



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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ADVENT/PILIPKIVA/NATIVITY FAST

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Father Bob, Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yurij, Archbishop Jovan, Metropolitan Savas, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynech, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe & Protinica Linda Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Igumen Patrick, Father Jim Orr, Father Rick Seilier, Panimatka Laryssa Charest, Fr. Vasyl Sendeha, Father George & Dobrodijka Oksana Bazylevsky, Father Angelo Artemas, Father John Haluszczak, Father Simon & Dr. Christina Nellis, Father Joshua [Anna], Father Justin (Todd) Mokhiber, Pani Cathy Danczak, Protopresbyter Gerald Ozlanski, Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, 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, Yvonne Christy, Father Deacon Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, 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, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, 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, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, 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, 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 Zeliszcuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], 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 & Terri Berceli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, 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, 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 & Jan Jennings, Tim Sams, Mike Ruzzi, Stephen Popichak—Fr. Bob's brother, Mary Kay Ludovicy, Pastor Sara Irwin, George Dilendorf, Sharon Torick, Carol Behun, Erv Frye, William Lusherand, Colin Kirton—Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, Clifford, Joe Veto, Paul Riley, Tonee & Sydnee Turner, Annette Paluh, Theresa Paluh, Cathy Lotinsky, Monk Andrew, Jeff & Buschra Kerr,

Margaret Sekelsky, Robert Sekelsky, Robert Rodriguez, Rita & Joe Mrvos, Alexandra & Bowen, Katherine Kulik, Pastor Terry Polen, Eleanor Kitt, Stacie & Gary, Maria Warholak, Stacie & Gary, Anna Sekelik, Christy, Mariruth, Rich & Judy Previc, Ben Williams, Father Joe Uzar, Tim—surgery, John Wakin, Olivia—young girl with a brain tumor, Rick & Sharon Morgan, John Stasko, John, Kris & Kait, Kristi Wilson, Wendy LaGamba, Melissa Gross [hip replacement], Amy Forbeck, David Salazar, Kitty Mary, Dr. Paul Riley, David Hess, Serena, Wyatt, Makenzie, Jennifer, Chaplain Rachelle Zazzu, Candace Irvin, Carol Muschick, Grace Love [knee replacement], Stacie Riley, Joseph Paul Cervo, Jr. [infant], Elizabeth [5-year-old], Lillian Skowvron, Sue & Greg Heinen, Paul Simpson [Father Bob's cousin], Sharon Curtis Rivas, Kathy Milcic, Lisa Bolan, David G. [cancer], Donna [dementia] & Darla, Linda Snow, the McKenna family, David Gazella, Brian & Michele Cannone, Robert Rodrigues & family, Father Deacon James & Diakonissa Kari Rossetti, Michael Welsh, Nick Solominsky, Samantha & Lisa Houser, Sarah Stepanovich Clark, Julia Baloga, Brett Crosby, Randy Lapuh, Henry & Shirley Tkacik, Diane & Arthur Chaklis, Denny Mader, Zoe Oswalt—Fr. Bob's cousin [cancer], Barbetta [cancer] & Scott, Kristin [cancer], Erm Hartmann, Barbara Bookser [cancer], Bob Mazzuca [cancer], Marko, Taylor, Terri Crosby-Vega [knee replacement], Christine Mohamed, Sue Demko, Tammy Marsico, Terry & David Hartnett, Jamie Ball, Kay Williams, Hannah Stewart, Jim Wyko—Alex's friend, Dan Losego, Lisa Bruce, Yvette, Barry Bender, Scott McDougall, Andrew Zelleznick, Jill Bailey, Byron & Cecilia Scott, Laura, Christopher, & Baby Jane Dickson, Vespina, Michelle Russo, Julie Tripodi, Alby Oxenreiter, Debbie—HTUCC [knee], Jackie May, Barbara Morvay, David Salsar, N&O, Randy & Adrienne Kuny, Vince Berardinelli, Mason Martin [Karns City HS QB] & family, Martin Mrvos, Jeff McCoy, Lauren & Sloane Valentina Persico, Alexis & baby Colton Rosati, Jessica Shirley, Steve Milcic, Wilbert Wagner, and Jill Morocco. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Theoria, the transformation of the soul, divine blessedness, and theosis come to a person through his Geronda, not by chance. Gerondissa Makrina (Vassopoulou), Words of the Heart p.227

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] 956-6626.

