



## Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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# GREAT LENT!

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father John Harvey, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Cuthbert Jack, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Tom Hopko, Father George Livanos, Joshua Agosto and his family, Mike Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Esther Holupka, Wanda Mefford, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Betty O'Masta, Julie Eiler, Vince Ferro, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—21-year-old with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Woloschak, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Pete Niederberger, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy,

Diane McDaniel, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Theodore Demopoulos, Jillian Bowman, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], Mel & Charlotte Malik, David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Susan "Billie" Mason, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Donald Griffey, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [child with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, Pastor Ed Bowen, David Hiles, Karen Johnson, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Susan Bertram, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Fred DeNorscia, Sandi Anderson, Donald Uebing, Sabrina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Barbara McDougall, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Manny Lopez, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Judi Danser, Mira Filipovic, Lynn, Jacqueline, Irma Opacic, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Debby Novak, Jeff Jones, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Margaret Thurston [Evelyn's sister], Donna Cacioppo [Evelyn's niece], Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Stella Rossi, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Carol Mensing's Family, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Billy Simpson, and Daria Masur ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our March babies:** John Paouncic on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, Sonia Luciow on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Walter Anthony Burlack on the 7<sup>th</sup>, Mary Shirley on the 9<sup>th</sup>, Our Dear Mother Alexandra on the 11<sup>th</sup>, Judy Previc on the 12<sup>th</sup>, and Mike Holupka on the 25<sup>th</sup>. May God grant them Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'nohaya Lita! God Bless!

**Please remember in your prayers—our dear 'Little Father' Emilian,** who returned to Romania to undergo surgery for back pain. This particular procedure is not offered here in the United States. He asked for our prayers and expressed his thanks for the love and fellowship he has shared with the Holy Ghost Parish Family. He said he looks forward to returning to us pain-free in the springtime...may God watch over him and heal him...Fr. Bob

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Debbie Paouncic’s class. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP!

**REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!**

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

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

#### **SCHEDULE OF SERVICES**

**SUNDAY, MARCH 01 DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT 10:30 AM  
FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY; MARTYRS  
PAMPHILIUS-PRESBYTER, VALENS-DEACON, PAUL, SELEUCUS, PORPHYRIUS,  
JULIAN, THEODULUS, ELIAS, JEREMIAH, ISAIAH, SAMUEL, & DANIEL AT  
CAESAREA IN PALESTINE**

*Tone 5*

Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2

John 1:43-51

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Mary Smith, John Metrick, Andrew Hanczar, Anna Lawrence, Michael Cicio, Chuck Shumski, Terry Reinhart, Joseph Vangrin, & Frank Riznow—Fr. Bob***

**SUNDAY, MARCH 08 DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT 10:30 AM  
SECOND SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS; SYNAXIS OF THE  
VENERABLE FATHERS OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; HIEROMARTYR POLYCARP-  
BISHOP OF SMYRNA; SAINTS JOHN, ANTONIUS, MOSES, ZEBINAS,  
POLYCHRONIUS, MOSES, & DAMIAN-ASCETICS OF THE SYRIAN DESERT; SAINT  
ALEXANDER-FOUNDER OF THE ORDER OF THE UNSLEEPING ONES**

*Tone 6*

Hebrews 7:26-8:2; Galatians 5:22-6:2

John 10:9-16; Luke 6:17-23

***Litany in Blessed Memory of Robert Rohal & Gary Atutes—40 days—Fr. Bob***

**SUNDAY, MARCH 15 DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT BASIL THE GREAT 10:30 AM  
THIRD SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; ADORATION OF THE MOST HOLY CROSS;  
HIEROMARTYR THEODOTUS-BISHOP OF CYRENIA; VIRGIN-MARTYR EUTHALIA;  
MARTYR TROADIUS OF NEO-CAESAREA; SAINT AGATHO OF EGYPT-MONK; 440  
MARTYRS SLAIN BY THE LOMBARDS**

