine-covid-19-vaccines-immunizations/>

There are two paragraphs from that statement I would like to cite:

Scripture encourages us to respect and protect the body as the temple of God (1 Cor. 6:19). At the same time, it discourages us from either tempting or testing the Lord (Matt. 4:7). And as your spiritual shepherds, we affirm and assure you that it is neither wrong nor sinful to seek medical attention and advice. In fact, we welcome interventions that provide us more time for spiritual renewal and repentance.

We therefore encourage all of you – the clergy and lay faithful of our Church – to consult your physicians in order to determine the appropriate course of action for you, just as you do for surgeries, medications, and vaccinations, in cancer treatments and other ailments. Indeed, while your own bishop, priest, or spiritual father remains prepared to assist you with spiritual matters, your personal doctor will guide your individual medical decisions.

I agree with this statement from the Episcopal Assembly. There is one particular issue I have asked a priest from our diocese to comment on regarding people who believe the vaccine is the “mark of the beast” referring to the book of Revelation. Here is this priest’s perspective on this topic and his understanding about how the “mark of the beast” is to be understood.

All scientific data show that the vaccine will protect our people as a whole. At the same time, some preach a personal narrative—totally alien to the biblical story—that refusing the vaccine will somehow save our faithful. This personal truth,

predicated on the fear of government, is preached as an alternative to God’s biblical story and is promoted in opposition to scientific data. Jesus himself submitted to Rome’s power, as did St. Paul, so that God’s power could increase for the sake of those who trust in him.

In Hebrew numerology, 666 (the mark of the beast), signifies “Nero Caesar.” St. John used this mark to call out loyalty to Nero among the church’s ranks. Revelation exposes this fealty as the adoration of earthly power, security, and wealth. Those who fear Nero flee discomfort and personal risk to save their own skin. In Revelation, they are marked as traitors to God and his Christ.

The Book of Revelation does not predict the future and has nothing to do with American history. St. John wrote it to address a specific historical crisis in the early church. Under the tyranny of Caesar’s yolk, Christians were abandoning the faith. The Book of Revelation was handed down both as encouragement and a call to martyrdom.

God is the King of Kings above all kings of the earth. His heavenly city, “set upon a hill” (Matt 5:14), has nothing to do with Jerusalem or Rome, let alone the United States. If this God is your salvation, whom shall you fear? If this Lord is your stronghold, of whom should you be afraid? (Ps 27:1) Revelation applies this teaching to the crucified Lamb, whose coronation by God belittles Nero. In Hebrew, God is represented by the number 7. A mere 6, Nero looks like a god but falls short of divine fullness.

The martyrs, who in Revelation bore the mark of the Lamb and his Father, had no need of Nero’s security, let alone “buying and selling.” (Rev 13:17) They were content with poverty and death on the cross. They were “those who follow the Lamb wherever he goes” (Rev 14:4), even unto martyrdom by the hand of Nero for the sake of God and their neighbor. As St. John explains elsewhere, “perfect love casts out fear.” (1 Jn 4:18)

If you find anything useful in this note to share with your children to promote further discussion, please do so.

The blessing of the Lord be upon you,

With love in Christ, + Paul

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS TAKEN FROM THE OCA WEBSITE

Am I too sinful to convert?

Question: At present, my wife and I are seriously considering conversion to Orthodox Christianity. I, however, am concerned that my many past sins would prevent me from being accepted into the Church. I am genuinely sorry for these sins, and have done all I can to change—sometimes with success, sometimes not—but I fear that in confessing them, I would be seen as being “too sinful” to be accepted by the Church, or that the priest might soon give up on me. What can you say about this?

Answer: A person with a serious physical ailment should turn to a hospital and its doctors in the hope of physical healing, or at least in a genuine effort to bring about a remission in his or her ailments. It is precisely for such purposes that hospitals exist and doctors commit themselves to pursuing the “healing arts.” Only the most unreasonable of persons would say, “I would really like to go to the hospital, but I am afraid that the doctor would turn me away because I am far too ill.” Similarly, a person with a serious spiritual ailment should turn to the “spiritual hospital”—the Church—and those who minister therein in the hope of spiritual healing, or at least in a genuine effort to bring about a remission in his or her sins. It is precisely for such purposes that the Church exists and her clergy pursue their vocation. It would be most unreasonable to say, “I would really like to go to the Church, but I am afraid that I will be turned away because I am far too sinful.” Our Lord Jesus Christ came into the world precisely to heal sinners, to seek out the lost, and to restore all who would receive Him to spiritual health. As Christ reveals in Matthew 9:13, “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

If you are convinced that you and your wife wish to embrace Orthodox Christianity as the fullness of Truth, then embrace it. Just as one who is physically ill should not worry that he or she is “too sick” to see a doctor, so too do not fear that you will be turned away from the Church because you are “too sinful”—and this is especially so when one is genuinely repentant and intensely desires forgiveness and reconciliation. Some of the greatest saints of the Church, such as Mary of Egypt, were quite notorious sinners, yet they repented, relied on the spiritual healing afforded by the Body and Bride of Christ—the Church—and attained holiness.

Ultimately, God does not desire the death of sinners. He rejoices when we turn from our sins and live. As Our Lord Himself plainly states in Luke 10:15, “there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.”

A Note from the Former Chancellor

Your Eminence, Esteemed Clergy, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I would like to take a moment to thank you for the love you have shown me and my family over the years as the chancellor of this diocese. I am filled with gratitude having had the blessing to serve the Lord in this capacity getting to help our communities grow and develop.

As I leave this part of my service to the Church, I know that the diocese is in good hands with Fr. Paul as the new chancellor. I hope to still be of service to you and if nothing else, be assured of my prayers for all of you.

I ask that you remember me and my family in your prayers as we start this new chapter in our lives.

With love in Christ,

Prayer of St. Ephrem

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

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. *(Full Prostration)*

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen. *(Full Prostration)*

O God, cleanse me, a sinner *(12 times)*.
And recite prayer one more time.