



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church
714 Westmoreland Avenue
PO Box 3
Slickville, PA 15684-0003
www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org
Very Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor
23 Station Street
Carnegie, PA 15106-3014
[412] 279-5640 home
[412] 956-6626 cell
rpopichak@alumni.cmu.edu

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Metropolitan Savas, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smoly nec, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Father George Livanos, Igumen Patrick, Pani Mary Ann Chubenko, Father Jim Orr, Father Rick Seilier, Panimatka Laryssa Charest, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, 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, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop 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, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciw, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaelle Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, 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], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino,

Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Howard Simpson, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam & Gordon Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Cindy M., Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Andy Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Bill Boretsky, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul

Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr, Steven—Harry Batch's cousin, Rose Mary Pavlovich—Mary Anne Kuznik's Cousin, Stella McKeag, Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, Dollie Irvin, Joe Mrvos, Alexandra, Katherine Kulik, Micky Delans [COVID-19], and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO Subdeacon Gary and Natalie Gebet for their kind and generous donation of \$1500 from the estate of Gary's parents Joseph and Frances Gebet, in their memory. May God grant Joseph and Frances the Kingdom of Heaven and Life Everlasting! Vechnaya Pam'yat! Memory Eternal! God Bless Subdeacon Gary and Natalie for remembering our parish in their time of loss.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ... There is NOTHING to keep us from praying...for each other, for our family and friends, and most of all for the first responders—EMTs, nurses, doctors, firefighters, police officers, and members of our military who keep us safe. Be well, and be SAFE!!! God Bless!

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!

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, JULY 19 OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS!!! 10:30 AM
6TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; VENERABLE SISOES THE GREAT OF EGYHPT; MARTYRS MARINUS & MARTHA & CHILDREN AUDIFAX & ABBACUM & THOSE WITH THEM AT ROME-CYRINUS, VALENTINE THE PRESBYTER, & ASERIUS;

**VENERABLE SISOES OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF
HOLY PRINCESS JULIANA VILSHANSKA**

Tone 5

Romans 12:6-14

Matthew 9:1-8

SUNDAY, JULY 26 OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS!!! 10:30 AM

**7th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY FATHERS OF THE FIRST 6 ECUMENICAL
COUNCILS; SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY ARCHANGEL GABRIES; SAINT STEPHEN OF
SAINT SABBAS MONASTERY-BISHOP OF CENOMANIS; MARTYR SERAPION-
UNDER SEVERUS; MARTYR MARCAIN OF ICONIUM**

Tone 6

Romans 15:1-7; Hebrews 13:7-16

Matthew 9:27-35; John 17:1-13

SUNDAY, AUGUST 02 OBEDNITZA UPSTAIRS!!! 10:30 AM

**8th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; HOLY GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS/ELIJAH;
UNCOVERING RELICS OF SAINT ATHANASIUS-ABBOT OF BREST-LYTOVSK**

Tone 7

1 Corinthians 10-28; James 5:14-22

Matthew 14:11-22; Luke 4:22-30

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Father Peter Natishan, Samuel Mrvos, David Yenni,
M. Denise Lawrence, Rudy Obradovich, Mike Horvath, John Sheliga, Anna Harte,
Millie Kitch, Agnes Rossi, Mary Milanovich, Michael Cherepko, & Mary Vigani--
Fr. Bob*

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 19 JULY 2020

**6th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; VENERABLE SISOES THE GREAT OF EGYHPT;
MARTYRS MARINUS & MARTHA & CHILDREN AUDIFAX & ABBACUM & THOSE
WITH THEM AT ROME-CYRINUS, VALENTINE THE PRESBYTER, & ASERIUS;
VENERABLE SISOES OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA; UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF
HOLY PRINCESS JULIANA VILSHANSKA**

TROPARION—TONE 5

Let the faithful praise and worship the Word,
Coeternal with the Father and the Spirit;
Born for our salvation from the Virgin;
For He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh,
To endure death, and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 5

Thou didst descend into Hell, O my Savior, Shattering its gates as almighty;
Resurrecting the dead as Creator, And destroying the sting of death.

Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man,
And we all cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 5

READER: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.

PEOPLE: **Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.**

READER: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

PEOPLE: **Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.**

READER: Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us...

