

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Parish Council President: Matthew Adamcio

V. Rev. Archpriest Andrew Bartek, Rector



Saturday, March 14, 2021

Tone 7

Gospel: St. Matthew 6:14-21

Epistle: Romans 13:11-14:4

Sunday of the Expulsion of Adam & Eve from Paradise / Sunday of Cheesefare

Ven. Benedict of Nursia

MARCH Bulletin Sponsor:

By Father Andrew, In memory of my ordaining Bishop, His Eminence Metropolitan Nicholas

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, March 14

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy / Pot Luck social followed by Forgiveness Vespers

Monday March 15- CLEAN MONDAY

Noon: Lenten Prayers / Confession
6:30 pm: Canon of St Andrew / Confession

Tuesday, March 16

Noon: Lenten Prayers / Confession
6:30 pm: Canon of St Andrew / Confession

Wednesday, March 17

9:30 am: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
6:30 pm: Canon of St Andrew / Confession

Thursday, March 18

Noon: Lenten Prayers / Confessions
6:30 pm: Canon of St Andrew / Confession

Friday, March 19

Noon: Lenten Prayers / Confession
6:30 pm: Pre-Sanctified Liturgy / Lenten social
(Begin fast from no later than 1:00pm)

Saturday, March 20

9:30 am: St. Theodore Saturday / Confession
4:00 pm: Great Vespers / Confession

Sunday, March 21- SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

9:05 am: Hours followed by Divine Liturgy / Memorial Sunday / Please bring Icon from home for Procession of Icons

(NEW NOTE): You must let Fr. Andrew know if you want to attend any service.

The Daily Lenten prayers will not be any particular service. They will be prayers taken from several Lenten services. They will last about an hour or so but if you can't stay, leave when you must.

110 E Main Street, Marblehead, OH 43440
www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org

MARCH CANDLE & BULLETIN SPONSORS

Bulletin: (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of Metropolitan Nicholas, my ordaining Bishop
Chandelier: (\$50) Diane Tryon in loving memory of her father on his 100th Birthday
Altar Candles: (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of his father, George, on the occasion of his birthday
Candles on the Tomb: (\$25) Fr. Andrew in memory of my deceased relatives & Pani Jeanette
Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (\$25) Teri in memory of her dad, John, on occasion of 15th anniversary of repose

APRIL CANDLE & BULLETIN SPONSORS

Bulletin: (\$50) Fr. Andrew for his God-father Andrew & grandfather Matthew
Chandelier: (\$50) Open
Altar Candles: (\$50) Open me My mother & deceased relatives in April
Candles on the Tomb: (\$25) Open
Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (25) Open

TENTATIVE READERS

Sunday, Mar 14	Tim
Friday, Mar 19	Teri & Tim
Saturday, Mar 20	Tim
Sunday Mar 21	Teri
Wednesday, Mar 24	Tim & Teri
Thursday, Mar 25	Natalie
Saturday, Mar 27	Tim
Sunday, Mar 28	Tim
Wednesday, Mar 31	Tim & Teri

Rectory 419-798-4591 / Cell 570-212-8747
info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org

MARCH 2021: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY

Goal Pledged per month: \$4,825

Sunday, March 7: \$1,550

MARCH 2021: OTHER INCOME

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

Sunday, March 7: \$90 Candles; \$85 Vigils; \$255 Holy Day donations; \$50 Bulletin; \$50 Chandelier

Week Total: \$530

RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS RECEIVED

Sunday, March 7: \$25 Special Collection Mother Maria

VIGILS - MARCH 7

Susan Guzy (1) In loving memory of father Frank (3/6) Vishnaya Pamyat

Laura Kovach (4) Safe travel for Jim; For healing of Joe, Andrew, and JC; For health of Betty, Ben, Julia, Andrea, Wendy, Mark, Dana, Bodhi, Wayne, David, and Brenda; Special intentions

