

THE SPIRITUAL WATCH

Η Πνευματική Εγρήγορση



“Stand fast on spiritual watch, because you do not know when the Lord will call you to Himself”
«Παραμείνετε ακλόνητοι εν πνευματική εγρήγορση, γιατί δεν γνωρίζετε πότε ο Κύριος θα σας καλέσει εμπρός Του»

+St. John Maximovitch / +Άγιος Ιωάννης Μαξίμοβιτς

Divine Trophy of Freedom



“Surely we should honor and use this divine Trophy of the freedom of the whole human race. Its appearance alone puts the serpent, the originator of evil, to flight, triumphs over him and disgraces him, proclaiming him defeated and crushed. It glorifies and magnifies Christ, and displays His victory to the world.”

—St. Gregory Palamas (Homily XI, Precious and Life-Giving Cross)

In 1925, on the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the All-Honourable and Life-giving Cross of our Saviour, 14 September according to the Orthodox Church calendar, the all-night vigil was served at the church of St. John the Theologian in suburban Athens. By 9 o'clock that evening, more than 2,000 of the true-Orthodox faithful had gathered in and around the church for the service, since very few true-Orthodox churches had been accidentally left open by the civil authorities. Such a large gathering of people could not, however, go unnoticed by the authorities. Around eleven P.M. the authorities dispatched a battalion of police to the church "to prevent any disorders which might arise from such a large gathering." The gathering was too large for the police to take any direct action or to arrest the priest at that time and so they joined the crowd of worshippers in the already over-flowing courtyard of the church. Then, regardless of the true motives for their

presence, against their own will, but according to the Will which exceeds all human power, they became participants in the miraculous experience of the crowd of believers.

At 11:30 P.M., there began to appear in the heavens above the church, in the direction of *Cont'd on p.4*

St. Xenia Camp 2018: Another Great Success!

Glory be to God for another amazing St. Xenia's Camp this year— a spiritually rejuvenating week, which campers and staff alike looked forward to all year. This year's camp was blessed with 98 campers—an all-time high since it was first started, in 1997, by St. Xenia Camp foundress, the newly-reposed handmaiden of God, our beloved Presbytera Katina Patitsas. (Please see p. 6 for Presbytera Katina's obituary.) Presbytera Katina originally founded the Camp in Pennsylvania, before it moved to its present location in Maine.

In spite of the unprecedented turnout in the number of campers this year, the staff and counselors at St. Xenia's worked hard and met the challenge, accomplishing everything necessary to make this year's camp a great success. A big thank you goes out to all of the tireless volunteers who gave so generously of their time and talents. The week, as always, was full of fun, laughter, and creative activities through which our Orthodox youth and community as a whole enjoyed blessed unity and formed stronger bonds.

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About *The Spiritual Watch*

The Spiritual Watch is published with the blessing of his Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America.

The Spiritual Watch is mailed to the homes of faithful by request only. Please see request information on p. 5

“Be Careful! Watch out for your soul! Turn your thoughts away from what will soon pass and turn them towards what is eternal. Thus you will find the happiness that your soul seeks”
«Πρόσεχε! Φρούρησε την ψυχή σου! Στρέψε τις σκέψεις σου μακριά από αυτά που σύντομα θα περάσουν και στρέψε τις προς τα αιώνια. Έτσι θα βρεις την ευτυχία που λαχταρά η ψυχή σου»

Θείο Τρόπαιο Ελευθερίας

«Δεν θα τιμήσωμε λοιπόν εμείς και δεν θα χρησιμοποιήσουμε το θείο τούτο τρόπαιο της κοινής ελευθερίας του γένους, το οποίο και μόνο με τη θέα του τον μεν αρχέκακο όφι φυγαδεύει και διαπομπεύει και καταισχύνει, διακηρύσσοντας την ήττα και την συντριβή του, δοξάζει δε και μεγαλύνει τον Χριστό, επιδεικνύοντας στον κόσμο τη νίκη του;»

-Άγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς

(Ομιλία εις τον Τιμίο και Ζωοποιό Σταυρό)

[Έχουν περάσει πάνω από] 90 χρόνια από το θαυμαστό γεγονός της τρίτης εμφανίσεως του Τιμίου και Ζωοποιού Σταυρού εις το όρος Υμηττός.