*Tone 7*

Hebrews 4:14-5:6

Mark 8:34-9:1

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 01 MARCH 2015**

**FIRST SUNDAY OF GREAT LENT; TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY;  
MARTYRS PAMPHILIUS-PRESBYTER, VALENS-DEACON, PAUL,  
SELEUCUS, PORPHYRIUS, JULIAN, THEODULUS, ELIAS, JEREMIAH,  
ISAIAH, SAMUEL, & DANIEL AT CAESAREA IN PALESTINE**

### **TROPARION—TONE 2**

We venerate Thy most pure image, O Good One,  
And ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ our God.  
Of Thy good will Thou wast pleased to ascend the cross in the flesh  
And deliver Thy creatures from bondage to the enemy.  
Therefore, with thankfulness we cry aloud to Thee:  
Thou hast filled all with joy, O our Savior,  
For thou didst come to save the world

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

### **KONTAKION—TONE 8**

No one could describe the Word of the Father  
But when He took flesh from you, O Theotokos,  
He accepted to be described  
And restored the fallen image to its former state  
By uniting it to divine beauty.  
We confess and proclaim our salvation in word and images

### **PROKEIMENON—TONE 4**

**READER:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and  
glorified is Thy name forever!

**PEOPLE:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

**READER:** For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

**PEOPLE:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers and praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

**READER:** Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers

**PEOPLE:** And praised and glorified is Thy name forever!

### **ALLELUIA VERSES**

Moses and Aaron are among His priests; Samuel also was among those who called on His name.

They cried to the Lord, and He answered them.

### **How to Treat the Heterodox**

A Small Compilation in Support of Charity and Compassion

#### **The Blessed Father Seraphim (Rose) of Platina**

A few years before he died, Fr. Seraphim received a letter from an African-American woman who, as a catechumen learning about Orthodoxy, was struggling to understand the uncharitable attitude that some Orthodox Christians showed to those outside the Church, an attitude which reminded her of how her own people had been treated. "I am deeply troubled," this woman wrote, "as to how Orthodoxy views what the world would call Western Christians, i.e., Protestants and Roman Catholics. I have read many articles by many Orthodox writers, and a few use words like 'Papists,' etc., which I find deeply disturbing and quite offensive. I find them offensive because as a person of a race which has been subjected to much name-calling I despise and do not wish to adopt the habit of name-calling myself. Even 'heretic' disturbs me....

"Where do I stand with my friends and relatives? They do not know about Orthodoxy or they do not understand it. Yet they believe in and worship Christ.... Am I to treat my friends and relatives as if they have no God, no Christ?... Or can I call them Christians, but just ones who do not know the true Church?

"When I ask this question, I cannot help but think of St. Innocent of Alaska as he visited the Franciscan monasteries in California. He remained thoroughly Orthodox yet he treated the priests he met there with kindness and charity and not name-calling. This, I hope, is what Orthodoxy says about how one should treat other Christians."

This woman's quandary was actually fairly common to people coming into the Orthodox Faith. Now nearing the end of his short life and having thrown off his youthful bitterness, Fr. Seraphim answered as follows:

*I was happy to receive your letter—happy not because you are confused about the question that troubles you, but because your attitude reveals that in the truth of Orthodoxy to which you are drawn you wish to find room also for a loving, compassionate attitude to those outside the Orthodox Faith.*

*I firmly believe that this is indeed what Orthodoxy teaches....*

*I will set forth briefly what I believe to be the Orthodox attitude towards non-Orthodox Christians.*

*1. Orthodoxy is the Church founded by Christ for the salvation of mankind, and therefore we should guard with our life the purity of its teaching and our own faithfulness to it. In the Orthodox Church alone is grace given through the sacraments (most other churches don't even claim to have sacraments in any serious sense). The Orthodox Church alone is the Body of Christ, and if salvation is difficult enough within the Orthodox Church, how much more difficult must it be outside the Church!*

