



Sunday, December 12, 2021

Gospel: [St. Luke 14:16-24](#)

Tone 8

Epistle: [Colossians 3:4-11](#)

25th Sunday after Pentecost / Sunday of the Forefathers  
St. Spyridon the Wonderworker, Bishop of Tremithus

## DECEMBER Bulletin Sponsor:

*Fr. Andrew in memory of my family & friends*

### Liturgical & Events Schedule

#### Sunday December 12

9:05 Hours / Divine Liturgy / Social

#### Monday, December 13

6:00 pm Council Meeting @ Rectory

#### Saturday, December 18

4:00 pm Great Vespers

#### Sunday, December 19

9:05 am Hours / Divine Liturgy / Memorial Sunday / Social / Change Linens

### Luke 14:16-24 (Gospel)

Then He said to him, "A certain man gave a great supper and invited many, and sent his servant at supper time to say to those who were invited, 'Come, for all things are now ready.' But they all with one accord began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a piece of ground, and I must go and see it. I ask you to have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I am going to test them. I ask you to have me excused.' Still another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So that servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in here the poor and the maimed and the lame and the blind.' And the servant said, 'Master, it is done as you commanded, and still there is room.' Then the master said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.' For I say to you that none of those men who were invited shall taste my supper.'"



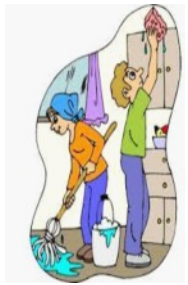
- Saturday, December 25- Free Christmas Dinner
- Wednesday, January 5- Theophany Holy Night Supper (PLEASE SIGN UP IF YOU ARE COMING)
- Saturday, January 8- Blessing of the Lake
- Sunday, January 23, 2021 @ 1:00pm - Local March for Life in Port Clinton. The March is about an hour (about a mile) followed by a reception at Knights of Columbus. If one can't walk, prayers will be offered at the Knights until the March is completed
- Sunday, January 30- Annual Church Meeting

### Archbishop Paul's Travel Schedule:

Ss. Peter & Paul, Lakewood, OH  
December 10-12

### DECEMBER CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

Week of Dec. 12	Sandy
Week of Dec. 19	Bobbie
Week of Dec. 26	Natalie



## NOVEMBER: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY

Goal Pledged per month: \$4,825

Nov. 7: \$2,285  
Nov. 14: \$1,165  
Nov. 21: \$ 715  
Nov. 28: \$1,290

Month Total: \$5,455

## NOVEMBER: OTHER INCOME

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

Nov. 7: \$65 Candles; \$20 donations; \$250 Vigils; \$100 holy Day donations; \$50 bulletin; \$100 Chandelier; \$25 Candles on Tomb; \$100 Altar Candles; \$30 Candles @ St. Tikhon; \$25 Eternal Light & Icon Screen

Nov. 14: \$10 Candles; \$150 Vigils; Donations \$2,050, \$125 Holy Day Donations; \$46,517.45 fundraising

Nov. 21: \$17 Candles; \$260 donations; \$85 Vigils; \$55 Holy Day Donations

Nov. 28: \$Candles; \$160 Vigils; \$5,000 Anonymous; \$130 Holy Day; \$50 Chandelier

**TOTAL FOR MONTH: \$8,857** (does not include fundraising efforts)

## NOVEMBER: RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS

Nov. 7: \$150 Holiday Bureau; \$110 St Vladimir's Seminary; \$87.50 Building Restoration  
Nov. 14: \$100 St Vladimir; \$5,000 building fund  
Nov. 21: \$200 Christmas Flowers; \$200 St. Vladimir Seminary; \$100 Building Fund  
Nov. 28: \$115 Flowers; \$10 Food Pantry; \$1,000 Catastrophic Fund; \$30 St. Vladimir's Seminary