Ένα γεγονός, που αποτέλεσε την Θεόθεν Βεβαίωση του ιερού και δικαίου αγώνος των Γνησίων Ορθοδόξων Χριστιανών.

Είναι γνωστό σε όλους, ότι στην χώρα μας από το έτος 1924, δημιουργήθηκε η λεγόμενη ημερολογιακή μεταρρύθμιση, η προδοσία δηλαδή των Ιερών Κανόνων και η αλλοίωση του Ορθοδόξου φρονήματος.

Οι ορθόδοξοι, οι οποίοι αντέδρασαν, αντιμετώπισαν απηνείς διωγμούς.

Εκατοντάδες οι συλλήψεις, οι ξυλοδαρμοί, το κλείσιμο των εκκλησιών. Οι λιτανείες διαλύονταν βιαίως σαν να ήταν παράνομες συγκεντρώσεις. Έσπαγαν ακόμη και τους Επιταφίους. Κι όλα αυτά, επειδή κάποιοι αρνήθηκαν να συμπορευθούν με τους προδότες.

Ένα έτος μετά την προδοσία, την ημέρα της Παγκοσμίου Υψώσεως του Τιμίου και Ζωοποιού Σταυρού, στις 14 Σεπτεμβρίου του 1925, έρχεται το θαυμαστό γεγονός της Γ' εμφανίσεως του Τιμίου Σταυρού να δώσει την ενίσχυση στους βασανισμένους γνησίους Ορθοδόξους.

Να δυναμώσει το φρόνημα της Πίστewος.

Να αποκτήσουν δύναμη.

Να συνεχίσουν με τον αυτόν ζήλο και θυσία τον αγώνα για την διατήρηση της ανόθευτης πνευματικής κληρονομιάς.

Τον αγώνα υπέρ της Ορθοδοξίας.

Είναι γεγονός, ότι τα χρόνια εκείνα οι γνήσιοι χριστιανοί δεν είχαν την δυνατότητα όπως εμείς σήμερα, της ελεύθερης έκφρασης.

Να διοργανώνουν περιλαμπρες τελετές προς δόξαν Θεού. Να κυκλοφορούν στους δρόμους ελεύθεροι.

Οι χριστιανοί του χθες ευρίσκοντο σε διωγμό. Ήσυχαν τρόπους για να μπορέσουν να επιτελέσουν τα θρησκευτικά τους καθήκοντα, να εκκλησιαστούν στα εξωκκλήσια, στα βουνά και στις ερημίες.

Πάντα με τον φόβο και με απόλυτη μυστικότητα.



Οι ιερείς ζούσαν κρυμμένοι. Κυκλοφορούσαν νύκτα για να αποφύγουν την σύλληψη.

Δυστυχώς, για να κάνουμε μια παρένθεση, σήμερα, που οι εκκλησίες είναι ανοικτές, οι χριστιανοί δυστυχώς όχι μόνον απέχουν από τα θρησκευτικά τους καθήκοντα, αλλά αγανακτούν ακόμη και από το χτύπημα της καμπάνας. Όπως αναφέρουν οι στατιστικές στην χώρα μας, οι χριστιανοί συρρικνώνο-

νται σε ποσοστά επικίνδυνα και αυξάνονται οι αρέσεις και η αθεΐα.

Τον Σεπτέμβριο του 1925 όμως δεν υπήρχαν αυτές οι ανέσεις και ευκολίες που έχουμε σήμερα. Τότε οι άνθρωποι όλων των ηλικιών ανέβαιναν στους πρόποδες του Υμηττού, στο εξωκκλήσι του Αγίου Ιωάννου, να προσενηθούν και να τιμήσουν την εορτή του Τιμίου Σταυρού.