PEOPLE: **From this generation forever.**

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 5

I will sing of Thy mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Thy truth from generation to generation.

Thou hast said: Mercy will be established forever, and my truth will be prepared in the heavens.

“Love not only those close to you and your benefactors, but even your enemies, so that you might thereby pacify them, correct them, and make them good people.” +St. Theophan the Recluse

A List of 12 Things a Normal Orthodox Christian Does

Posted on [July 29, 2018](#) | by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick



The normal Orthodox Christian—who is living according to the norms of the Orthodox faith—will be doing the following (this is not an exhaustive list, nor is this in order of priority):

1. Participating in church services as often as possible. Attendance at every Sunday morning liturgy is a minimal baseline for worship life—in

most cases, it is not enough. And participation doesn't just mean attendance, but engagement, whether silently and attentively, singing along, making the Sign of the Cross, etc.

2. Prayer at home every day. Ideally, at least morning and evening prayer, as well as prayer over meals. It is especially important for husbands and wives to pray together regularly and for parents to pray with their children. This will include reading Scripture, too, especially Scripture that is prayer, such as the Psalms.

3. Receiving the sacraments. This isn't just communion and confession, but also holy unction (when sick), marriage (in the Church, not outside!), baptism and chrismation (for you and your children), and even considering whether you or one of the men of your family should think about ordination.

4. Avoiding immorality. What we do with our bodies, minds and words has an effect on our salvation. Use them for good, not for evil. Seek to serve rather than to be served.

5. Fasting according to church tradition. Your father-confessor will help to apply the fasting traditions of the Church for you and your family. We fast on most Wednesdays and Fridays, as well as during the four major fasting seasons (Great Lent, the Apostles Fast, the Dormition Fast and the Nativity Fast).

6. Confession. The sacrament of confession is critical to our repentance. We should go at least once during each of the four fasting seasons but also whenever there is a need, especially a sin that disrupts your peace.

7. Getting spiritual advice. This often happens in confession, but your father-confessor is there for you at other times, too. He's a resource you should utilize frequently.

8. Tithing. Giving 10% of your income back to God (it is His gift to you!) is a Biblical standard that Orthodox Christians should embrace. If you're not ready for 10% yet, choose another percentage and be disciplined about it, working toward 10%. If you're able to give more than 10%, do so. Don't "give until it hurts"—give until it feels good! Giving our money to God in worship (not because we need to meet a budget) is one part of what it means to give Him everything about ourselves so that it can be healed. (Is tithing Orthodox? Yes! It's mentioned in the Fathers many times, but here's the kicker—the Fathers usually say that Christians should exceed the tithe expected by the Old Covenant.)

9. Almsgiving. This is directly aiding someone in need. It might be monetary, but it also might be with your labor, your encouragement or even just your attitude.

10. Education. We seek a deeper understanding of our faith not only so that we can know what our piety means but so that we give even our minds to God for His healing and transformation. Our whole intellect should be

engaged in Christ—whether through spiritual reading, classes, or some other form of education. Knowing and understanding the Scripture should be at the top of our educational efforts.

11. Sharing the faith. If you're grateful for the salvation God has given you, you will want to share it with others.

12. Going on pilgrimage. It's a journey with a holy purpose. Common destinations include monasteries and important shrines.

"What made them saints? Suffering? Not suffering alone makes saints, but striving towards God, love of God, and the labor of overcoming obstacles to holiness, which is the fruit of man's labor and the gift of the Holy Spirit." +St. John Maximovitch

Wonders of Saint John of Shanghai

Posted on [July 7, 2020](#) | by [Editor](#)



Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco occupies a special place in my life. Despite the fact that I am not called his name, he is my heavenly patron and intercessor. And he prayed for me long before I knew about him. The saints themselves come to us and reveal themselves; thus, we find saints close to us, whom we always ask for help.

I call St. John the way he was called during his life—Vladyka. Often I ask him for blessings for the coming day, I just talk to him and always feel his guardianship. As he bequeathed to all of us in a dream of his spiritual daughter Maria Shakhmatova immediately after his death: "Tell everyone that although I have died, I am still alive", he is really alive and very quick to help absolutely everyone. I have many occasions in my life when St. John helped me, he is always here, but talking about "classical" wonders, when you ask for help and immediately receive it, I would like to tell about three happenings.