## MONTH AND YTD FINANCIAL'S / WITHOUT FUNDRAISING

### NOVEMBER:

Income: \$14,322  
Expenses: \$ 9,419  
**TOTAL GAIN: \$4,903**

### YTD

Income: \$ 88,913  
Expenses \$115,348  
**TOTAL LOSS: \$26,435**

## MONTH AND YTD FINANCIALS / WITH FUNDRAISING

### NOVEMBER

Income: \$60,684  
Expenses: \$ 9,419  
**Total Gain: \$51,266**

### YTD

Income: \$135,175  
Expenses: \$115,348  
**TOTAL GAIN: \$19,827**

## NOVEMBER: LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE

**Saturday, Nov. 6:** 6 attended Vespers  
**Sunday, Nov. 7:** 20 attended Liturgy (7 of which were visitors) / 16 received Communion  
**Monday, Nov. 8:** 11 attended Feast Day Liturgy  
**Thursday, Nov. 11:** 8 attended Liturgy  
**Saturday, Nov. 13:** 9 attended Vespers  
**Sunday, Nov. 14:** 16 attended Liturgy (1 being a guest) / 10 Communicants  
**Saturday, Nov. 20:** 5 attended Vespers  
**Sunday, Nov. 21:** 18 attended Liturgy (4 of which were visitors) / 13 Communicants  
**Saturday, Nov. 27:** 6 attended Vespers  
**Sunday, Nov. 28:** 16 attended Liturgy / 11 received communion

## VIGILS- NOVEMBER 28

**Susan Guzy (2)** Blessed Thanksgiving to all of Holy Assumption, Birthday blessings to brother Gary 11/27 and Memory Eternal to Olivia, 40<sup>th</sup> day remembrance 12/2 Vishnaya Pamyat

**Laura Kovach(4)** Birthday blessings to George. In memory of Uncle Alex. For health of Betty K., Ben F., Earl R., Mary P., Andrea J., Wendy R., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Hattie K., Molly K., David M , Marguerite B., Stephanie R., Kathie J., Joe H., Margi H. , Joe S., Mark P , and George K. Safe travels for family and friends.

**Sandy Martin (2)** In loving memory of mom, anniversary Dec 1, For health and healing of Marg

**Royhab (2)** for health of Stephanie and Marguerite

**Diane Tryon (2)** In loving memory of family friend, Father Peter, In loving memory of neighbor Don Moses

**Twarek (9)** Safe travel for Laura and Jim, For the health of Amber, For the health and recovery of Zach, Health and recovery of Marguerite, Health and recovery of Dorothy 'Dottie' Goldman, Health and recovery of Joe Schutt, Health and recovery of Jamie Philpot , Jim, Stephanie, Ron, Ezra, Health of David, Helen Lis and Tina's dad, Earl, Matt, Tom, Loren, Joe, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Chuck, Bohdi, Diane, Stella, Jake, Cheryl, special intentions

## DECEMBER LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE

**Sun. Dec. 5:** 11 attended Liturgy / 6 Communicants

**Mon. Dec. 6:** 11 attended Liturgy (3 guests)

## DECEMBER BULLETIN CANDLE SPONSORS

**Bulletin:** (\$50) From Father in memory of his family & friends reposed in December

**Chandelier:** (\$50) From Jean for the Health and safe travels for her daughter Jessica and son-in-law Justin and for the children Hayden, Rowan, & Silas as they travel to their new deployment & home in Japan

**Altar Candles:** (\$50) From Father in memory of the former pastors of this parish & Hierarchs from the Diocese in the month of Dec.

**Candles on the Tomb:** (\$25) From Tammy in remembrance of her father William and husband Robley

**Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** (\$25) From Jean in memory of her father William Pipenur

**Candles @ the Cross** (\$15) From Sandy for the hlth of Marguerite

**Candles @ St Tikhon's Icon** (\$15) for the health of Tim and safety of Nicholas, Tikhon & Gleice

## DECEMBER: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY Goal Pledged per month: \$4,825

Dec. 5: \$490

## DECEMBER: OTHER INCOME

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

**Dec. 5:** \$25 Candles; \$105 Vigils;\$180 Holy Day Donations

Week Total: \$310

## DECEMBER: RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS

**Dec. 5:** \$60 Flowers; \$100 Zoe for Life

## PRAYER LIST- UPDATED DECEMBER 8

**HIERARCH'S / CLERGY:** His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman; Archbishop Benjamin from San Fransico; John Duranko (Father's home pastor); James Gleason (Father's Spiritual Father); Moses Berry; Gregory Grivna; Emilian Hutnyan; Joseph Von Klarr; Michael Kuzara; Michael Macura; Basil Stoyka, Andrew Yarvonitsky; John Zabinko / Deacon Paul Gansle, Deacon Peter Rentsch, / Sub-deacon Wylie Meath