Άνθρωποι απλοί, απ' όλο το λεκανοπέδιο της Αττικής, κατέφευγαν στην ερημιά να ευχαριστήσουν τον Θεό, να μεταλάβουν των Αχράντων Μυστηρίων και να λάβουν τον Αγιασμό.

Μπροστάρης και λειτουργός ο ακάματος αγωνιστής Ιερέας π. Ιωάννης Φλώρος, με συνεργάτες, τους ευσεβείς νέους της εποχής, οι οποίοι συγκροτούσαν το Σύλλογο των Ορθοδόξων, όπως ο Ανδρέας Βασορίδης και άλλοι.

Θα ήταν μια ακόμη ευχαριστιακή Σύναξη υπό τον φόβο του διωγμού. Μια σύναξη κρυμμένη στο ημίφως των κεριών, αν ο ίδιος ο Θεός δεν παρενέβαινε με τρόπο θαυματουργικό και απόλυτο. Άνθρωποι που έζησαν αυτό το λαμπρό γεγονός και μαρτύρησαν τα όσα είδαν στην συνέχεια δεν μπόρεσαν να κρύψουν την συγκίνηση και την ευτυχία, που αξιώθηκαν ναιώσουν την νύκτα εκείνη.

Χαρακτηριστικά είναι τα λόγια του Ιωάννου Γλυμή, ενός εκ των ανδρών του αποσπάσματος της χωροφυλακής που είχαν διαταγή να συλλάβουν τον Ιερέα, όπως αναγράφεται στο βιβλίο του αιμνήστου Μητροπολίτου Πενταπόλεως κυρού Καλλιολιτίου «Τα Πάτρια» (τόμος Δ', σελ. 100):

«Ήμουν ένας από τους άνδρες της σχολής χωροφυλακής που έστειλαν το βράδυ εκείνο, στο ερημοκκλήσι του Αγίου Ιωάννου

Συνεχίζεται στην σελ. 10

Saint Xenia Camp

Cont'd from cover

At St. Xenia's Camp, which has been called "an Orthodox village for a week," campers attended daily Church services, enjoyed Orthodox fellowship, and dined on delicious fasting food, thanks to the extraordinary efforts of the volunteer kitchen staff.

The week's activities included swimming, canoeing, arts and crafts, and concluded with creative Orthodox skits, produced and presented by each cabin.

As His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, has stated, St. Xenia's Camp is one of the most important missionary activities of our church, here in North America. This year's camp, through the prayers of St. Xenia, certainly lived up to this lofty goal.



Ask His Eminence

Q: Bless, Master! Are all the sins that were forgiven in this life time, null and void at the last judgement? Or are all the sins still on our souls?

-Elizabeth Cardinale



A: Our Faith is the Faith of repentance.

The message of our Lord Jesus Christ was: "Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is nigh!" Likewise, the message of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner of Christ was, "Repent, for the Kingdom of the Heavens is at hand!"

So here we are, trying to repent. If anyone thinks that they are exempt from this most important process of repentance, then they are lost. They are in delusion. For this rea-



son, we say in the petitions of every service, "That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance..." Repentance is not exclusively for monastics; it is for all Christians—lay people and monastics alike.

We do not know with certainty what things await us in the next life. So, we try to cross our t's and dot our i's, and be very careful in terms of doing the best that we can in order to be forgiven our sins. We do, also, strongly believe that our Lord is a compassionate, merciful, and long-suffering Lord; and that He forgives us. However, oftentimes, because of their passions, people like to "baptize" things. For example, we may often find ourselves using confession and absolution as a

Cont'd on p. 5

Letter From Fr. Maximus

Dear All,

In response to many requests, I am sending out a short report of what we have been doing in Guatemala and in particular at the hermitage of St. Ignatius. I came in the middle of July and, since that time, I have been spending most of the week in the hermitage while I go to the parish of St. Xenia in the capital (about two hours away, counting traffic) to serve there on the weekends.