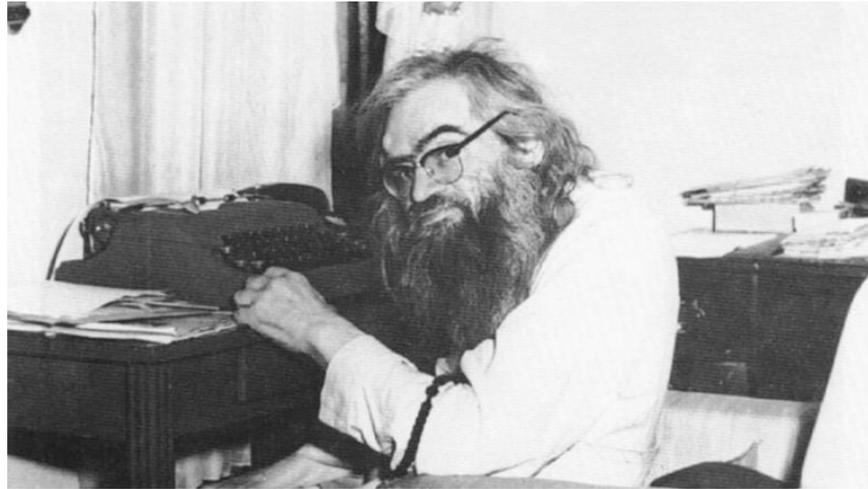
The first happening occurred in the winter about two years ago. I had a seasonal cold, nothing serious, but I had to take antibiotics. Usually they give me a stomachache. And in the evening after taking the last pill from the course, I felt very bad. There was a feeling that there was a stone in my stomach, and general dizziness, weakness and nausea were such strong that I could not move. I just froze half-sitting on the sofa and could only moan. The day before, on the same day, my husband and I agreed to read the akathist to St. John of Shanghai for someone who had problems. I don't remember who we prayed for, but I remember that the people's situation was serious. Since it was already late, my husband offered to read the akathist right now, despite the fact that I could not even get up. He stood in front of our icons, and I lay aside. I asked him to give me the icon of St. John and put it on my stomach with a mental moan: "Vladyka, help me!" While my husband read Heavenly King, and I read the first kontakion, my stomach let out a rumbling and just became still. Suddenly. I was reading the first ikos expecting this to be a temporary relief, and soon my stomach would break with renewed pain, but no. I was simply numb to the end of the akathist and did not move, waiting for my husband to finish reading to tell him that St. John healed me just in an instant—after the first kontakion. As if nothing ever happened: no pain, no weakness, no sign of antibiotics harm. I burst into tears and was very happy that Vladyka helped me.



I have repeatedly visited Vladyka in San Francisco, and this is a wonder in itself, because there were absolutely no opportunities and plans

to ever be there. I always feel immense joy when I come to him and go to his relics: the feeling that you are going to your dear father, whom you love very much and have not seen for a long time. And this feeling is mutual, you know that Vladyka is waiting for you and is very glad to see you.

The next such visit in December 2017, I was supposed to fly towards my homeland from San Francisco, when St. John showed me the power of prayer against rational thinking. It was an early flight and I had to arrive at the airport by 6 in the morning. The father, whose place I stayed in, offered to take me to the airport an hour and a half before departure, because usually registration and inspection are quick and there is no need to sit at the airport for hours. But I preferred to sit and wait than to be late for the flight. The father agreed and brought me to the San Francisco airport a little more than 2 hours before departure, blessed me and went to the cathedral, where he serves and tells the pilgrims about St. John of Shanghai. I checked my luggage and went to the search line. My heart sank when I saw this line, which was extremely huge. But I reassured myself that everything is under control, we will be in time, because all these people must get on their flights. However, after an hour and a half, when the landing on my flight was already ending, I got very nervous. An hour and a half passed, and I passed only half of the line! The same time was needed to overpass another half, but I did not have time. I scrolled through my mind all possible and impossible plans for how to catch a flight, and in the end I texted to the priest who brought me here, asking what should I do in such situation. In response, the text message came to me: "Read the akathist to St. John." That was all... I felt so ashamed that for an hour and a half I only got nervous and thought out the ways out, but never even thought to pray! It should be noted that Vladyka John, during his lifetime, being bishop and archbishop, traveled a lot, including by plane, therefore in America he is considered the main patron of travelers. I immediately opened the akathist on my phone and began to read. I already know it by heart, and it takes about a minute to read each kontakion and ikos. As soon as I began to read an akathist, the line began to move continuously! I could not help but smile. On the eighth ikos, I had to put the phone in my bag, it was my turn. I almost danced. Wow, an hour and a half without a prayer I stayed almost at the same place and in 8 minutes with a prayer I "flew" the line! I was still late for the flight, but safely moved to the next 2 hours later. My suitcase got on the first flight, as a warning to me that I need to pray, and not to fuss.