SERVICES IN SLICKVILLE

SUNDAY, December 10 **OBEDNTIZA—UPSTAIRS** **10:30 AM**
**27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; GREAT-MARTYR JAMES THE PERSIAN;
VENERABLE PALLADIUS OF THESSALONICA; 17 MONK-MARTYRS IN
INDIA; VENERABLE ROMANUS THE WONDERWORKER OF CILICIA**
Tone 2
Ephesians 6:10-17
Luke 13:10-17

SUNDAY, December 17 **OBEDNTIZA—UPSTAIRS** **10:30 AM**
**28TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; GREAT-MARTYR BARBARA & MARTYR
JULIANA OF HELIAPOLIS IN SYRIA; VENERABLE JOHN DAMASCENE;
VENERABLE JOHN-BISHOP OF POLYBOTUM**
Tone 3
Colossians 1:12-18; Galatians 3:23-29
Luke 17:12-19; Mark 5:24-34

SUNDAY, December 24 **OBEDNTIZA—UPSTAIRS** **10:30 AM**
**29TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS;
VENERABLE DANIEL THE STYLITE OF CONSTANTINOPLE; MARTYR MIRAX
OF EGYPT; MARTYR ACEPSIUS & AEITHALAS AT ARBELA IN ASSYRIA;
VENERABLE LUKE THE NEW STYLITE OF CHALCEDON; VENERABLE NICON
THE DRY OF PERCHEVSKY LAVRA**
Tone 4
Colossians 3:4-11
Luke 14:16-24

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 10 DECEMBER 2023

**27TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; GREAT-MARTYR JAMES THE
PERSIAN; VENERABLE PALLADIUS OF THESSALONICA; 17
MONK-MARTYRS IN INDIA; VENERABLE ROMANUS THE
WONDERWORKER OF CILICIA**

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!



Contemplating One's Own Death

The Importance of Preparing for the Inevitable

A dear friend of mine made the observation that the greatest hazard to one's life is conception, because it is a death sentence. This is because the very moment we are born we begin to die. And although our culture teaches us to fear death, it inevitably comes anyway.

My best friend in college died about four years ago. Although he was Orthodox his family had him cremated, so there was no final kiss, no burial, no closure. Following the funeral in the parish church his priest and I joined his family and friends at an art gallery, where his work was often featured. While mingling with his wife, son, and their friends, I happened upon a small box sitting on a pillar meant for a sculpture. Looking closely I saw decoupage photos of my friend's life. Among them was a photo of the two of us taken back in the 60's, during our college days. Looking around to make sure no one was looking, I lifted the box in order to take a closer look at the photo. Instantly I knew it was my friend's ashes, given the weight of the box. Laughing to myself, I knew he'd have been amused at the site of me discovering I was holding his remains in this small box.

As Americans, we fear death and consequently do everything in our power to avoid looking at it. We often choose cremation as a convenient way of denying the reality of death because we can avoid looking at the body of our friend or relative. Yet we Orthodox know that a burial service with an open coffin and graveside service are of benefit to friends and family because the whole process helps with closure.

As we lower the casket into the ground, we allow each person to drop a handful of earth into the grave, personally joining ourselves in the grieving process. Denying the reality of death by hiding it from our consciousness only promotes a longer period of grief.