Sandy Martin (1) Special intentions

Jim Mazur (1) Special intentions

Royhab (2) For health and healing for Mitch Hagmaier and Jack Folk

Twarek (8) Birthday blessing to Ruth 3/8; Birthday blessings to Rachel; In loving memory of Dad & Grandpa George 3/8; Health and recovery of Bob Snyder, JC Geisman, and Joey Batcha; Health of Jewel and Stefani 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

VIGILS- FEBRUARY 28

Susan Guzy (2) Special intentions

Laura Kovach (4) For healing of Joe, Andrew, and JC; For health of Betty, Ben, Julia, Andrea, Wendy, Mark, Dana, Bodhi, Wayne, David, and Brenda; Birthday blessings and good health to Tony; In memory of Ann Schmidt and Marian Stayancho.

Sandy Martin (1) Special intentions

Jim Mazur (1) Special intentions

Royhab (1) For blessed repose of Jerry Petrykowski

Janice Timko (1) In blessed and loving memory of my precious parents Sophia and Peter Monak. Mother's birthday February 28 and Phil 14 years. "Vechnaya Pamyat"

Twarek (8) In birthday memory of Aunt Martha; In loving memory of cousin Rosie & Marian Stayancho; Health and recovery of Bob Snyder, JC Geisman, and Joey Batcha; Birthday blessings to Tony Monastra; Health of Jewel and Stefani and their unborn babies; God's blessings to Morgan & Dylan and newborn son; 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

LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE FOR MARCH 2021

Wednesday, March 3: 6 attended Akathist

Friday, March 5: 6 attended Akathist

Saturday, March 6: 4 attended Vespers

Sunday, March 7: 16 attended Liturgy / 13 Received Communion

Wednesday, March 10: 6 attended Akathist

PRAYER LIST Updated 3-11

HIERARCH'S: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman

CLERGY: 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**; **Peter Pawlack**; **Peter Tutko**; **John Zabinko / Deacon Paul Gansle**

MATUSHKII: Pani Patricia Duranko; **Virginia Lecko**; **Maura McCarntey**; **Snezanna Ruzic**; **Margaret Zabinko**

PARISHIONERS & THEIR FAMILIES: Jonah Adamcio; **John Beadle** (Elchisco); **Kristen** (Cassell Daughter); **Maryann Cook** (cousin to Twarek); **Michael Glovinsky**; **Shirley Gresh** (Glovinsky); **Ben Grosik** (Hritsko cousin); **Julia Guzy**; **Joseph Habegger** (brother-in-law Kovach); **Mitch Hagmaier** (Royhab); **Ellie Hritsko** (Aunt); **Charisee** (Hileman); **Betty Kovach** (Jim's mother); **Cooper Kowal**; **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**; **Tim**; **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**; **Brendan** (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); **Madelyn** (Trudy); **Elliot Joy** (Former Police chief's son); **Andrea Joy** (Kovach); **Ann Marie Krynock** (Timko); **Melinda Kuzara** (Archbishop's list); **Gabriella** (Archbishop's list); **Jake Lipstraw** (Twarek); **Mark Ludvik** (Guzy); **Mark Masica** (Kovach); **Pauline Meath** (Fr's friend); **Karen Muzyka** (Fr's friend); **Vitaly Muzyka**; **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 Wiedenhof** (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.

VIRTUAL LENTEN YOUTH RETREAT SPONSORED BY FOCA

The Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America are calling all Orthodox youth of different ages to participate in a Lenten retreat. The retreat entitled “Rediscovering Pascha After a Year of Pandemic” will be held on Sunday April 11, 2021.

Archpriest Timothy Hojnicky and Archpriest Benjamin Tucci will be leading the retreat for children grades K-12 . The main theme will be rediscovering Pascha while emerging from a long period of separation and isolation. The event boasts of the opportunity to see old friends, renew relationships, and create new friendships as one prepares for Holy Week and Pascha.