I read a lot of books about Vladyka John, absorbing knowledge of him and his life like a sponge. I love stories written by his spiritual children, who knew him and loved him very much. Memoirs of Zinaida Yulem are especially close to me; she knew him as a bishop of Western Europe, when Vladyka served in France. Her life is continuous wonders by Vladyka's prayers. One of her stories helped me to realize an event from my life as a miracle of Vladyka, and not to pass by it. Let me quote:

"When our dear blessed John was leaving us to begin the administration of the diocese in San Francisco, it seemed to me that although Father Mitrofan was with us, I would lose everything and remain an orphan. To this day I can't remember this moment without tears. When after the Liturgy on the day of his departure, Blessed John came out of the altar with a staff in his hand to say a few words of comfort, I thought: "Lord, what will I do when I can't see my Elder, hear his voice and feel his presence? Where is he going ... this is so far away!" And when he began his sermon, I began to cry with bitter tears that flowed from my eyes, like two rivers. Blessed John looked in my direction and said: "People who have one goal and who strive for "one thing needful" have unity of souls and never feel the distance dividing them. And it does not matter how great this distance is: it can never be an obstacle to the spiritual closeness that unites these people in the unity of souls." After these words, my tears instantly dried out, and I thought: "How amazing! As if someone had closed my tap!" And immediately my heart felt so warm, so pleasant, so joyful (as on Easter) that I even forgot that our Blessed is leaving us. And when we went to see him off to the airport, instead of sadness, I felt joy. I did not feel at all that he was leaving us forever. What did make my sadness suddenly turn into joy? His prayers."

My story happened in one of the visits to Vladyka in San Francisco. Whenever I am there, I plan to visit the New Cathedral, where the relics of St. John are, several times: just to come in the afternoon and be alone with the saint, to go to the Divine Liturgy and partake of Communion

(fortunately, they serve it here every day) and come again before my leaving to say goodbye to Vladyka. On my very first visit, I saw a silver pendant with the icon of Vladyka on a chain in the bookstore of the cathedral and I definitely wanted to buy it somehow. But all the time I put it off until the next time. It was quite expensive, and I always thought that the next time I would save up money and buy it for sure. This time, I again did not dare to buy a pendant. The day before departure, the Romanian mother, with whom I became friends, brought me to the cathedral to say goodbye to Vladyka. I came up to Vladyka, hugged his reliquary and felt that my heart was breaking from coming separation. It was so hard for me to fly away and say goodbye, I didn't know whether I ever come back here, or this was my last time. So I stood alone at the reliquary and cried, mentally speaking with the saint. And then I decided that I would buy a pendant with the icon of St. John now, I had money and did not want to put it off anymore. I wiped away my tears, said "Goodbye" to Vladyka, and went up to the bookstore. There was no one in the store, only a priest in a cassock stood behind the counter. "Hello, sister Anastasia," he greeted me. Wow, this is the first time I see this priest, and he addresses me by name! How does he know me? It turned out that it was Hieromonk Yuvenaliy, with whom we texted, but could not meet due to changed circumstances. Anyway, of course, it's interesting that he recognized me, never meeting me... We talked very well, and I finally told why I had come. I asked him to pack me a pendant with a chain and began to count the money. He muttered something inaudibly and began to pack my long-awaited purchase. Then he put the parcel on the counter and pushed the money aside, saying: "Take this, this is a gift." "Oh no, I want to buy it for myself" "Take the money," he repeated. "You probably did not understand, I buy this pendant for my money, let it be a donation for the cathedral." "Agh, you are so stubborn, I tell you, take the money." I just wanted to object again, as he said: "Take the money, it will be your obedience! Better take a pendant, go to the cathedral, and touch the reliquary with it, so that Vladyka blesses you. We all do it with all pendant, but as for you, go and so it yourself again." I did not resist anymore, took the money, said goodbye, and being extremely happy went to fulfill my obedience! I flew into the cathedral and go immediately to Vladyka, pulled out a pendant with a chain, put them on the reliquary, hugged it and began to thank him. Just 10 minutes passed between two goodbyes, but my mood was just different: my heart was light and exulted, I was very joyful and knew that Vladyka would bring me to San Francisco again. I said goodbye again and left the cathedral being the most joyful person.