Our first priority in the hermitage was to build a wall connecting the buildings in order to prevent anyone from entering without permission. This is important because a few months ago some robbers came to the hermitage, assaulted Fr. Ignacio (the other priestmonk who lives there), and stole a few things. Also, the wall will allow us to establish visiting hours for the local people.

We began by connecting two of the cells on the south wing. Because we needed a bathroom (previously we only had an outhouse) we built a bathroom in the space, along with another cell, because we were expecting visitors and had no other place to lodge them. Then we bought a large water tank and installed it on the terrace over my cell, so that the bathroom (and eventually the kitchen) would have water. As of right now, since we lack a functioning well, we are filling the tank with buckets of water, although we hope to get a gasoline pump to pump water up to the tank.

Then we started to work on the walls of the refectory (trapeza). We built the frame of the trapeza at the beginning of the year, but did not have the funds to build the walls, only the roof. Originally, we were planning on building the kitchen connected to the trapeza, and then to connect the kitchen to the church with a short wall, but since we had spent money on the bathroom and the new cell we did not have enough to work on the kitchen, so we are connecting the trapeza directly to the church.

While most of the construction in the Hermitage is out of concrete block, the walls of the trapeza are being built out of adobe, which are mud bricks. They are much larger and heavier than concrete blocks, and are more insulating for sound and heat. They are also an ancient and natural building technique - many of the early Spanish colonial churches and monasteries in Latin America are built out of adobe.

Since we chose not to build the formal kitchen at this point, we built a temporary kitchen out of wood. When God wills that we build the formal kitchen, the temporary kitchen will then be converted into a storage shed. We cook on a brick wood stove, which also doubles as an oven for making prosphora. We have a small garden and two corn fields. We use the corn for making corn meal and tortillas, as well as

corn on the cob. The locals make a thick drink out of it called atol, but I don't like it much.

Meanwhile, we have also been working on the construction of the Convent of St. Irene Chrysovalantou, located below the hermitage of St. Ignatius, on the same church property but lower on the mountain. We built a chapel there, which is doubling as the cell of Sister Miriam, the nun who lives there. During the day, she walks up to the Hermitage to attend the services and to cook.

Our schedule runs something like this: in the morning we do Matins, and on feastdays we also serve a Liturgy. Afterwards, we eat breakfast and then go about our obediences. Since we are still setting things up, many of our obediences are related to construction and practical things - for example, during this past week we were transferring some of our water tanks (that means emptying and refilling with buckets... a time-consuming task) and reinstalling the rainwater collection system, which only works during the half of the year when there is rain. As a result, we have not had much time to work on other obediences that might bring in an income, such as iconography or sewing. Sometimes we have minor disasters too, since as the day when the stonemasons needed to move a water tank out of the way and without thinking emptied all our water on the ground! In the evening, we eat dinner and then serve Vespers and Compline with the Akathist to the Mother of God.

Two weeks ago in a nearby lake we baptized a Brazilian woman who was visiting. A local family with property on the lake let us use their beach and dock, which worked out very nicely.

In the parish of St. Xenia, most things continue as usual. There have been some enquirers and visitors, and I have had to spend some days in the city getting things we cannot obtain at the Hermitage, as well as using the internet.

We ask the prayers of everyone for the continued success of the monastery, the convent, and the mission in Guatemala. Many thanks are owed to the benefactors who have generously donated to the mission - you know who are and you are in our prayers - may God bless you!