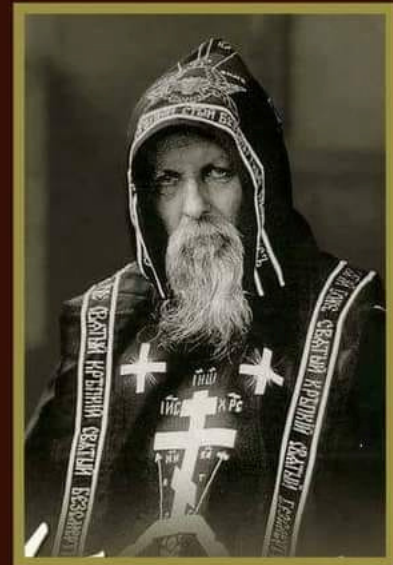
I recently had my casket constructed, and have chosen the site of my own burial on the grounds of the monastery. Additionally, I have placed the casket in a corner of our monastery's community room, thus allowing myself (and all my fellow monks) the chance to contemplate our own inevitable death every time we walk in.

When we face our own mortality we are better prepared for that moment when we will be standing before God and accounting for our life. I'm not in a hurry, mind you. I'm praying God will give me many years more for repentance. However, it is good that I think about my own death, for avoidance will not prolong my life, but it can make me put off repentance.

Love in Christ,
Abbot Tryphon

***At least once in our life we must
light a candle for those
whom we insulted,
whom we deceived,
whom we stole something from,
whom we owed,
and we did not pay our debt.***

Counsels of Saint Seraphim of Viritsa



Monastery of St. Pious the Unrepentant

Father George Callos:

Thanks to Jolynn Ruggerio for sharing this...

Lutheran Pastor, Richard Wurmbbrand, wrote an account of the things he witnessed as a prisoner in Communist Romania. His extraordinary and moving account of what happened in the prison one Christmas Eve between an Orthodox Priest and his torturer is well worth a read:

"When I was in jail I fell very, very ill. I had tuberculosis of the whole surface of both lungs, and four vertebrae were attacked by tuberculosis. I also had intestinal tuberculosis, diabetes, heart failure, jaundice, and other sicknesses I can't even remember. I was near to death.

At my right hand was a priest by the name of Iscu. He was abbot of a monastery. This man, perhaps in his forties, had been so tortured he was near to death. But his face was serene. He spoke about his hope of heaven, about his love of Christ, about his faith. He radiated joy.

On my left side was the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest almost to death. He had been arrested by his own comrades. Don't believe the newspapers when they say that the Communists only hate Christians or Jews—it's not true. They simply hate. They hate everybody. They hate Jews, they hate Christians, they hate anti-Semites, they hate anti-Christians, they hate everybody. One Communist hates the other Communist. They quarrel among themselves, and when they quarrel one Communist with the other, they put the other one in jail and torture him just like a Christian, and they beat him.

And so it happened that the Communist torturer who had tortured this priest nearly to death had been tortured nearly to death by his comrades. And he was dying near me. His soul was in agony.

During the night he would awaken me, saying, "Pastor, please pray for me. I can't die, I have committed such terrible crimes."

Then I saw a miracle. I saw the agonized priest calling two other prisoners. And leaning on their shoulders, slowly, slowly he walked past my bed, sat on the bedside of this murderer, and caressed his head—I will never forget this gesture. I watched a murdered man caressing his murderer! That is love—he found a caress for him.

The priest said to the man, "You are young; you did not know what you were doing. I love you with all my heart." But he did not just say the words. You can say "love," and it's just a word of four letters. But he really loved. "I love you with all my heart."

Then he went on, "If I who am a sinner can love you so much, imagine Christ, who is Love Incarnate, how much He loves you! And all the Christians whom you have tortured, know that they forgive you, they love you, and Christ loves you. He wishes you to be saved much more than you wish to be saved. You wonder if your sins can be forgiven. He wishes to forgive your sins more than you wish your sins to be forgiven. He desires for you to be with Him in heaven much more than you wish to be in heaven with Him. He is Love. You only need to turn to Him and repent."

In this prison cell in which there was no possibility of privacy, I overheard the confession of the murderer to the murdered. Life is more thrilling than a novel—no novelist has ever written such a thing. The

murdered—near to death—received the confession of the murderer. The murdered gave absolution to his murderer.