Later I also bought 4 pendants in different trips for friends and relatives, but no one else gave them to me for free. Only then I realized that Vladyka comforted me in this way by giving me a present—his pendant—so that I could understand that he was everywhere with me, never leaving me. You don't have to be in San Francisco for him to be close and help you—he is everywhere.

I have a small ministry: I take a lot of oil bottles from the reliquary of St. John of Shanghai in San Francisco and small icons of the saint and give them to people who need them. I want to thank St. John for his help in my life in such a way and console people who know him, as well as introduce him to those who hear his holy name for the first time. Saint John, pray to God for us!

Source: <https://obitel-minsk.ru/chitat/den-za-dnyom/2020/chudesasvyatitelya-ioanna-shanxajskogo>

A prayer for our Neighborhoods
by Archbishop Demetrios of America

I pray to you, God, for the families of my neighborhood. Visit them. Throw their troubles out of them and bring hope. Make the daily cares that devour the heart disappear. Present solutions to life's problems. Settle the disturbed relationships among members of different families whom I know or do not know. O Lord, remind the people of our area that You exist, that You are a strong and loving Protector. Keep away, Lord, anything that causes the disappearance of peace from souls, and the escape of sleep from our eyes. Stay a little while more tonight in our neighborhood. Spread peace along with the night. Let the harshness of the day and its struggles not spread over the night. Amen.

On the Feast of the Foremost Apostles Peter and Paul

By Elder Philotheos Zervakos

I am in awe and wonder, how the Holy Apostles that we celebrate today, achieved such great and extraordinary miracles! How can one not be in wonder and in awe?

Consider, my brethren, what was the Apostle Peter before? A fisherman. He knew nothing more than fishing, catching fish with a net on Lake Gennesaret. And suddenly you see him preaching to the whole universe. His words were so graceful and sweet that in one of his speeches three thousand and sometimes five thousand believed, whom he then baptized.

Without neither fear nor trembling, he stood before kings and tyrants, teaching and rebuking and remaining fearless in the face of threats and dangers. Eager and tireless, although he was an elder, he began preaching from Jerusalem, running to Judea, Antioch, Pontus and Galatia, Bithynia and Cappadocia, Europe and Asia. In Rome he was martyred for Christ by being crucified by Nero with his head down.

What was the Apostle Paul? A tent-maker, that is, he made tents. He was previously a persecutor of Christianity. When he went to Damascus with authority against the Christians, a sudden light shone on him that blinded his physical eyes, and he heard a voice say to him: "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?" With great fear and awestruck, Paul said, "Who are you, Lord?" And he said, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting." Then the Lord commanded him to go to Damascus to find the Apostle Ananias. And after he was baptized, the eyes of his soul and body were opened, and the former persecutor presented himself as a great defender of Christianity.

Like a winged eagle he traveled the whole universe preaching the word of God and baptizing those who believed. In this Apostle one sees wonderful and extraordinary things that transcend all human power; that is why Divine Chrysostom was right to exclaim in one of his sermons: "No other Paul will be born." His struggles and efforts for the gospel are beyond reason; the dangers, tribulations, sorrows, and other afflictions are indescribable.

Listen, my beloved ones, in a few words, you have heard the achievements of the foremost Apostles. How did they perform such signs and wonders? By what means? With faith. All the wondrous and extraordinary things that the Apostles and all the Saints did, they did with faith.