In Christ,
Maximus, unworthy hieromonk

P.S. Anyone wishing to donate to the mission can send a check to Holy Ascension Monastery, made out to the same, earmarked in the MEMO: "for Guatemala"

521 Coldbrook Rd., Bearsville, New York 12409



Divine Trophy of Freedom *Cont'd from front cover*

North-East, a bright, radiant Cross of light. The light not only illuminated the church and the faithful but, in its rays, the stars of the clear, cloudless sky became dim and the church-yard was filled with an almost tangible light. The form of the Cross itself was an especially dense light and it could be clearly seen as a Byzantine cross with an angular cross bar toward the bottom. This heavenly miracle lasted for half an hour, until midnight, and then the Cross began slowly to raise up vertically, as the cross in the hands of the priest does in the ceremony of the Elevation of the Cross in church. Having come straight up, the Cross began gradually to fade away.

The human language is not adequate to convey what took place during the apparition. The entire crowd fell prostrate upon the ground with tears and began to sing prayers, praising the Lord with one heart and one mouth. The police were among those who wept, suddenly discovering, in the depths of their hearts, a childlike faith. The crowd of believers and the battalion of police were transformed into one, unified flock of faithful. All were seized with a holy ecstasy.

The vigil continued until four A.M., when all this human torrent streamed back into the city, carrying the news of the miracle because of which they were still trembling and weeping.

Many of the unbelievers, sophists and renovationists, realizing their sin and guilt, but unwilling to repent, tried by every means to explain away or deny this miracle. The fact that the form of the cross had been so sharply and clearly that of the Byzantine (sometimes called the Russian Cross) Cross, with three cross-bars, the bottom one at an angle, completely negated any arguments of accidental physical phenomenon.

The fact that such an apparition of the Cross had also occurred during the height of the first great heresy must strike the Orthodox with an especial sense of the magnitude of the importance of the calendar question and of all that is connected with it. No sensible person can discuss this issue lightly, with secular reasoning or with worldly arguments. Renovationists, like the Arians in 351, are left without extenuation or mitigation.

From Orthodox Life, March-April, 1972; Reprinted with permission from Holy Trinity Monastery (Jordanville, NY)

Eyewitness Accounts

Eyewitness Accounts of the Appearance of the Cross over the Church of St. John the Theologian at Mt. Hymettus, September 14, 1925.

I was one of the men from the

Police Institute who were sent to stop the vigil that night, some fifty years ago, at the country Church of St. John the Theologian.

The Old Calendarists were keeping vigil there, because it was the eve of the feast of the Exaltation of the Precious Cross (according to the Church Calendar, not the papist! — ed.)

Since many people had gathered - more than two thousand individuals - we did not attempt to seize the priest as we had been ordered, but we sat down quietly in the nearby court and waited for them to finish.

At about 11:30 at night, we heard a loud and strange uproar coming from the shouts of the multitude. Without any delay, we ran to see what was happening - and we saw. The whole multitude of the faithful was in a state of excitement. Some were weeping and others, crying out "Lord, have mercy," were kneeling and had turned their eyes toward heaven, and yet others were fainting, overwhelmed with great emotion. Then we too looked and beheld the marvel: an enormous radiant Cross, very high above the church was illuminating the whole area. At first, we were seized with fear, but immediately we came to ourselves and, forgetting the