**MATUSHKII:** Pani Patricia Duranko; Virginia Lecko; Maura McCarntey; Roberta Spengler; Margaret Zabinko

**PARISHIONERS & THEIR FAMILIES:** James Bargdill (Schutt); John Beadle (Elchisco); James Billy (Fr.); Kristen (Cassell); Marguerite Bird; Maryann Cook (Twarek); Michael Glovinsky; Shirley Gresh (Glovinsky); Joseph Habegger (Kovach); Charisse (Hileman); Betty Kovach; David LaValle (Fr); Helen Lis; Child Stephanos (Loizos); Scott Lucas (Fr); David Mazurik; Child Stella Miller (Elchisco); Nancy Naiser (Royhab); Earl Rindfleisch; Helen Jean Rofkar (Elchisco); Joe Rose; Sonya Rose; Ron Royhab; Maryann Royhab; Stephanie Royhab; Joe Schutt; Christi Schutt; Steven Schirtzinger (Soski); Dacia Snider (Hileman); Diane Tryon; Greg Tyron; Tom Twarek; Tim; the child Bodhi (Cassell); Elinor Williams (Golob); Kathryn Tryon & her unborn baby

**OTHER REQUESTS:** Child Ezra; Jack Eilrich (Fr.); Baby Finn (Cassell); Zoe Finley (ABL); Marge Dziana; Ruthe Flewelling; Ben Franklin (Kovach); Donald Gresh (Glovinsky); Andrea Joy (Kovach); Ann Marie Krynock (Timko); Maria (ABL); Jake Lipstraw (Twarek); Mark Ludvik (Guzy); Mark Masica (Kovach); Pauline Meath (Fr); Karen Muzyka (fr); William Romanchak (Fr); Sandy Scafaria (Hileman); Janice Timko; George Timko; Loren Welch (Fr); Chuck Wiedenhof (Twarek); Sara (Jake); Chris Quotap (Fr)

**MILITARY:** Alex, Nathan Brown, Craig Cassell, Cory Deaton , Jake Ellithorpe, Jordan Fulton, Alena Grabavoy, Nicholas & Tikhon

**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



**NOTE:** ABL (Archbishop's request) / Please let FR. Andrew know who can come off the list or be put on.

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### ***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.

Thank you and God bless!



### **BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND**

Our 125<sup>th</sup> 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*.

## Understanding the Bible: Recognizing Genre By Fr. Lawrence Farley

Odd as it sounds, the first step to understanding the Bible is to realize that there is no such thing as The Bible. Or, to state it somewhat less paradoxically, we must realize that the Bible is not a single book written by a single author, but a library of books written over a number of centuries by many authors. The word “bible”, though singular in form, comes from the plural Greek word βιβλία/biblia—the books. When trying to understand the Bible we are attempting to master the meaning of a library. And as anyone knows who has tried to use a library, it is imperative to understand that the books there are divided into many different sections, each section being a separate category or literary genre.

So, if I want to find a particular book so that I can be taught by its author, I first need to figure out its literary genre. For example, if I wanted to learn about astronomy, I would not look in the Science Fiction section, but in the Science section. And—perhaps more significantly—if I picked up a book from the Science Fiction section about boldly going where no man has gone before and tried to learn astronomy from that book and from Captain Kirk, I would be sure to get things wrong. That, however, would not be the fault of Capt. Kirk, but of Fr. Lawrence, because I did not realize I was reading a particular literary genre.

As in a public library, so in the Bible: there are many differing literary genres. Sometimes we tend to think there are only two different literary genres in the Bible—the historical and the apocalyptic. That is partly because those are the only two literary genres found in the New Testament (which was written over the course of a comparatively short time of about 60 years or so).

In the Gospels and in Acts we find history. That is, we find accounts of events of the author’s very recent past recounted with the intention of letting interested people know what happened. Obviously this history is not unbiased (no history really is), and obviously the events recounted are selected from a large number of events to make a certain point. But, in the words of St. Luke, having investigated everything carefully, the authors wrote things down so that the readers would know the exact truth about what they had heard about Jesus and His Church (Luke 1:1-4). The same sense of history pervades the Epistles: the authors like Paul, Peter, James, and John were writing to real people to let them know things like

who Jesus is and how He wanted them to live. We also find the apocalyptic genre in the New Testament, namely the Book of Revelation. Its apocalyptic nature is screamingly obvious, given its abundant use of lurid image and symbol.