Attendance is free but participants must register to receive the Zoom Link. Click the link below to access the registration form online. (Link is on the Diocesan website.)

An opportunity for all. No one has to leave their homes. It is free. Please take advantage.

The importance of love at the Last Judgment

Last Sunday we heard the readings from 1 Corinthians 8, concerning eating meat, and Matthew 25, concerning the Last Judgment. They may seem disjointed in looking at them on the surface, but they are actually very connected to each other.

Food will not commend us to God. We are no worse off if we do not eat, and no better off if we do. Only take care, lest this liberty of yours somehow become a stumbling block to the weak. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9

For you were called to freedom, brethren; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh (to indulge the flesh, NIV), but through love be servants of one another (serve one another humbly in love). Galatians 5:13 The above readings from Corinthians and Galatians help us to put fasting in a proper perspective. The things we fast from during lent are not bad things. Whether they are certain foods, certain luxuries, certain videos, apps, TVs, or computers. St. Paul tells us not to allow our use of

these things to become a stumbling block to others. The verse from Galatians tells us not to use our freedom as an opportunity to indulge the flesh but, through humble love, to be servants of one another. As we are about to enter into the Great Fast, we address this simple question: Do we eat to live, or do we live to eat? This is a time for the family to have a discussion to help us all better understand where we have fallen short in our use of the gifts we have been given. This idea is presented very clearly in the following hymn sung at Matins from this past Sunday:

DANIEL THE PROPHET, AND GREATLY BELOVED MAN, WHEN HE SAW THE POWER OF GOD, CRIED OUT: THE COURT SAT IN JUDGMENT AND THE BOOKS WERE OPENED! CONSIDER WELL, MY SOUL: DO YOU FAST? THEN DO NOT DESPISE YOUR NEIGHBOR! DO YOU ABSTAIN FROM FOOD? THEN DO NOT CONDEMN YOUR BROTHER, LEST YOU BE SENT TO BURN AS WAX IN THE FIRE. BUT MAY CHRIST LEAD YOU WITHOUT STUMBLING INTO HIS KINGDOM! (Praises Verse, Sunday of Last Judgment, Tone 8)

When we read the gospel from Matthew 25 on the Last Judgment, we find that we will not be asked how often we went to church, how correctly we fasted and followed the rules, or whether we were “Orthodox” Christians. The question will be: did we see Christ suffering in the needs of those who are poor, hungry, naked, in prison, or alone having no one to visit them? Did we actively love those persons the Lord brought into our lives? Did we use what the Lord gave us for the well-being of others? Or were our lives only about living to eat? Our inability or refusal to see Christ suffering in the needs of others will be the rule we are judged by.

I encourage you, as we are about to enter the Great Fast, that by the grace of God, make every effort as a family to be active in your love towards one another. May your acts of self-denial through fasting bring you into a greater awareness of the brother or sister God brings into your midst. Receive them with kindness and love. May we repent of our failure to love and seek to “bear each other’s burdens, fulfilling the law of Christ.”

Forgive me a sinner, The blessing of the Lord be upon you, +Paul

MARCH Celebrations

NAME'S DAY	BIRTHDAYS	
3-4: Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa 3-17: Archbishop Alejo of Mexico	1- Marilyn Calzone 2- Lori Batura 3- Tony Monastra 7- Tamera Blackford 8- Rachel Adamcio 8- Ruth Sheller 11- Jason Monschein 16- Paul Bojan	16- Claudia Zile 22- Ariana Holmes 23- Mason Monschein 26- Rachel Sumner 30- Bobbie Royhab 30- Fred Cassell 31- Greg Mazur
<i>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.</i>		

Parish Highlights: St. Andrew Orthodox Church Grows Community Service

St. Andrew Orthodox Church in Maple Heights, OH recently established a partnership with the local health community to use their hall as a distribution center for the COVID-19 vaccine.