*2. However, it is not for us to define the state of those who are outside the Orthodox Church. If God wishes to grant salvation to some who are Christians in the best way they know, but without ever knowing the Orthodox Church—that is up to Him, not us. But when He does this, it is outside the normal way that He established for salvation—which is in the Church, as a part of the Body of Christ. I myself can accept the experience of Protestants being 'born-again' in Christ; I have met people who have changed their lives entirely through meeting Christ, and I cannot deny their experience just because they are not Orthodox. I call these people "subjective" or "beginning" Christians. But until they are united to the Orthodox Church they cannot have the fullness of Christianity, they cannot be objectively Christian as belonging to the Body of Christ and receiving the grace of the sacraments. I think this is why there are so many sects among them—they begin the Christian life with a genuine conversion to Christ, but they cannot continue the Christian life in the right way until they are united to the Orthodox Church, and they therefore substitute their own opinions and subjective experiences for the Church's teaching and sacraments.*

*About those Christians who are outside the Orthodox Church, therefore, I would say: they do not yet have the full truth—perhaps it just hasn't been revealed to them yet, or perhaps it is our fault for not living and teaching the Orthodox Faith in a way they can understand. With such people we cannot be one in the Faith, but there is no reason why we should regard them as totally estranged or as equal to pagans (although we should not be hostile to pagans either—they also haven't yet seen the truth!). It is true that many of the non-Orthodox hymns contain a teaching or at least an emphasis that is wrong—especially the idea that when one is "saved" he does not need to do anything more because Christ has done it all. This idea prevents people from seeing the truth of Orthodoxy which emphasizes the idea of struggling for one's salvation even after Christ has given it to us, as St. Paul says: Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*

*[Phil. 2:12]. But almost all of the religious Christmas carols are all right, and they are sung by Orthodox Christians in America (some of them in even the strictest monasteries!).*

*The word "heretic" (as we say in our [article on Fr. Dimitry Dudko](#)) is indeed used too frequently nowadays. It has a definite meaning and function, to distinguish new teachings from the Orthodox teaching; but few of the non-Orthodox Christians today are consciously "heretics," and it really does no good to call them that.*

*In the end, I think, Fr. Dimitry Dudko's attitude is the correct one: We should view the non-Orthodox as people to whom Orthodoxy has not yet been revealed, as people who are potentially Orthodox (if only we ourselves would give them a better example!).*

*There is no reason why we cannot call them Christians and be on good terms with them, recognize that we have at least our faith in Christ in common, and live in peace especially with our own families. St. Innocent's attitude to the Roman Catholics in California is a good example for us. A harsh, polemical attitude is called for only when the non-Orthodox are trying to take away our flocks or change our teaching....*

*As for prejudices—these belong to people, not the Church. Orthodoxy does not require you to accept any prejudices or opinions about other races, nations, etc.*

From "[Pastoral Guidance](#)", Chapter 84 of *Father Seraphim Rose: His Life and Works*.

+ + +

## **St. Silouan the Athonite**

Father Silouan's attitude towards those who differed from him was characterised by a sincere desire to see what was good in them, and not to offend them in anything they held sacred. He always remained himself, he was utterly Convinced that 'salvation lies in Christ-like humility', and by virtue of this humility he strove with his whole soul to interpret every man at his best. He found his way to the heart of everyone to his capacity for loving Christ.

I remember a conversation he had with a certain Archimandrite who was engaged in missionary work. This Archimandrite thought highly of the Staretz and many a time went to see him during his visits to the Holy Mountain. The Staretz asked him what sort of sermons he preached to people. The Archimandrite, who was still young and inexperienced gesticulated with his hands and swayed his whole body, and replied excitedly, 'I tell them, Your faith is all wrong, perverted. There is nothing right, and if you don't repent, there will be no salvation for you.'

The Staretz heard him out, then asked, 'Tell me, Father Archimandrite, do they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, that He is the true God?'

'Yes, that they do believe.'

'And do they revere the Mother of God?'

'Yes, but they are not taught properly about her.'

'And what of the Saints?'

'Yes, they honour them but since they have fallen away from the Church, what saints can they have?'