This is the faith of the Saints, but what is the faith of our Christians today?

What do I see, what do I hear from the illiterates, the peasants, the shepherds? Blasphemies, obscenities, thefts. What do I see in the rich, in the merchants? Greed, seizures, avarice. What do I see in the rulers?

Egoism, arrogance, flattery, deceit, covetousness. In all, both the people and the clergy, one sees negligence, lethargy, corruption, paralysis. And then we wait for progress, we wait for wars, sorrows, and misfortunes to stop. I said it, I say it and I will keep saying it; when we repent, when we become pious, then our troubles will cease.

Let us not be deceived, beloved. The decision against sinners was made by God: "If you keep My commandments, you will eat the goods of the earth, if not, the knife will eat you." "The Lord guards those who love Him, and He will destroy all sinners."

So that we too may not be lost along with sinners, let us turn to our God and heavenly Father with repentance and tears, and let us beg Him to have mercy on us.

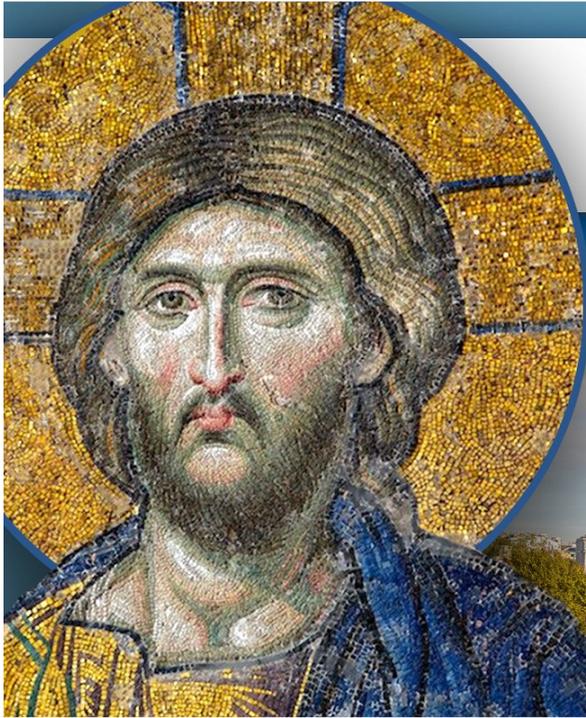
All Good, Lover of Mankind, All Gracious, All Merciful, and All Compassionate Lord, You Who for us men and for our salvation became a man like us yet without sin, to free us from sin and lead us to God the Father, through the intercessions of the Most-Blessed Lady the Theotokos Mary, of all the Saints and especially of Your foremost Apostles Peter and Paul, have mercy, enlighten, and save us. Amen.

From a manuscript of the Elder Philotheos Zervakos written between 1920-1930. Translated by John Sanidopoulos.

ΑΡ
Ρ
Ε
Τ
Ε
Ρ

ΑΡ
Ρ
Α
Υ
Λ





ASSEMBLY OF CANONICAL
ORTHODOX BISHOPS
OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

STATEMENT ON THE TRAGIC CONVERSION OF

HAGIA SOPHIA

FROM A MUSEUM TO A MOSQUE



Statement on the Tragic Conversion of Hagia Sophia from Museum to Mosque

+++++

We, the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America, protest the decision of the civil courts in Turkey, as well as the clear direction of their government, to re-convert Hagia Sophia into a mosque. As citizens of the United States of America, we implore our government to intervene for the reversal of this decision. Furthermore, we urge the Turkish government to return to the status quo whereby Hagia Sophia remains a museum, respecting both its origins and history.

By contrast, this unilateral action denies the universal vocation of this holy and sacred place. Hagia Sophia belongs to the whole of humanity as a World Heritage Site. Built in 537 AD during the reign of Emperor Justinian, it has been, for more than a millennium, a place of rich cultural and spiritual inspiration for all.

We are particularly concerned about the negative effects such a change will have on religious pluralism in Turkey, as well as on the relations among nations and between faith-based organizations. We call on the international community to invite the Turkish authorities to revise their decision, affording all people the opportunity to continue enjoying the full and rich history and beauty of this outstanding landmark. This unique Christian monument should remain open to all as a sign of co-existence and peace among all peoples of good will.