They prayed together, embraced each other, and the priest went back to his bed. Both men died that same night. It was a Christmas Eve. But it was not a Christmas Eve in which we simply remembered that two thousand years ago Jesus was born in Bethlehem. It was a Christmas Eve during which Jesus was born in the heart of a Communist murderer.

These are things which I have seen with my own eyes."



Sister Vassa [Larin]:

WHEN OUR "ORTHODOXY" NEEDS SOME STRAIGHTENING OUT

(Sorry today's post is long. I'm sharing a part of the book I'm writing, entitled: Rediscovering "Orthodoxy," because here I write about today's Gospel-reading about the bent-over woman healed by Christ in the synagogue.)

Rediscovering the Term "Orthodox"

Two things need to be said, that we might better understand the term "orthodox": 1. It signifies "*up*right opinion," "*up*right glorification or worship," and "*up*right expectation"; 2. As a name by which a group of Christians is called, it refers to an *assigned* virtue rather than a *given* one. That is to say, the name "Orthodox," like the name of a saint that we receive in Baptism, calls us to strive for the virtues manifested by (the saint

with) that name, but does not automatically give us those virtues. Let us reflect more on both these aspects of "orthodox," below.

Upright-ness

The first part of the word "orthodox," that is, *orthos*, is related to the word used as a Byzantine liturgical invitation, "Orthoí!" (pronounced or-thee, rhyming with "a tree"), which means, Stand upright! or Stand up straight, as one does when standing at attention. It is a position that expresses both attentiveness and a readiness to serve, as when waiters in a fancy restaurant stand at attention with napkins folded over their arms, or when soldiers stand at attention when in the presence of a superior.

However, unlike the abovementioned examples of waiters and soldiers, Ortho-dox Christians are called to be attentive to, and ready to serve, not first-and-foremost any human superiors, but their primary authority, God. Thus, the upright-ness of Orthodox Christians signifies their freedom from servitude to God-less authorities and to false gods. It is the freedom of the Spirit, Who frees the faithful from "the bondage of self"; from a bondage to self-centered thinking and behavior, and to sin and falsehood, along with their crippling effects of fear, resentment, despondency, indecisiveness, and spiritual blindness.

Orthodox Christians are not freed from the crippling effects of sin only once, in Holy Baptism. God heals us, making us upright or "straightened out" again and again, in small and big ways, both individually and as a church-community, whenever we (re)turn to Him in repentance. Every now and then, our "Orthodoxy" needs some straightening out, because we walk through time not perfectly, but get rather bent over by the kicks in the gut of our historical circumstances.

Note in this context the example from Luke 13:10-14a, of a woman being "straightened out" by Christ, after she had been "bent over" for eighteen years:

"Now He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bent over and could in no way raise herself up. But when Jesus saw her, He called her to Him and said to her, 'Woman, you are loosed from your infirmity.' And He laid His hands on her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God. But the ruler of the synagogue answered with indignation, because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath..."

It is significant that Christ heals this woman, returns her to upright life, specifically on the *eighteenth* year of her affliction. The number 18 signifies "life," because this number is written in Hebrew with the Hebrew letters *Chet* and *Yod*, -- with the same letters as those that form the Hebrew word "chai," meaning *life*. This Hebrew word for life is often expressed in the plural, *Chayim* (חַיִּים), as in the well-known toast,

"L'chayim!" that means "To life!" The two consecutive letters Yod (י) in that plural noun are said to picture two "hands held together" (the Hebrew word yad [יָד] means "hand"), signifying the union of God with us. The word thus reveals that true life or "life abundantly" comes from "God with us" and our response to His presence. The healing of the bent-over woman beautifully demonstrates how it comes from the touch of His hands, after "He called her to Him" and she responded, probably hobbling over to Him with great difficulty in her condition.