In addition to this agreement, the parish has developed other ways in which they could serve the community, including assisting senior citizens with their taxes through American Association of Retired Persons. Christine Hoover, a member of St. Andrew Church commented “Both of these events are handled with all safety precautions in place. We are happy to be able to assist the local community for both of these things.”

The hall also supports local Knights of Columbus meetings and local Boy Scouts gatherings on a weekly basis. This all coincides with their important partnership, their monthly food bank that assists local residents.

“It’s nice to open up our hall to these groups, who give back so much to the community, and to help out the local citizens of the community.”

St. Andrew Church was established on January 31, 1963. The cornerstone was blessed on August 25, 1968 by His Eminence, the Most Reverend John, Archbishop of Chicago and Minneapolis Diocese. The community is active in their local community serving and ministering to a diverse community. For more information about parish life, please visit www.standreweoc.org

MARCH Reposed

1- George Danchisen (2018) 3- Anna Stoyka (2018) 4- Andrew Mazur (2001) 6- Frank Guzy (2002) 11- Ella Mazur (1918) 13- Metropolitan Nicholas (2011) 13- Richard Michael Benya (1983) 13- George Malchisky Sr (1980) 17- Frank Holodnak (1961) 23- Eva Pondillo (2001) 23- Ella Mazurik (1985)	23- Francis Mitchell (2008) 23- Barbara Ann Wasylenko (2017) 25- Pani Janette Moriak (1997) 25- David Chikerotis (2019) 29- Todd Pollack (2019) 29- Carolyn Woodward (2000) 30- John Rofkar (2019) Michael Elchisko (1909) Helen Millie (1910) George Danchisen (1912)
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Archpriest Alexis W. Fedec Celebrates 55th Anniversary of Ordination to Priesthood

On Saturday, February 13, 2021, Archpriest Alexis W. Fedec, retired Rector of Saint Nicholas Church, Kenosha, WI, marked the 55th Anniversary of his Ordination to the Priesthood.

A native of Philadelphia, PA, Father Alexis graduated from Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH. He attended Christ the Savior Seminary, Johnstown, PA, and Saint Tikhon's Seminary, South Canaan, PA, from which he graduated in 1962. He was ordained to the priesthood on Sunday, February 13, 1966 by His Eminence, the late Metropolitan Ireney, at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral, New York, NY.

In addition to serving Saint Nicholas Church, from which he retired as Pastor Emeritus in 2005, Father Alexis faithfully served the Nativity of the Virgin Mary Church, Madison, IL; Three Saints Church, Ansonia, CT; Saints Peter and Paul Church, Minersville, PA; and Saints Cyril and Methodius Church, Jeannette, PA. He also served as Treasurer of the Chicago Deanery for many years.

Father Alexis and his wife, Matushka Alexandra, have six children and three grandchildren.

Since retiring, he has enjoyed catching up on a large backlog of books on Church history and playing with his grandchildren.

When asked about his ordination to the priesthood in 1966, Father Alexis responded, "Back in those days, you had to go to New York to be ordained by the Metropolitan. It was very rare for a diocesan level bishop to ordain someone to the priesthood." He further elaborated, "I was ordained before there was an Orthodox Church in America. This was before the Russian Orthodox Church gave the North American Metropolia our Tomos of Autocephaly in 1970. So, it was quite a different world back then."

"It was also an exciting time after the Tomos was received from the Moscow Patriarchate. The original plan or agreement was for the parishes that were still under Moscow here in the United States and Canada to merge with the OCA, but aside from a few that actually did, it never really happened. Though, we did receive into the OCA parishes of Albanian and

Bulgarian backgrounds. That coupled with the OCAs Romanian Episcopate and Archdiocese of Mexico, truly makes us the most multicultural Orthodox Church in our hemisphere. It's just a shame that we took so long to have conducted our services in English, or mostly English. Only in recent years have we begun to effectively spread the Gospel of our Lord here in North America. And—I hope and pray—that we continue to make even more momentum in this area!"