Given that the New Testament contains just historical and apocalyptic genres, it easy to project this approach to literary genre onto the Old Testament, and to imagine that those are the only two genres present there also.

I suggest that, given the fact that the Old Testament consists of many more books (and many longer books) written by many more authors over many more years, and subject to much revision and compilation, it is likely that we would find a number of literary genres there. And in fact we do.

In particular, we find creation stories (or “mythology” in some dictionaries), history, revised history, poetry, proverb, philosophy, erotic love poetry, prophecy, and historical romance. Given that all these categories abounded in the ancient world of which the Israelites were a part, this is hardly surprising. The Old Testament represents the literature of the Hebrew people written over centuries, so it should be expected that the many literary genres present in that world would find a place in their literature as well. The difference between their literature and that of the world around them is that theirs served the transcendent purposes of the God who dwelt among them. That literature was written to the people of its time, but because of the providential purposes of God, it served a higher, deeper, and longer-lasting purpose. In the words of St. Peter, it was revealed to the prophetic writers of the literature that ultimately they were not serving just themselves, but us Christians (1 Peter 1:10-12). One can therefore find a deeper layer of meaning in the literature of the Hebrew people.

The question is: how can we discern what kind of literary genre we are reading? In the library signs are posted, so that one cannot easily wander into the Science Fiction section and check out a book on Star Trek imagining that one could learn astronomy from it. But there are no such signs posted on each of the books of the Old Testament.

## DECEMBER Celebrations

ANNIVERSARIES	BIRTHDAYS		
12-5-2004: Archbishop Mark of Philadelphia 12-19-1971: Retired Bishop Seraphim of Sendai 21- Ed & Irene Vangeloff 27- James & Lauren Jerome 12-27-2014: ArchBishop Paul of Chicago 31- Justin & Jessica Issler 31- Fred & Christi Soski 31- Jimmy & Christine Billy	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">                             1-Ileana Bruner                              1- Thomas Mcdonald                              1- Holly Mesavage                              2- Kira Weisend                              4- Chris Lariccia                              4- Steven Calzone                              5- Mat. Laryissa Bremer                              6- Mat. Susan Northrup                              6- Paul Demkosky Sr                              8- Joe Rose                         </td> <td style="width: 50%; border: none;">                             9- Pauline Meath                              9- Angie Dardovsky                              11- Tina Rindfleisch                              11- Emmelyn Monschein                              12- Rowan Issler                              13- Gabe Mazurik                              17- Tim Heffernan                              23- Teri Cassell                              23- Sean Williams                              25- Darlene Mazurik                              28- Carol Mazurik                              30- Jeff Stokely                              30- Christina Adzima                         </td> </tr> </table>	1-Ileana Bruner 1- Thomas Mcdonald 1- Holly Mesavage 2- Kira Weisend 4- Chris Lariccia 4- Steven Calzone 5- Mat. Laryissa Bremer 6- Mat. Susan Northrup 6- Paul Demkosky Sr 8- Joe Rose	9- Pauline Meath 9- Angie Dardovsky 11- Tina Rindfleisch 11- Emmelyn Monschein 12- Rowan Issler 13- Gabe Mazurik 17- Tim Heffernan 23- Teri Cassell 23- Sean Williams 25- Darlene Mazurik 28- Carol Mazurik 30- Jeff Stokely 30- Christina Adzima
1-Ileana Bruner 1- Thomas Mcdonald 1- Holly Mesavage 2- Kira Weisend 4- Chris Lariccia 4- Steven Calzone 5- Mat. Laryissa Bremer 6- Mat. Susan Northrup 6- Paul Demkosky Sr 8- Joe Rose	9- Pauline Meath 9- Angie Dardovsky 11- Tina Rindfleisch 11- Emmelyn Monschein 12- Rowan Issler 13- Gabe Mazurik 17- Tim Heffernan 23- Teri Cassell 23- Sean Williams 25- Darlene Mazurik 28- Carol Mazurik 30- Jeff Stokely 30- Christina Adzima		