'Do they celebrate the Divine Office in their churches? Do they read the Gospels?'

'Yes, they do have churches and services but if you were to compare their services with ours—how cold and lifeless theirs are!'

'Father Archimandrite, people feel in their souls when they are doing the proper thing, believing in Jesus Christ, revering the Mother of God and the Saints, whom they call upon in prayer, so if you condemn their faith they will not listen to you ... But if you were to confirm that they were doing well to believe in God and honour the Mother of God and the Saints; that they are right to go to church, and say their prayers at home, read the Divine word, and so on; and then gently point out their mistakes and show them what they ought to amend, then they would listen to you, and the Lord would rejoice over them. And this way by God's mercy we shall all find salvation ... God is love, and therefore the preaching of His word must always proceed from love. Then both preacher and listener will profit. But if you do nothing but condemn, the soul of the people will not heed you, and no good will come of it.'

*From Saint Silouan the Athonite, by Archimandrite Sophrony (Sakharov) (Essex, England: Stavropegic Monastery of St. John the Baptist, 1991), pp. 63-65.*

TALK OF "REPENTANCE" makes modern-day Christians nervous. We are embarrassed by the stereotype of old-fashioned preachers hammering on sin and making people feel guilty... But the Greek word for repentance, metanoia, means a transformation of the mind, whereby greater clarity and insight are obtained. It doesn't refer to emotion. Saint Paul says, "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind."...Repentance is insight, not emotion.

The Hebrew word shub means to turn from the wrong path onto the right one. I once heard an overly enthusiastic retreat leader say, "Repentance means turning yourself completely around. It means turnaround 360 degrees." I could only agree that, in my my case, too often that's exactly what it means!



Father Alexander Men, an outspoken Russian priest, wrote: "The good news of Christ was preceded by a call to repentance...and the very first word of Jesus' teaching was 'Repent.' In the Greek text of the Gospels it is rendered by the resonant word metanoite – in other words, rethink your life. This is the beginning of healing. Repentance is not a sterile 'grubbing in one's soul,' not some masochistic self-humiliation, but a re-evaluation leading to action."

Our first step, then is to decide where we want to go. If we are resolved to move daily further into union with Christ, we must be ready to face our sins, the things that hold us back, and to let God begin to heal them. Repentance is the way back to the Father.

*From "The Illumined Heart" by Frederica Mathewes-Green*



*Frederica Mathewes-Green is the wife of an Antiochian Orthodox priest, and an author, NPR and Huffington Post contributor, lecturer, mother, and grandmother. She has written extensively on Orthodox Christianity, including the practice of the Jesus Prayer.*

Catechetical Homily for Holy and Great Lent (2015) Prot. No. 133

CATECHETICAL HOMILY At the Opening of Holy and Great Lent

+ BARTHOLOMEW

By God's grace Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch  
To the Plenitude of the Church

May the Grace and Peace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ be with you  
Together with our Prayer, Blessing and Forgiveness

\* \* \*

*"The arena of virtues has opened; let those who wish to compete enter."*

(Triodion Sticheron, Cheesefare Sunday)

Beloved brothers and sisters, dear children in the Lord,

Our Lord Jesus Christ grafts us into His body, inviting us to become saints, "just as He is holy." (1 Peter 1.16) Our Creator wants us to be in communion with Him in order to taste His grace, which is to participate in His sanctity. Communion with God is a life of repentance and holiness; whereas estrangement from God, or sin, is identified by the Church Fathers with "evil of the heart." Sin is not natural, but derives from evil choice"

(Theodoret of Cyrus, Dialogue 1, Immutabilis, PG 83.40D) or from the evil spirit, since "no one sins, who promises faith," according to Ignatius of Antioch, the "God-bearer."

Holiness is a quality that belongs to the Lord as "the one, who offers and is offered, who receives and is distributed." The celebrant of the Sacrament of the Divine Eucharist, by divine grace offers to the faithful "the holy things for the holy people," the body and blood of Christ; and he immediately receives from the Orthodox faithful the response to this offering: "One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father, "who is eaten but never consumed; who sanctifies those who participate."