May God grant Father Alexis many years!

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

Matthew 6:14-21 (Gospel)

For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Moreover, when you fast, do not be like the hypocrites, with a sad countenance. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear to men to be fasting. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you fast, anoint your head and wash your face, so that you do not appear to men to be fasting, but to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

NEW: FIRST ANNUAL ST. NICHOLAI LECTURE, MARCH 23

A Message from the Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary Archpriest John Parker:

Dear All,

I am pleased to announce our First Annual St. Nicholas Lecture, scheduled for Tuesday, March 23, 7:00-8:30PM.

The Lecture is the spring coefficient to the October St. Tikhon Lecture, and is to be scheduled each Spring, on or around March 18, the Feast of St. Nicholas.

Our inaugural lecture will be given by His Grace, The Rt. Rev. Irenej (Dobrijevic), Bishop of the Diocese of Eastern America of the Serbian Orthodox Church. His Grace is an alumnus of St. Tikhon's. His Grace wrote his M.Div. Thesis on St. Nicholas, "Bishop Nicholas Velimirovich: A 1921 Mission to America."

The Lecture will be entitled, "St. Nicholas: His Last Years".

It will be live-streamed for the benefit of the wider world through our YouTube and Facebook pages.

Please mark your calendars for March 23, 7:00-8:30PM.

Glory to God for all things.

Your Servant in Christ,

Fr. John Parker



40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

March 7: Archimandrite Alexander [Cutler] / Jane / William Alber / Anna Schofield

March 14: Two FBI agents killed in FL / Mitred Protopresbyter Daniel Hiubiak

March 21: Christopher Ghareeb / Clay / John / Mary / Michael

March 28: John Richard Elchisco

April 4: Police officer killed in LA / Jerry

April 18: Mat Sonya Tutko / Carol

Department of Christian Education Publishes Weekly Lenten Reflections

For each week of Great Lent, the Department of Christian Education has chosen a saint commemorated during that week whose life offers points for reflection. Families (or anyone who wishes to) can read the brief life of the saint, then use the questions, Scriptural comparisons, and reflective ideas to discover ways in which the saint's life can inspire our own lives. A simple review of all six saints' stories is given at the end.

The DCE hopes this series of reflections will enrich families' and all readers' Lenten experience.

You can find many more helpful resources at dce.oca.org.

The ongoing work and new projects of the Departments of the Orthodox Church in America support parishes and missions in their important ministries. Your prayerful financial support is needed to expand available resources. Go to oca.org/stewards to learn how you can become a part of the Stewards of the OCA.

Lenten Reflections for Families from the Department of Christian Education

For each week of Great Lent, the Department of Christian Education (DCE) has chosen a saint who is commemorated that week, and whose life offers some points for reflection. Families (or anyone who wishes to) can read the brief account of the life, note the saint's connection to people or events in the Bible, and reflect on the questions and thoughts offered. Some of these saints are familiar; others perhaps less so. A general and very simple review of all six saints' stories is offered at the end.

Bible verses are taken from the Revised Standard Version; please have a Bible ready to look up passages. In the texts for each saint, suggested answers to some of the reflection questions are included. These can be shared after participants have offered their own answers.

The Department of Christian Education hopes this series of reflections will enrich the Lenten experience of families and readers. **PAGE 9 is the First Reflection!**

Archbishop Paul's Travel Schedule: March 8 to April 12

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL

March 13th to 14th

Sunday of Forgiveness, Forgiveness Vespers
Beginning of Great Lent

St. Herman Chapel, West Bend, WI,

March 17th, Presanctified

Ss. Peter & Paul Cathedral, Detroit, MI,

March 19th to 21st

Tonsure of Phillip Dage as Reader

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL,

March 24th to 25th

Feast of Annunciation

Protection of the Virgin Mary, Royalton, IL

March 27th to 28th

St. John of Kronstadt, Lincoln, NE,

April 2nd to 4th

Visits to SVS and STS Seminaries to see students,

April 5th to 8th

St. Demetrius Church, Jackson, MI,

April 9th to 11th

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. (Full prostration)