### 40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

**Dec. 5:** Gordon Schutt / Fr. Maximos Herman  
**Dec. 12:** Dan Opritza / AP Peter Tutko  
**Dec. 19:** Robley Blackford  
**Dec. 26:** Donald Keegan  
**Jan. 9:** Victims of the school shooting in Detroit/  
 Police officer killed in GA

### READERS

Sunday, Dec. 12     Ron  
 Sunday, Dec. 19     Tim  
 Saturday, Dec. 25     Ron  
 Sunday, Dec. 26     Tim

### For Your Prayers

**Diane Tryon**

109 Joslyn Street  
Arcadia, OH 44804

**Marguerite Bird**

512 Ottawa Street  
Marblehead, OH 43440

## NOVEMBER / DECEMBER Reposed

Michael Guzy (1927) Mary Lou Hobson (2015) Mary Hritsko (1948)- Anna Holodnak (1951) John Danchisen 1-Helen Elchisco (1990) 3- Mary Hubicki (2013) 8- Bill Soltis (2014) 8-Mary (Marika) Lefas (2019) 10- Michael Basala (1991) 12- Anna Bretz (2002) 13- Joseph Mazurik (1986) 13- Archimandrite Seraphim Oblivantseff (1954) Former Pastor 15- Michael W. Belenky (1971) 18- Archbishop Job (2009) 19- Edward Malchisky (2001) 20- Julia Brosojah Millie (1953)	0- John Mazurik (2017) 20- William Pipenur (2003) 21- Mary Sennich (1985) 22- Antonima Vecsey (1972) 22-Susan La Valle (2019) 23- Steven Danchisen (1982) 23- Fr. David Sedor (2008) 24- Alexandra Turkul (1980) 24- John Bird <b>No year Provided</b> 26- Fr. Robert Sally (2002) 26- Julia Malchisky (1971) 28- Fr. John Kuchta (2019) 29- Alexandra Dotsenko (1980) 30- Bishop Boris (2000) 30- Rita Felenchak (1996) 30-Ed Pehanich, Sr (2019) 31- Jevgeny Cernonok (1980) 31- Robert LaVallee (2007) 31- Hermenegildo Guerrero Peter Onyock (1952) Anna Mazurik (1968)
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### *Fr. Lawrence Con't from Pg 5*

Most of it is pretty clear sailing. The authors of Joshua and Judges seem to have wanted their readers (or their hearers actually) to believe that they were writing history, even if the historical events were especially selected and told in a way to make a certain point. The authors of 1-2 Samuel and 1-2 Kings also seemed to represent events that actually happened, although once again the authors were writing not comprehensive unbiased histories, but a lesson to be learned from those histories—namely the lesson that say one should avoid worshipping idols. The Psalms are also pretty straightforward, as are the Proverbs. The core meaning Song of Solomon also seems tolerably clear—and maybe a bit too clear, given that exegetical history has been littered with noble but absurd attempts to deny the erotic elements there. The works found under the names of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the other prophets containing their prophecies and oracles also seem to be clear sailing regarding genre, even if the fulfillment of those prophecies is a subject of intense debate.

More problematic is recognizing when we are reading not history, but historical romance (or political satire). Part of this problem comes from our unstated and unexamined presupposition that there can be no humour to speak of in the Bible. When the texts are transposed from their original context of reading to a listening group or family, translated into sonorous and archaic language, bound in leather, and then read or chanted as a part of a religious ritual, the humorous elements are almost certainly to be an early casualty.

Bluntly put, no one would dream of laughing, grinning, or indulging in a wry smile at something read from the Bible in Church, and so we thereby banish humour as a component from our Bibles, even if the authors of the texts intended them to be satirically humorous—for wry humour is embedded in all satire. But who said satire was unsuitable for Christians? If we could listen to Christ like His first Galilean audience did, we would certainly detect wry humour—such as His image about a man with a huge log sticking out of his eye trying to pick a tiny mote of the eye of someone else.

I suggest therefore that satire and historical romance are valid categories for Holy Writ, and should not be

banished from our list of acceptable Biblical genres without a hearing. But how can one distinguish historical romance from history?