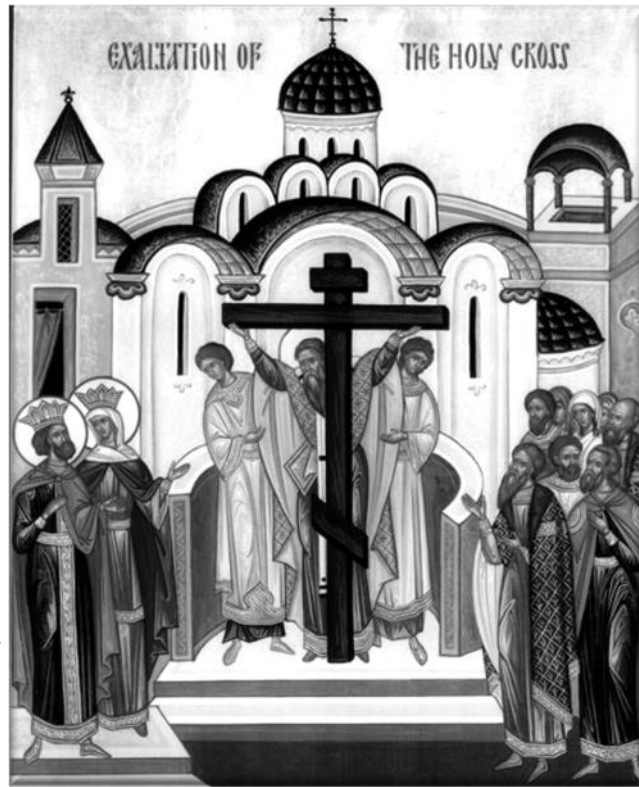
purpose for which we had been sent, we fell to our knees and wept like little children.

Of course, it is superfluous for me to tell you that, filled with emotion, we attended the rest of the vigil to the end - no longer as persecutors, but as faithful Christians. In the morning when we returned to the Institute, we told everyone about the great marvel which we had been deemed worthy to see. Afterwards there was an investigation and all of us swore under oath that we had seen the Precious Cross clearly, high in the sky.

John D. Glymis
Retired Police Officer, 78 years of age
73 Aristotle Street
Peristeri (a suburb of Athens)

On that night in 1925 when the Precious Cross appeared, I was making the last run with the tram which I was operating. I had reached Omonoia and was going around the square when I saw everyone looking up toward heaven and crying, "Look! - the Cross! - the Cross!" Immediately I stepped on the brakes and stopped the vehicle. I stuck my head out the tram's door and I, the unworthy one, also saw the Precious Cross of Our Lord - may His Name be glorified; it was shining over Mount Hymettus. I don't remember how long this lasted. I know only one thing - the Precious Cross which I saw the night turned me into a different man. Since then, everyone in my family has become a faithful child of the Church of the True Orthodox Christians.

Athanasios Primals
Retired Tram Conductor, 80 years of age
17 Kavales Street
Nicea (a suburb of Athens)



On another occasion, during the persecution against the traditional Orthodox faithful, New-Martyr Catherine Routis was brutally clubbed to death by police as she, together with other faithful, attempted to shield the true Orthodox Bishop from the beating.



Ask His Eminence Cont'd from p. 3

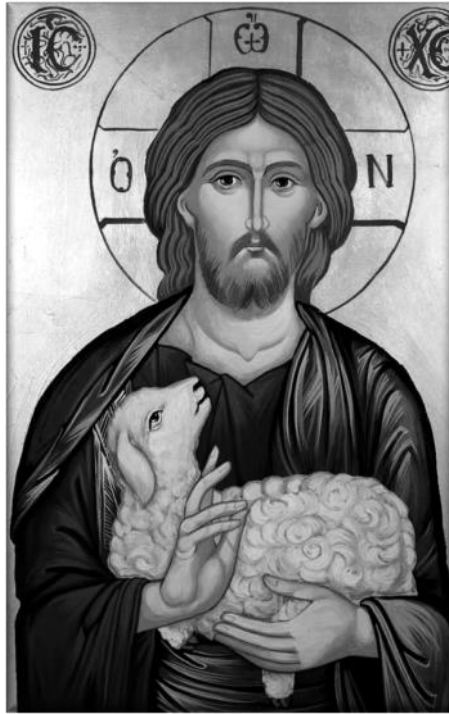


pretext to dismiss our sins without true and heartfelt repentance. We must not think of the absolution prayers that the priest reads over us as some type of “magic wand”—there must be heartfelt repentance and there must be a synergy (συνεργασία) with God. In Scripture our Savior

tells us that sins that are “loosed on earth” through the holy priesthood, will be “loosed in Heaven” (Matthew 16:19). We know that our Savior’s Words are true—the earth and the sky shall pass away, but His words shall not pass away (Matthew 24:35). Therefore, our sins, both here on earth and in eternity, are “loosed” through repentance and confession. However, our repentance must be true; we must “bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.” (Luke 3:8)

There have been many Saints who have received sanctification (αγιασάν) within a very short amount of time. St. Taisia of Egypt, for example, was a harlot until she had a sudden repentance—a profound repentance, with tears from the bottom of her heart, and she reposed in this state of repentance. She is now a Saint of our church, because her repentance was so deep. The Church has many “last minute” Saints because of the depth of their repentance.

I remember that, when I was a teenager, I came across two different teachings of the Holy Fathers which initially seemed to be in contradiction to one another. On the one hand, I read, in a book called “*The Shepherd of Hermas*,” that sins can be forgiven only through much prayer, fasting, and spiritual struggle (αγώνα). And on the other hand, I read the teachings that with the smallest, heartfelt “Ἡμαρτον, Κύριε, Συγχώρησον!” (“I have sinned, O Lord, forgive!”) all of your sins are forgiven. And so, I thought, there seems to be a contradiction: Does the forgiveness of all your sins require years and years of struggle, or a deep repentance that can take place in an instant?



Then I became a monk. Through the monastic life, I have come to realize that there was no contradiction at all: Both of these teachings are true. We know that if a person prays with his whole heart and says, “God please forgive me, a sinner!” he is forgiven. But, the causes of his sin and the passions are so deeply rooted in his heart, that only through much prayer, much fasting, and much struggle can he uproot it. Without uprooting the passion that led to the sin, the sinner will soon be led astray again. In this case, the sinner had his sin forgiven, only to soon commit the same again, and find himself once more in the pit. These remaining passions and old habits of the flesh are the reason why we still find ourselves falling into these proclivities to sin even after repenting.

Again, only through much prayer, fasting, struggle, and especially *humility*, can we be delivered. Actually, all of the virtues have as their safeguard this one virtue: humility. The demons can imitate all of the virtues, except for this one—humility—the mother of the virtues. We practice these exercises (άσκησις)—the fasting, the struggling, the standing in vigils, etc.—all for the purpose of uprooting the passions of the soul and to prevent falling again into the pit of sin; or, more specifically, we do all these things to attract God’s mercy. In fact, when we pray, fast, struggle, and keep vigil, we need to see these spiritual acts as “fruits of repentance”—things we are doing in humble repentance for our sins. Otherwise, the effects of these spiritual efforts will be minimized, or perhaps even catastrophic.

Through the struggle of the body, we gain the virtues of the soul: humility, long-suffering, and patience. The fathers call this “πράξη και θεωρία,” or “action and divine vision.” Therefore, through God’s help and mercy, and our synergy with Him, we have the hope of true repentance and its fruits, that we might not find our sins still on our souls in the next life.



HOW TO REQUEST THE SPIRITUAL WATCH

Each issue of *The Spiritual Watch* is mailed to the homes of the faithful by request ONLY. Suggested annual donation: \$100 (USD)

To request that *The SW* be mailed to your home or parish, please fill out and mail the *Pledge Form* on the *inside back cover* of this issue, indicating how many copies of each issue you would like and mail to:



***The Spiritual Watch*, c/o St. John’s Monastery, 151 Heron Road Cobleskill, NY 12043**

Donations offered from **within the U.S.**, please make checks payable to:
“Metropolis of America” with “*The SW*” on the memo line

Donations offered from **outside the U.S.**, please make checks payable to:
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If you would like to receive *The Spiritual Watch*, but are unable to make a donation at this time, please indicate this, and we will mail it to you.

Note *The SW* is a 100% volunteer effort. The periodical incurs significant expenses primarily with the printing, mailing supplies, and postage for each issue.