Beginning of Great Lent 2021: Message from the Holy Synod

Let us all joyfully begin the sacred season of abstinence; And let us shine with the bright radiance of the holy commandments of Christ our God, With the brightness of love and the splendor of prayer, With the purity of holiness and the strength of good courage. So, clothed in raiment of light, let us hasten to the Holy Resurrection on the third day, That shines upon the world with the glory of eternal life. (Matins of Monday of the First Week)

To the Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful of the Orthodox Church in America,

Dearly Beloved:

We are preparing to pass through the gates of the Great Paschal Fast which will lead us through a season of life-giving repentance to the celebration of the Feast of feasts, Holy Pascha. We enter this season around the same time that society marks the one-year anniversary of the global outbreak of the coronavirus. The pandemic placed a heavy burden on us, not only during last year's Lenten journey and Paschal celebrations but throughout the remainder of the year, to the present day.

On May 1, 2020, we, the members of the Holy Synod of Bishops of the Orthodox Church in America, issued a Pastoral Letter and a set of Directives to guide the Church in a gradual re-opening of our parishes, missions, and institutions. At that time, we expressed our common longing for the restoration of full liturgical and parochial life, and we understood that such restoration could take some time. One year later, our sentiments are conveyed in our recently-issued Encyclical of Hope, in which we offer our gratitude for the prayers, patience, and sacrificial efforts of the clergy, monastics, and faithful of the Church during these difficult times.

Since last March, much has changed. The Church has responded in a unified manner to the pandemic by voluntarily accepting various safety restrictions for the protection and well-being of our brothers and sisters and our neighbors. The preliminary work that the Holy Synod called for last year has been accomplished with great success, and it is evident that our parishes and institutions have adapted to the *Con't*

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WEEK ONE REFLECTION

Saint Nikolai of Zicha:

Born in 1880 to pious farmers in the small Serbian village of Lelich, Nikolai Velimirovich received his early education at the local Chelije Monastery. He then attended the Seminary of Saint Sava in Belgrade. His brilliant mind enabled him to go on to undertake doctoral studies at Berne, Switzerland and at Oxford.

But having been a shepherd in his early years, he felt called to become a shepherd of people, and to enter the priesthood. On a single day late in the year 1909 he both entered a monastic order and was ordained a priest.

Returning to the Seminary of Saint Sava as a professor, he wrote some of the great number of poems and theological works that would become his precious legacy to the Church.

But as the First World War engulfed the world, he also traveled to England in 1914 to raise funds for the suffering Serbian people. He would later do the same in Europe and America. A powerful and convincing speaker, his efforts were very effective and continued over many more years.

In 1919, having returned to Belgrade from his travels, he was made Bishop of Zicha. During the next decades, he continued to write and to minister to the people of Serbia. Among his written works is the Prologue from Ohrid, a collection of the lives of saints.

World War Two brought the occupation of Yugoslavia by the German Nazis, and the bishop was imprisoned, like many prominent Christians, in the notorious Dachau concentration camp. He was tortured, and witnessed many deaths by firing squad as well as prisoners' horrible suffering. His own lifelong poor health only made the ordeal worse.

Bishop Nikolai came to the United States as a refugee in 1946. During the next ten years he taught at Saint Sava Serbian Orthodox Seminary, Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary, Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary, and Saint Tikhon's Orthodox Seminary, where he became rector. He died at Saint Tikhon's in 1956, and years later his relics were

taken to rest in his native Serbia.

Saint Nikolai knew the Bible very well. In the difficult years of his imprisonment and torture, he relied for sustenance on passages like this one: "Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed" (I Peter 4: 12-13).