Certainly not by the lack of historical details. Of course historical romances will purport to be historical—that is the point and power of the genre. Historical romances do not flaunt their non-historical character by beginning, “Once upon a time”. Like all historical romances and good historical fiction, it uses historical verisimilitude, using details that look like history to bring the hearer into its world.

Take for example the opening of the Book of Judith—a book that no one now accepts as history, but that all scholars regard as historical romance.

It begins by anchoring its story in history: “It was the twelfth year of the reign of Nebuchadnezzar, who ruled over the Assyrians in the great city of Nineveh. At that time Arphaxad was ruling over the Medes in Ecbatana. Around Ecbatana he built a wall of hewn stones, three cubits thick and six cubits long. He made the walls seventy cubits high and fifty cubits wide. At its gates he raised towers one hundred cubits high with foundations sixty cubits wide. He made its gates seventy cubits high and forty cubits wide to allow passage of his mighty forces, with his infantry in formation. At that time King Nebuchadnezzar waged war against King Arphaxad in the vast plain that borders Ragau. Rallying to him were all who lived in the hill country, all who lived along the Euphrates, the Tigris, and the Hydaspes, as well as Arioch, king of the Elamites, in the plains. Thus many nations joined the ranks of the Chelodites.”

This wealth of historical and physical detail gives the impression that one is reading history—as the author intends it to. How then does one clue onto the fact that it is not history but rather historical romance? 1. By the fact that the historical details presented contradict known history, and 2. By the historical errors—or wild improbabilities—found in the story. If there are many errors or improbabilities, one is almost certainly reading not history, but historical romance.

For example, in the case of the Book of Judith, we note that Nebuchadnezzar did not rule over the Assyrians in Nineveh as the text says, but over the Babylonians. And by the time Israel was back in the land and Judith arose, Nebuchadnezzar and the other Babylonians were long gone. *Con't Next Pg*

### *Fr. Lawrence Con't from Pg 7*

Then the Persians were the ones in charge. The combination of errors reveals that one is reading not history, but historical romance.

The point is one discerns one is reading historical romance by examining the details of the story, not because there are no historical details given. All historical romances begin and read like history—that is how the genre works.

One asks: if the Book of Judith is an example of Hebrew historical romance, who says that such a literary genre is unsuitable as Holy Scripture? A narrowed and impoverished view of truth will say that only things historically true (or clearly apocalyptic) are suitable for Scripture. But why should this be? It is this kind of narrowed thinking that once suggested that only chaste and modest subjects were suitable for Scripture, so that the Song of Solomon therefore had nothing to do with sex. I suggest that a God who created the world with its many rich cultures and its many literary genres and who deigned to become incarnate in such a world takes a wider view of what is suitable for teaching His people the lessons they need.

We need to learn so many things. We therefore should be open to all the ways in which God might teach us: by the tales of history, the trumpets of prophecy, the poignancy of poetry—including erotic poetry—and the lessons of historical romance. A fearless and hungry heart will open itself to all truth, whatever its guise and genre.

### **His Grace Bishop Alexis Returns from Visit to Russia**

On November 22, 2021, His Grace Bishop Alexis of Bethesda, Locum Tenens of Sitka and Alaska returned from his visit to Russia. The visit spanned nine days and strengthened the relations between the Orthodox Church in America and the Moscow Patriarchate.

After arriving in Moscow, on Saturday, November 13th, His Grace concelebrated the All-Night Vigil with Metropolitan Dionysi at Novospas Monastery. During Matins, he ordained Nicholas Cragle to the subdiaconate and was hosted to a meal

following the service. The next day, His Grace celebrated the hierarchical Divine Liturgy at Saint Catherine's in the Fields Representation Church of the Orthodox Church in America where Subdeacon Nicholas Cragle was ordained to the Holy Diaconate. In attendance was also Protopresbyter Vladimir Devokov. Following the Liturgy, His Grace offered a homily.

On November 15th, a meeting took place with Bishop Alexis and Bishop Anthony of the Serbian Patriarchate at Saints Peter and Paul Church, the Serbian Representation Church in Moscow.

His Grace then traveled to Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra on November 16th. While there he had the opportunity to venerate the relics of Saint Sergius of Radonezh and Saint Innocent. During the meal, His Grace met with Bishop Theodorit, the rector of Moscow Theological Academy and discussed possible collaboration with Saint Herman's Seminary.

From Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra, His Grace went to Pereslavl for a meeting with Bishop Theoktist at the Monastery of the Venerable Daniel. Later that day in Rostov, he met with Archimandrite Panteleimon and was hosted for lunch by Abbess Eustoli of the Convent of Saint Nicholas. His Grace then met with Archimandrite Leonty, Abbot of Spaso-Yakovleski Monastery, and had the opportunity to venerate the relics of Saint Demetrius of Rostov before his departure. Concluding his time in Rostov was a tour of the Rostov kremlin. Finally, that same evening, he had dinner in Yaroslavl at the Tolga Monastery with Metropolitan Vadim and Abbess Barbara.

On November 18th, His Grace celebrated the hierarchical Divine Liturgy at the Church of Saint James the Brother of the Lord for the feast of the election of Saint Tikhon as Patriarch of All Russia, the same church Saint Tikhon served after returning to Russia from North America. Before departing Yaroslavl for Moscow, His Grace was given a tour of the Monastery of the Kazanskya Icon and the Uspenski Cathedral.

Ending the visit to Russia was a trip to Kazan where, on Saturday November 20th and Sunday November 21st, His Grace concelebrated the All-night Vigil and hierarchical Divine Liturgy with Metropolitan Kiril at the Kazan Cathedral. Concluding his time in Kazan before traveling home, His Grace had the opportunity to visit some of the churches in the city.



## **His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon sends greetings to St. Catherine's Representation Parish on their patronal feast day**

On December 7, 2021 His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon sent his greetings to Archpriest Daniel Andrejuk and the faithful of Saint Catherine's Representation Parish in Moscow in honor of their patronal feast day.

In his letter, His Beatitude encouraged the faithful to look to the example of Saint Catherine the Great-Martyr for inspiration to the Christian life. "Although Saint Catherine was endowed with extraordinary gifts of beauty and intelligence," he said, "she did not cling to these gifts, but offered them back to God, the Giver of every good gift (cf. James 1:17)." His Beatitude concluded his letter exhorting the faithful to "flee every sin and temptation and run toward embrace of the Father of all, the lover of mankind" through the intercessions of Saint Catherine and and strengthened by her prayers.

The Very Reverend Daniel Andrejuk

St. Catherine the Great Martyr Representation Church

Bolshaya Ordynka 60/2

Moscow 119017

RUSSIA

Very Reverend Father Daniel and All the Beloved Faithful of Saint Catherine Parish,

Christ is in our midst!

With joy I extend my archpastoral greetings to you on your parish feast, the feast of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr.

What is a great martyr? Did Saint Catherine (and the other great martyrs recognized by the Church) suffer more torments for Christ than the other martyrs? No, all of the martyrs suffered tremendous mental and physical tortures—and, finally, death—for the sake of fidelity to the Gospel and for the greater glory of God. Saint Catherine is a great martyr, rather, because of the special resonance of her

witness down through the ages, and because of her powerful intercession for the Christian people over the course of the centuries.

People of all times, and we among them, can draw great strength from Saint Catherine's double renunciation and double offering to Christ. First, although Saint Catherine was endowed with extraordinary gifts of beauty and intelligence, she did not cling to these gifts, but offered them back to God, the Giver of every good gift (cf. James 1:17). She desired nothing other than to offer all her heart, all her soul, all her mind, and all her strength to Jesus Christ her Creator and Savior, the Bridegroom of the Church and of every Christian soul (cf. Mk 12:30). Second, when Saint Catherine was showered with blandishments by her captor, the Emperor Maximian, and promised many things if only she would repudiate Christianity, she put the emperor and all the so-called wisdom of the world to shame. She was ready to suffer and die rather than renounce her Redeemer. Thus, just as she accepted and offered back the true gifts of God, she rejected the false gifts of the world, death, and the devil.

As you celebrate the feast of this great martyr, dearly beloved faithful of Saint Catherine parish, be sure to ask her prayers for yourselves. Ask her to pray that you, too, be able to recognize, accept, and offer back the good gifts of God, and to reject the false gifts of this world. This creation was made good by God, but corrupted by human sin. Thus, even as we accept with joy the good things of this life, doing all to the glory of God, we must reject all that is evil—the temptations of power, lust, and greed, what Saint John the Theologian calls "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life" (1 Jn 2:16).

And so let us flee every sin and temptation and run toward the embrace of the Father of all, the Lover of mankind. Inspired by the witness of Saint Catherine the Great Martyr, and strengthened by her prayers, may we all commend ourselves, each other, and all our life unto Christ our God, the beloved Bridegroom of creation, sending up glory to Him, together with His Father who is from everlasting and His All-holy Spirit.

Assuring you of my prayers, and of the prayers of your fellow faithful in North America,

+Tikhon Archbishop of Washington Metropolitan of All America and Canada

## **Righteous Miriam Commemorated on December 12**

Saint Miriam, like her brothers Moses and Aaron, was descended from the tribe of Levi.

When Moses was an infant, the Hebrew midwives were ordered to kill any male child when they assisted at childbirths, but they refused to obey. Moses was hidden by his mother for three months, and then, when she could no longer do this, he was placed into a basket of reeds and set upon the waters of the Nile. Miriam watched in secret to see what would happen to him. When Pharaoh's daughter found him, Miriam emerged from her place of concealment and offered to find a wet nurse from among the Hebrew women for the baby. Miriam went to get her mother, who raised her child until he was grown, and then returned him to Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:10).

In the Torah, she is called "Miriam the Prophetess" (Exodus 15:20), while the Prophet Michah (6:4) has God say that He sent Moses, and Aaron, and Miriam before the Hebrews to lead them out of Egypt.

In Chapter 12 of the book of Numbers, Miriam and Aaron apparently criticize Moses for being married to a foreign woman of Cush (or an Ethiopian). This, however, was merely a pretext for their resentment. Actually, they were disturbed by Moses' position as the sole mediator between God and the people. Miriam was a prophetess, after all. Miriam and Aaron questioned Moses, "Has the Lord spoken only to Moses? Has He not also spoken to us?" God then tells them that He speaks face to face with Moses, but only in visions to Miriam and Aaron while they are asleep. Then, for daring to speak against Moses, Miriam is punished with leprosy. Aaron pleads with Moses not to hold their sin against them, since they had acted out of ignorance. Even so, Miriam was set apart outside the camp for seven days, and then she was healed and allowed to come in.

In one of the stichera on the Praises for the Sunday before the Nativity, Sarah, Rebecca, Anna, and Miriam, "the glory of women," are said to "exchange glad tidings."

## **Hieromartyr Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem Commemorated on December 12**

The Hieromartyr Alexander, Bishop of Jerusalem, was a disciple of the great teacher and writer of the Church, Clement of Alexandria. At the beginning of the third century he was chosen bishop of Flavia, Cappadocia. He was arrested during the reign of the emperor Septimus Severus (193-211) and spent three years in prison.

After his release from prison he went to Jerusalem to venerate the holy places, and was told to remain there through a divine revelation. In 212 he was chosen as coadministrator with the elderly Patriarch Narcissus, an unusually rare occurrence in the ancient Church. Following the death of Saint Narcissus (August 7), Saint Alexander succeeded him and governed the Church of Jerusalem for thirty-eight years, working for the enlightenment of Christians. He also established the first library of Christian theological works at Jerusalem.

Saint Alexander was arrested during the persecution of the Church under the emperor Decius (249-251). The holy martyr was sent to Cappadocia, where he suffered many tortures. He was condemned to be eaten by wild beasts, but they did not harm him. Saint Alexander was cast into prison, where he surrendered his soul to God.

The hieromartyr Alexander is also commemorated on May 16.

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## **Righteous Sarah Commemorated on December 12**

Sarah was the wife of the Old Testament Patriarch Abraham and the mother of Isaac. At first she was called Sarai, and her name was changed to Sarah (Genesis 17:15-16). The three men who visited Abraham at the oak of Mamre told her that she would conceive and have a son (Genesis 18:10). She did not believe them at first, since she and her husband were old, but they insisted that she would bear a son in the spring. Their prediction was fulfilled, and God did as He had promised (Genesis 21:1-3). Saint Andrew Rublev depicts the three men as angels in his most famous icon. Sarah is praised in the New Testament for her faith (Hebrews 11:11) and also for her obedience (I Peter 3:6).