Another important aspect of the healing of the bent-over woman is the very different response to the presence of Christ of the ruler of the synagogue, "because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath." According to this ruler of the synagogue, it was not the appropriate *time* for healing. We see here that he, too, is crippled or bent over, not physically as was the woman, but in his inability to see what "the signs of the times" he was living in were saying. He was reading these signs in old and crooked ways, according to which a Saturday, a Sabbath, was no time for God's work. With his head thus stuck in the past, he is unable to see the new and main "Sign" of his times, Who was the Lord of the Sabbath in the flesh, right there in that synagogue, straightening out what had become crooked with time.

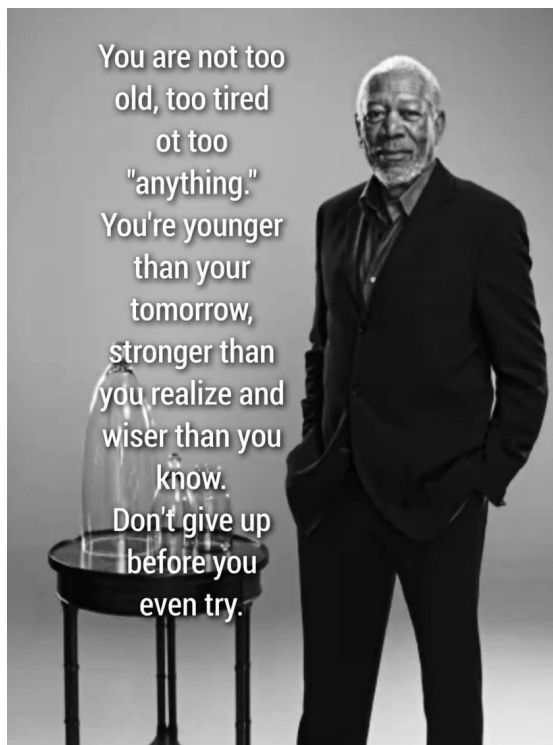
If you will forgive me some more allegorical exegesis, I think it might be a helpful way to relate the story of the healing of the bent over woman also to the afflictions of the Orthodox Church in our time. We might see the healing of the *woman* as a healing of the *church*, even while one of the "gate keepers" thereof is so OCD about maintaining its canonical rules (of the past), he has become indifferent to the actual needs of the human beings within the gates. Today we have entire churches in need of "straightening out," most obviously (but not only) in Russia and in Ukraine, along with certain demographics in need of a way forward in our church, most obviously women. But those of us who are the "gatekeepers" have our heads stuck in the past, especially in the canonical rules of the past. It obscures our vision not only of the human beings in need of healing, in need of being able to stand up straight and profess the faith and serve in the church as God is calling them to do, but obscuring also our vision of the Lord of the Sabbath in our midst. Whoever reads, let him understand.

Sin itself drives us towards God, once we repent and have become aware of its burden, foul stink, and lunacy. But if we refuse to repent, sin does not drive us towards God. In itself it holds us fast with bonds that we cannot break, making the desires which drive us to our own destruction all the more vehement and fierce. **St. John of Karpathos**, Philokalia, Vol. 1 p.311

How do we maintain connection with the spiritual world, with the heavenly Church? By calling upon them in prayer; by keeping the festivals instituted in their honour; and by the Church services. **Righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt**, My Life in Christ p.423

For through certain small and worthless things, our inordinate desires bind us again to the world without our realizing it. ...let us learn to cut off our desires...nothing helps men so much as to cut off self-will, for thereby a man prepares the way for nearly all the virtues. **Dorotheos of Gaza**

The journey of life is likened to swimming a vast sea. This sea is sometimes quiet and sometimes has a tailwind blowing, but most often it is tempestuous. Seeing the oncoming storm, the tempest itself, we must not fall into despondency and despair. We must stand up to the waves, resist the contrary wind. Otherwise, the ship of our soul may become devastated, even submerged. **St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov), Bishop of the Caucasus and the Black Sea**, Harbor for Our Hope: On Acquiring Peace Amidst Suffering p.22



Self-love must be eradicated. Every sin comes from the love of self. **Righteous John, Wonderworker of Kronstadt**, My Life in Christ p.170