In our struggle to achieve "likeness" to God, for which we were created, namely holiness, the one, holy, catholic and apostolic Orthodox Church, which aspires exclusively and solely to our salvation, "rightfully proclaimed" one season as a period of special prayer and supplication in order to calm the passions of our soul and body.

This season commences tomorrow as a salvific preparation for the "great and most sacred Pascha of Christ." We are referring to Holy and Great Lent, which we must live "by offering prayer and seeking forgiveness," in order truly to taste Pascha "with all the saints," by becoming "saints," by confessing before God and people that we are "clay vessels" that are shattered on a daily basis by the evil one, always "falling and rising." That is to say, we must admit our human imperfection and failure, as well as our insignificance before God, by repenting and repeating day-in and day-out, at all times and in all places – even as we are made "holy" through baptism – that "one is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father."

Therefore, we call upon all Orthodox Christian faithful – clergy, monks and nuns, as well as all our brothers, sisters and children in the Lord – to transform our life at all times, but particularly during this period of Holy and Great Lent, into a loving effort of preparation before our neighbor so that we might share more vividly from now in the Lord's Kingdom, the "new Pascha," whose light never sets. We invite everyone to a life of holiness and spiritual struggle so that the possibility of transcending sin may be granted to the whole world and to us as a "good gift" and "perfect gift." For

“everyone that is born from God does not sin . . . and cannot sin, for that person is born of God.” (1 John 3.9-10)

Let us enter, then, with all our soul, without sorrowful faces but instead rejoicing and delighting, into this spiritual arena of virtues; and let us arm ourselves “with the brightness of love, the splendor of prayer, the purity of chastity, and the strength of valor” in order to journey with the Lord, even as we pray that “He may not overlook us when we are in danger of alienating ourselves from Him.” (Hymn from the Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross) Rather, may He render us worthy “to reach His holy resurrection on the third day, which shines incorruption through the world.” (Poem by Theodore, Service on Monday of the 1st Week of Lent)

Beloved brothers and sisters, children in the Lord,

Holy and Great Lent is a period of preparation and repentance as the voice of our conscience, which is internal and inexpressible, our personal judgment. When it finds us doing wrong, it protests vehemently inasmuch as “nothing in the world is more violent than our conscience,” according to the experienced herald of repentance, St. Andrew of Crete. Thus, each of us must be at peace with our conscience in order that “we may offer a mystical sacrifice in the fire of our conscience,” surrendering our passions and offering them as an oblation of love toward our fellow human beings, just as the Lord gave Himself up “for the life and salvation of the world.” Only then will forgiveness rise from the tomb for us as well; and only then shall we live in mutual respect and love, far from the horrific crimes that we witness plaguing the entire world today. In this struggle, we have as our allies and intercessors all the saints and especially our all-holy Mother of God, who through her prayers “washes our conscience.”

Wherefore, we urge and beseech you, as the spiritual father of all our Orthodox faithful throughout the world, to run with eagerness the race that opens up before us tomorrow in the arena of virtues, “neither thinking nor practicing sinful things.” Let us rather walk with God’s grace in order to cleanse our conscience “with the good option” of repentance in the conviction that heaven and earth, as well as all “things visible and invisible” will ultimately emanate the light of our Lord’s resurrection.

If we stand and behave righteously “before the doors of the Lord’s temple,” then we shall be vested with the bright robe of Christ’s imitation

and be rendered worthy of the “new drink” that comes from the source of incorruption. Then we shall taste the joy of the radiant tomb of the Lord and be swept inside the Church “to the very depths of the altar,” where “the awesome mysteries are celebrated.” May it be so.

Holy and Great Lent 2015

Your fervent suppliant before God

+ Bartholomew of Constantinople

Please remember in your prayers Billy Simpson, who has some health issues and has asked for prayers. May God grant him a complete and speedy recovery!