Perhaps few of us will ever suffer as greatly as Saint Nikolai did. But during Great Lent, we are called on to undergo tiny "sufferings" like fasting, and giving ourselves fewer pleasures and distractions. Can these be occasions of rejoicing for us? Can they remind us of the great joy we anticipate in the Kingdom of God?

Saint Nicolai wrote a long series of "Prayers by the Lake." In one of them he addresses God in this way: "I see a fish dying as soon as it is taken out of the water and I say, "That is me! If they take me out of Your embrace, I shall die in seconds—like a fish tossed onto the sand."

What "tools" does the Church offer us during Great Lent to help us stay firmly in God's embrace? (Some suggested answers: attendance at the special services, confession, Holy Communion both on Sunday and during the week.)

Note: For more on Saint Nikolai of Zicha, see Saints of North America, one of the series of Activity Books produced by the Department of Christian Education. The whole series is available for free download at dce.oca.org



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.

Holy Synod Con't

difficulties while maintaining fidelity to the fundamental and necessary liturgical and pastoral activities of the Church.

Some may argue that this adaptation was a capitulation to civil authorities or medical experts, or that it was an expression of faithlessness or fear. We propose, rather, that the Church as a body—the Body of Christ—responded with Christian love, long-suffering patience, and increased mercy in the midst of very difficult and painful circumstances. The members of this body have been stretched—physically, emotionally, and spiritually—through the very same ascetical effort that we strive for during Lent. In many ways, the trials of the pandemic have helped us to face the very realities that all must face: loneliness, suffering, isolation, our passions, and death.

Even in the midst of these trials, we have observed the sacrificial and creative efforts of our clergy, monastics, and faithful as they sought to maintain the integrity and beauty of our liturgical and pastoral life. Our initial restrictions may have seemed overly strict; however, the intent of those restrictions was not to diminish the glory of the Church or to “shut things down,” but rather to pave the way for an orderly re-opening and the full restoration of Church life.

Now we give thanks to God, because it seems that the rate of COVID-19 infections is decreasing across the United States, Mexico, and Canada. While we must remain vigilant, we look forward to the gradual, careful, and deliberate restoration of full liturgical and parochial life. We therefore re-affirm the following:

*The substance of the May 1, 2020 Synodal Directives remains in place. Their implementation is overseen by the diocesan bishop who is entrusted with the spiritual and pastoral care of his clergy, faithful, and monastics, protecting their well-being as he determines necessary, while always remaining of one mind with the Holy Synod.

*We must continue to adhere to the civil guidelines, beginning with those of our federal governments and then the particular and localized guidelines from the civil authorities, recognizing that there is a diversity from state to state, province to province, county to

county, and even municipality to municipality. Civil authorities have largely been reluctant to impose restrictions on the churches, but our communities are expected to respond in a way that is consonant with the public welfare. The Holy Synod, concerned for the health and well-being of all, intends to follow in the spirit in which those guidelines are given.

Finally, with the benefit of our experience during the past year, we encourage our faithful to take advantage of the blessing of the divine services of the Church in all care and safety, to continue to be vigilant, and to look to your bishop for guidance in this process. In this way, may we all greet the third-day Resurrection with faith, with hope, and with love.

With our paternal blessing and concern,

+ Tikhon Archbishop of Washington, Metropolitan of All America and Canada / *Locum tenens* of the Diocese of New England and the Albanian Archdiocese

+ Nathaniel Archbishop of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate

+ Benjamin Archbishop of San Francisco and the West

+ Mark Archbishop of Philadelphia and Eastern Pennsylvania

+ Alejo Archbishop of Mexico City and Mexico

+ Melchisedek Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania

+ Irénée Archbishop of Ottawa and the Archdiocese of Canada

+ Michael Archbishop of New York and New York and New Jersey

+ Alexander Archbishop of Dallas, the South and the Bulgarian Diocese

+ Paul Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest