



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

714 Westmoreland Avenue

PO Box 3

Slickville, PA 15684-0003

[724] 468-5581

www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org

Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

GREAT LENT

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Amari Clark, Robert McKivitz, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Please remember James John Logue, assigned to Iraq, and ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch

over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Our Annual Parish Meeting will be after the Obednitza NEXT Sunday, March 30. There will also be a Soup and Bread Luncheon. See Debbie, Liz, Evelyn, or Pani Gina for details.

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Fifth Grade and Matt’s Third Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! *Alex and Matt*

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, March 23	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS—ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA		
MARTYRS CODRATUS AND THOSE WITH HIM AT CORINTH, MARTYRS CODRATUS, SATURNINUS, & RUFINUS OF NICOMEDIA, VENERABLE ANASTASIA THE PATRICIAN OF ALEXANDRIA, NEW MARTYR MICHAEL OF THESSALONICA		
<i>Tone 2</i>		
Hebrews 1:10-2:3		
Mark 2:1-12		
<i>Litany in Blessed Memory of Mary Holupka—Mike Holupka’s Mother</i>		
<i>Parastas in Blessed Memory of Tillie Kuzman—Debbie & John Pauncic</i>		
Sunday, March 30	Obednitza	10:30 AM
VENERATION OF THE MOST HOLY AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS		
VENERABLE ALEXIS—MAN OF GOD, MARTYR MARINUS-VENERABLE ABBOT & WONDERWORKER OF KALYAZIN, MONK-MARTYR PAUL OF CYPRUS, SAINT PATRICK-ENLIGHTNER OF IRELAND		
*****ANNUAL MEETING AND SOUP & BREAD LUNCHEON*****		
<i>Tone 3</i>		
Hebrews 4:14-5:6		
Mark 8:34-9:1		
<i>Parastas in Blessed Memory of Charles Batch—Harry Batch & Family</i>		
Sunday, April 6	Divine Liturgy	10:30 AM
SAINT JOHN CLIMACUS—JOHN OF THE LADDER OF DIVINE ASCENT		
VENERABLE ZECHARIAH THE RECLUSE, SAINT ARTEMIUS-BISHOP OF SELEUCIA, VENERABLE JAMES THE CONFESSOR-BISHOP OF CATANIA, VENERABLE ZECHARIAH-THE ASCETIC OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA		
<i>Tone 4</i>		
Hebrews 6:13-20		

Mark 9:17-31

*Litany in Blessed Memory of John Metrick, Mary Smith, Andrew Hanczar, Anna Lawrence, Michael Cicio, Joseph Vangrin, and Frank Riznow—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Frank Yakim—Ollie Pendylshok*

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 23 MARCH 2008

**SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS—ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA
MARTYRS CODRATUS AND THOSE WITH HIM AT CORINTH,
MARTYRS CODRATUS, SATURNINUS, & RUFINUS OF
NICOMEDIA, VENERABLE ANASTASIA THE PATRICIAN OF
ALEXANDRIA, NEW MARTYR MICHAEL OF THESSALONICA**

TROPARION—TONE 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead!
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
All the powers of heaven cried out:
O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 2

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior,
Seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam,
Beheld this and rejoiced with Thee!
And the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 2

READER: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my
salvation.

PEOPLE: **The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my
salvation.**

READER: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to
death.

PEOPLE: **The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my
salvation.**

READER: The Lord is my strength and my song.

PEOPLE: **He has become my salvation.**

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 2

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

Before we enter the Lenten fast, we are reminded that there can be no true fast, no genuine repentance, no reconciliation with God, unless we are at the same time reconciled with one another. A fast without mutual love is the fast of demons. . . We do not travel the road of Lent as isolated individuals but as members of a family.

~His Grace Bishop Kallistos of Diokleia 20th Century~

Kali Sarakosti! A blessed Lenten Journey—Very Rev. Father George Livanos

The Lenten prayer of Saint Ephraim the Syrian (600's AD) to be prayed from the heart daily if possible during Great Lent:

The Great Lenten Prayer of St Ephraim:

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despondency, lust for power and idle talk.

(Great Prostration)

But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.

(Great Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see mine own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

(Great Prostration)

O God, cleanse Thou me a sinner, and have mercy on me.

(12 times, with a bow each time)

O Lord and Master of my life, take from me the spirit of sloth, despondency, lust for power and idle talk.

But grant unto me, Thy servant, a spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love.

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see mine own faults and not to judge my brothers and sisters. For blessed art Thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

(Great Prostration)

I read Fr. Jonathan Tobias' web site often and he just posted this. He writes beautifully. Thought I'd share his latest with you...Mira Filipovic

Soon, my office window filled with a bare dogwood, I will go out and prune the tree. The pussy willows need looked at for Palm Sunday a month away. The detritus from the dead November winds should be raked away. Soon.

It is hard to believe in Spring. A succession of winters will do that: bury the evidence, the actual experience of surprise, the burst of April scattering the remnants of January. Not only do the slate horizons of winter dull memories of Spring, but so also the Sirius heat of August. Somewhere lost in the familiarities of gray chill and bronze burn is the cool, fresh brightness, the juvenescence of lilac, honeysuckle, lilies and apple blossoms whispering, sighing in the first pleasant evening, when I can walk hand-in-hand in the soft darkness on our brick lane. Soon.

But now, coke trains lumber on the long viaduct to the Edgar Thomson No. 1 & No. 3 blast furnaces in Braddock, past the empty hulks of the interminable Westinghouse plant, the background of my foreground dogwood tree. We hear them day and night, and the Port Authority buses that growl day and night, coaching the workers in and out of the City. These are the sounds of death and heat, inhumane necessities, wrath and want. Whitman was off by a long shot in his versification of industry: the sounds do not cheer me, they do not betoken human activity. They, too, obscure the Spring. Which is to come. Soon.

There are white women who bemoan black men, and wars waged for increasingly arcane, industrial reasons. There are hierarchs who have forgotten meekness and have remembered lesser rubrics at the expense of the greater dogmas. There are webmasters who knit shawls at guillotines, despots who assign guardian angels and saints to nukes, revisionists who will be happy to refashion a dusty old patriarchal hasbeen church into their own egalitarian, professional, uptodate image, where every bishop will answer to an oversight committee. There are 1 in 4 female adolescents stricken with STDs, fired admirals, embarrassed governors, shuttered McMansions, unpopular embattled Orthodox, Creed-ignorant ecstaticians.

These are the sounds of death and heat. They, too, obscure the Spring. Which is to come. Soon.

Only a community that is apostolic in sacrament and mystical work can sustain the life of Christian dogma through history. In other words, the Gospel of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation – theology and economy proper – can only be articulated through a Body that actually believes this Gospel. Such a Body is led through history by bishops that see, with their hearts, the apostolic vision: they, and their clergy and faithful, can do this only through knowledge mediated by grace and works, in fear and trembling.

Time corrodes – as is characteristic of all Grace – all attempts outside the veil, or the “covering” of the sacred order, the authority of the Pillar of Truth. Bishops can be bishops, Church can be Church, only in the Biblical, Patristic sense – through asceticism, kenosis, radically conservative Gospel revolution, mystical charisma. If otherwise, as has been seen too often in the deathworks, then these men and institutions will tend, inexorably and carnally, toward the abysmal poles of mainline (and sidelined) American anti-nomianism; or neo-Borgia-Medici-

Frankish statism; or quasi-caesaro-papism that yearns for a third Rome. There is Rome enough, and that one is in Italy. There was once a New Rome: it did its ordained work of establishing Orthodoxy. It is gone. There was, and is, and will be, no other.

T

here is the state, of course, and I am not at all sure anymore that I know what, or where, it is. But it sure makes lots of money.

Culture has never been so loud and empty, so strident in its obfuscation, its mystification, its blinding and whining. It has a million ways to stand between the soul and the appearances, a million virtualities.

The Trinity, though, is beautiful. Christ is beautiful. Man finds his beauty (that is, meaning) in the redemption won by Christ. Church is this beauty, and redemption is Spring. Soon.

I have been despondent over death, and I have felt the winter as I have felt no other. But I remember the beauty of mercy this first week of the Fast, in the Canon. And I remember the Spring.

Very Rev. Father Jonathan Tobias

Get out of the car!

(This is supposedly a true account recorded in the Police Log of Sarasota, Florida.)

An elderly Florida lady did her shopping and, upon returning to her car, found four males in the act of leaving with her vehicle.

She dropped her shopping bags and drew her handgun, proceeding to scream at the top of her lungs, "I have a gun, and I know how to use it! Get out of the car!"

The four men didn't wait for a second threat. They got out and ran like mad.

The lady, somewhat shaken, then proceeded to load her shopping bags into the back of the car and got into the driver's seat. She was so shaken that she could not get her key into the ignition.

She tried and tried, and then she realised why. It was for the same reason she had wondered why there was a football, a Frisbee and two 12-packs of beer in the front seat.

A few minutes later, she found her own car parked four or five spaces farther down.

She loaded her bags into

the car and drove to the police station to report her mistake.

The sergeant to whom she told the story couldn't stop laughing.

He pointed to the other end of the counter, where four pale men were reporting a car jacking by a mad, elderly woman described as white, less than five feet tall, glasses, curly white hair, and carrying a large handgun.

No charges were filed.

Moral of the story? If you're going to have a senior moment . . . make it memorable.

Bartholomew invited by the pope to participate in the synod of bishops



Pope Benedict XVI greets Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew I during a private meeting at the Vatican March 6, 2008

In the "spirit of Ravenna", the ecumenical patriarch will take part in the meeting of the world's Catholic bishops, scheduled to take place in October on the theme "The word of God in the life and mission of the Church."

Vatican City (AsiaNews) - Benedict XVI has invited ecumenical patriarch Bartholomew to take part in the upcoming synod of bishops, scheduled for October, and to give an address to the assembly, together with the pope himself.

The news of the invitation, not yet released by Vatican sources, comes at the conclusion of Bartholomew's visit to Rome for the 90th anniversary of the Pontifical Oriental Institute, during which he met with the pope. The invitation to attend the synod came during lunch yesterday. In itself, the presence of representatives of other Christian Churches and confessions is a normal practice for synod assemblies, ever since Vatican Council II invited the "fraternal delegations". What makes this event significant is the personal invitation extended to Bartholomew, the solemnity reserved for this, and the atmosphere in which it took place.

In regard to the meeting between Benedict XVI and Bartholomew, there has in fact been talk of the "spirit of Ravenna", meaning the meeting of the "Mixed international commission for theological dialogue between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Church" held in Ravenna from October 8-14, 2007. The final document of the meeting - although it was released by a commission, and is therefore not binding - was described as "an important step forward" by Cardinal Walter Kasper, president of the pontifical council for Christian unity, although "the road to full unity is still a

very long one".

The document, Cardinal Kasper explains to Vatican Radio, "speaks of the tension between authority and conciliarity, or collegiality, at the local level, meaning that of the diocese, and at the regional and universal level. The important step is that for the first time the Orthodox Churches have told us yes, there exists this universal level of the Church, and there is also conciliarity, collegiality, and authority at the universal level; this means that there is also a Primacy: according to the practice of the ancient Church, the first bishop is the bishop of Rome, there is no doubt of this. But we did not speak of what the privileges of the bishop of Rome are, we only indicated the praxis for the sake of future discussions".

But the ecumenical patriarch will not only be present at the 12th general ordinary assembly of the synod of bishops that will be held at the Vatican from October 5-26, 2008, on the theme of "The word of God in life and mission of the Church". It seems, in fact, that Bartholomew could personally lead the delegation that the patriarchate sends to Rome every June 29th to take part in the celebration of the feast of Saint Peter and Paul.

[Fr Constantin Alecse, Biserica.org](#)

True Love

January 21, 2007 - Bulletin 12, Volume XLIV

Written by the Very Rev. Vladimir Berzonsky

"Many people have said much about love, but only in seeking it among Christ's disciples will you find it for only they have the true love, the teacher of love" (The Four Hundred Chapters on Love, No. 100, St. Maximos the Confessor)

Oh, what beautiful words! And what a glorious affirmation – if indeed it is true. Our priests when celebrating together kiss one another three times just before the Creed is sung, saying: "Christ is here in our midst." And of course we mean it. The Teacher of love is among us. We feel His presence in one another.

The celebrant turns at the Divine Liturgy to the believers with the invitation: Let us love one another. Do we all hear and obey that directive? Who of all Orthodox Christians would challenge the statement that we know who the true teacher of love is, and that He is present in our churches, our lives and in our hearts? Certainly we believe it. That's why we gather in His name. But the rest – the love part – will a visitor to our church go home to his family and say, "Look at the Orthodox, and how they love one another." Even as I write this, I imagine some might think that I am naïve, hypocritical in presenting a condition that I know to be false, or else I'm just a

hopeless dreamer.

But what is our faith about if it is not possible to make a reality of the gospel message of Jesus Christ? Are we making the gospel and, God forbid, our Lord Jesus Himself a dreamer? And on the other hand, if we agree that love among us, real and not nominal, pretentious tokenism is possible, then why is it not realized? And if it is real, then why is it not manifestly evident to one another and to any stranger who comes to share our fellowship?

What do we want from the visitor if we try to encourage her or him to become one of us? Another donor? Somebody to tally up for vanity's sake to show that our parishes are growing? Or can it be that we want to lift the newcomer into the love relationship that we share in Jesus Christ with one another? Dare we say, "Welcome to Christ's family of love"?

If that is the case, what would true love look like if our churches were to make the definition of St. Maximos real? Let's begin with ourselves. Little kindnesses to one another, smiles of greeting, signs of affection and pleasantries ought to be at least marks of our care for each other, but that's far from adequate. One doesn't need Orthodoxy for that. There are an abundance of congregations who are more practiced in social graces.

We do indeed pray for each other, including friends of the spiritual family and even for their departed loved ones. That concern should reach out to embrace the ill, the bereaved, those out of work or caught up in a period of life's challenging transitions. In a word, the parish ought to be as concerned for each other as any healthy extended family. Whether it's a myth or a fact, I'm told that Jewish people help one another beyond prayers and good wishes. If we are the new Israel, we ought to patronize our own businesses, establishments, professionals and merchants. We should help our own young people to get a start in whatever career they pursue if we have the opportunity to do so. We partake of the same chalices and worship in the same temples as one spiritual family. It follows that because we are communing in the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, He in us makes us blood brothers and sisters with Him, and therefore with one another. The implication of His words is self-evident. This is the love that the evangelist John is speaking of when he wrote: *"He who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should love his brother also."* (1 John 4:20).

Meditation: What if God couldn't...

What if God couldn't take the time to bless us today because we couldn't take the time to thank Him yesterday?

What if God decided to stop leading us tomorrow because we didn't follow Him today?

What if we never saw another flower bloom because we grumbled when God sent the rain?

What if God didn't walk with us today because we failed to recognize it as His day?

What if God took away His message because we failed to listen to the messenger?

What if God didn't send His only begotten Son because He wanted us to be prepared to pay the price for sin?

What if the door to the church was closed because we did not open the door of our heart?

What if God stopped loving and caring for us because we failed to love and care for others?

What if God would not hear us today because we would not listen to Him yesterday?

What if God answered our prayers the way we answer His call to service?

What if God met our needs the way we give Him our lives?

Meditate on these.....

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace."
Numbers 6:24-26*

The only survivor of a shipwreck was washed up on a small, uninhabited island. He prayed feverishly for God to rescue him. Every day he scanned the horizon for help, but none seemed forthcoming. Exhausted, he eventually managed to build a little hut out of driftwood to protect him from the elements, and to store his few possessions. One day, after scavenging for food, he arrived home to find his little hut in flames, with smoke rolling up to the sky. He felt the worst had happened, and everything was lost. He was stunned with disbelief, grief, and anger. He cried out, 'God! How could you do this to me?' Early the next day, he was awakened by the sound of a ship approaching the island! It had come to rescue him! 'How did you know I was here?' asked the weary man of his rescuers. 'We saw your smoke signal,' they replied.

The Moral of This Story:

It's easy to get discouraged when things are going bad, but we shouldn't lose heart, because God is at work in our lives, even in the midst of our pain and suffering. Remember that the next time your little hut seems to be burning to the ground. It just may be a smoke signal that summons the Grace of God.

P.S. You may want to consider passing this on, because you never know who feels as if their hut is on fire today!

via e-mail from Marie Popichak

Charles Shumski, 90, died peacefully after a very brief illness on March 11, 2008 in Port St. Lucie, FL. He and his wife of 66 years Olga Kitch Shumski moved to Port St. Lucie with his daughter Marilyn Suarez and her husband Kane Suarez in 2002. Previously, he was a lifelong resident of Slickville. Chuck, as he was known to his friends, was a veteran of the WWII and a member of the Slickville American Legion, Slickville Civics Organization and very active in the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Orthodox Church. In Port St. Lucie, he was a member of St. James Orthodox Church of America, where a memorial service will be held in the near future. He is survived by his wife, daughter, son-in-law, and beloved grandchildren Jon Simon Suarez of Gainesville, FL and Sheila M. Suarez of Orlando, FL and nieces and nephews in Pennsylvania and Michigan. Expressions of sympathy may be sent to Olga Shumski, 291 SE Wallace Terrace, Port St. Lucie, FL 34983. Memorial contributions may be made to the Eastern Orthodox Foundation, P.O. Box 432, Indiana, PA 15701-0432, www.eofoundation.org.

However, when the Day of Judgment comes, when the resurrection of the dead comes—and this book talks about the resurrection of the dead, over a thousand years before Christ. When the sinners see the righteous shining like the sun, they will be in dreadful fear, and in anguish they will groan and say, this is the man whom we once held in derision! We thought that His life was madness! We are the fools! We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts. What good has our boasted wealth profited us? We were deceived. We were deceived. These two chapters of the Wisdom of Solomon [refers to expanded content of homily] present us with a tremendous picture of the psychology of the ungodly—the mind of the worldly man—who will discover his deception on that day. The Apostle Peter also talks about all these things. These are exceedingly important—let's look at this. *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire!* (II Peter 3:11-12) So why are we wasting ourselves dealing only with earthly matters in a world that is about to be pulverized, to dissolve and collapse, a world that is going to be renovated? How should we spend our lives, knowing all this? Shouldn't we be characterized by holy conduct? And see what he says, ...yearning for and hastening... yearning and hastening with a joyous expectation, and racing towards that day of the coming of the Lord.

Fr. Athanasios Mitilinaios
The book of the Revelation Homilies
translated by Constantine Zalalas

However, when the Day of Judgment comes, when the resurrection of the dead comes—and this book talks about the resurrection of the dead, over a thousand years before Christ. When the sinners see the righteous shining like the sun, they will be in

dreadful fear, and in anguish they will groan and say, this is the man whom we once held in derision! We thought that His life was madness! We are the fools! We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we journeyed through trackless deserts. What good has our boasted wealth profited us? We were deceived. We were deceived. These two chapters of the Wisdom of Solomon [refers to expanded content of homily] present us with a tremendous picture of the psychology of the ungodly—the mind of the worldly man—who will discover his deception on that day. The Apostle Peter also talks about all these things. These are exceedingly important—let's look at this. *Since all these things are thus to be dissolved, what sort of persons ought you to be in lives of holiness and godliness, waiting for and hastening the coming of the day of God because of which the heavens will be kindled and dissolved, and the elements will melt with fire!* (II Peter 3:11-12) So why are we wasting ourselves dealing only with earthly matters in a world that is about to be pulverized, to dissolve and collapse, a world that is going to be renovated? How should we spend our lives, knowing all this? Shouldn't we be characterized by holy conduct? And see what he says, ...yearning for and hastening... yearning and hastening with a joyous expectation, and racing towards that day of the coming of the Lord.

Fr. Athanasios Mitilinaios

The book of the Revelation Homilies

translated by Constantine Zalalas

The Holy Prophet said, "Let the four fasts of the year be joy and gladness to Israel." Truly, it is a time for repentance. But repentance is a joyous experience, a lifting of burdens, an illumination of the heart, and an experience of Paradise.

If Great Lent is truly a period of repentance, then how could it be other than joy and gladness in the midst of extra temptations, a foretaste of Pascha, a sense of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, because true repentance brings all these into the heart of the believer.

In Christ, Vladika Lazar.

Once, there was a monk from the Monastery of St. Paul who had gone to the Church of St. Gerasimos on the island of Cephallonia. During the Divine Liturgy, he stood in the Altar area and was praying with his komboskini (prayer rope) the Prayer of the Heart – “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner” – while the others were chanting. They had also brought a possessed person into the church to be cured by St. Gerasimos. While the monk was saying the prayer in the Altar, the demon was being

seated outside and was shouting, "Stop working that string, will you, monk; it is burning me!"

The priest heard it too, and said to the monk, "Pray with your komboskini as much as you can, my brother, so that God's creature can be freed of the demon."

The demon then shouted in great anger, "You, rotten priest, you. What are you telling him to pull that string for? It is burning me!"

The monk then prayed with his komboskini with even greater effort and the possessed man was delivered from the demon.

from Elder Paisios of Mt. Athos, *Athonite Fathers and Athonite Matters*

final words of St. Neopite of Urbnisi before his martyrdom:

"Sweet is death to me, O unbelievers! Sweet it is to me. I desire to sunder the link between my mortal and immortal nature... With my own blood I will confirm the Holy Church, which is founded upon the Precious Blood of the Son and Word of God, whom I preach. May that which was foreordained for me by the Providence of God be fulfilled, for He has called me to His light from the depths of ungodliness!"

Hieromartyr Neopite of Urbnisi (in Georgia), 7th century commemorated 28 October

Abba Pambo said, "The monk should wear a garment of such a kind that he could throw it out of his cell and no-one would steal it from him for three days.

The same Abba, Palladios, told us of something that happened in Arsinoe, a city of the Thebaid. A man was arrested there for murder. After suffering many tortures, he was finally condemned to be beheaded. As he was being taken to where he had committed the murder - a point about six miles outside the city - there was a monk following behind, apparently with the intention of seeing how he would be decapitated. As he passed along the way to his execution, the condemned man saw the monk who was following and said to him, "Well now, abba, have you no cell, sir, nor any work to occupy your hands?" The monk answered, "Of course I have a cell, brother, and also something to occupy my hands." The man rejoined, "Then why do you not stay in your cell and weep for your sins?" The monk replied, "Ah, brother, I am very negligent of my soul's health - and that is precisely why I am coming to see how you die, that by this means I might come to have some compunction." The condemned man said to him, "Go your way, abba. Remain in your cell and give thanks to God who saved us. It was because He was made man and died for us that man dies no more the eternal death."

John Moschus, *Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow)* 71

A dying nuns request

The 98-year-old Mother Superior from Ireland was dying. The nuns gathered around her bed trying to make her last journey comfortable.

They gave her some warm milk to drink but she refused. Then one of the nuns took the glass back to the kitchen.

Remembering a bottle of Irish whiskey received as a gift the previous Christmas, she opened and poured a generous amount into the warm milk.

Back at Mother Superior's bed, she held the glass to her lips. Mother drank a little, then a little more and before they knew it, she had drunk the whole glass down to the last drop.

"Mother Superior", the nuns asked with earnest, "please give us some wisdom before you die."

She raised herself up in bed and with a pious look on her face said,

"Don't sell that cow."

Abba Theodore of Pherme said, "In these days many take their rest before God gives it to them."

Love which stems from created things is like a small lamp whose light is sustained by being fed with olive-oil. Again, it is like a river fed by rainfall; once the supply that feeds it fails, the surge of its flow abates. But love whose cause is God is like a spring welling up from the depths. Its flow never abates, for God alone is that spring of love whose supply never fails.

St. Isaac the Syrian (Isaac of Nineveh), 7th century