Questions? KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com

Kid-Corner



Pious Poetry

These Hands

See these Hands, pierced-through,
Nailed and bleeding on the Cross
These same Hands did fashion you
And gave you your intellect and thoughts.

These Hands marked with fearsome scars
A long, long time ago
Did make the sea, the sky, the stars
And did set the sun aglow

These Hands, that are now bleeding,
Fastened with nails to the Wood
These wounded Hands that we are seeing
Blessed all the children of the world.

The Godman they spat upon and slew!
These Hands were not for nails, so grim
But Christ accepted them for you.
How could you not give your heart to Him?

Τα Χέρια Αυτά

Τα Χέρια αυτά που βλέπεις καρφωμένα
Και πληγωμένα πάνω στο Σταυρό
Είναι τα Χέρια που έπλασαν εσένα
Και σου δώσαν τη σκέψη, το μυαλό.

Και κάποτε, τα ίδια αυτά τα Χέρια
Πριν από πολύ καιρό
Φτιάζανε τον ήλιο και τ' αστέρια,
Τη θάλασσα, τη γη, τον ουρανό.

Τα Χέρια αυτά, τα καταματωμένα
Που τα τρύπησαν σκληρά καρφιά
Τα Χέρια αυτά που βλέπεις πληγωμένα
Ευλόγησαν όλου του κόσμου τα παιδιά.

Τον Θεάνθρωπο έβαψαν στο αίμα!
Τα Χέρια αυτά δεν ήταν για καρφιά!
Όμως τα δέχτηκε ο Χριστός για σένα.
Πως να μην Του χαρίσεις την καρδιά;

*Based on a poem by Nicholas Kamvisis,
modified & translated*

Think about your Faith



Answer one or more of the questions and, with your parent's permission, send your responses, along with your name and age to: The Spiritual Watch, c/o St. John's Monastery, 151 Heron Road Cobleskill, NY 12043 or email them to KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com Part or all of the responses may be published in the next issue.

QUESTIONS

1. Why do some holy fathers teach that the forgiveness of sins takes much struggle, while other holy fathers teach that it can happen in one instant of deep repentance, when we call out, "I have sinned, O Lord, forgive me!"? (p.5)
2. Should the holy canons be considered as a simple rule book, with the central goal of our lives to follow rules well? Why or why not? (p. 7)
3. What is the "Mother of All Virtues?" (pp. 5, 7) Why do you think so?
4. What is the only virtue that the enemy cannot imitate or pretend to have? (p. 7)
5. Should REPENTANCE be at the center of our way of thinking and living? Why or why not? (pp. 5, 7)
6. Why do you think that the Precious and Life Giving Cross appeared in the skies of Athens in 1925? (pp. 1,4)





The Orthodox Home: Starting Off On the Right Foot



When we begin a big task, we must be careful to start with the right mindset. Whether we are cradle Orthodox or converts, we need to check our thinking closely, as we form a Christian home and map out a Christian family life. If our thinking is off, or if there are problems with our spiritual understanding, then we run the risk of creating a mindset in our marriage and in our family that appears to be true and Godly, but is not—"For I bear them record," warns St. Paul, "That they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge." (Romans 10:2)

What does this mean for us? How could our zeal for God not be Godly? We need to consider this carefully. It is a question that must not be ignored. We Orthodox Christians have a wonderful and spiritually rich Tradition that guides and leads us. Where does it lead us? It leads us to a closeness with God that will last for all eternity. In this Tradition, we have a map which shows us the Way to this life with God. This map provides us with teachings about the spiritual life and a powerful set of guidelines, called canons, which show us how to stay safe and on track in our journey. If not understood properly, however, these canons could be misunderstood to be a simple rulebook. Not so. If the Faith were a set of rules, and following rules becomes the goal, then we can drift away from the true goal: closeness to God.

If we become expert "rule followers," then we begin to think that the most pious person is the best "rule follower." This is the spirit of the Pharisee, an expert "rule-follower" who was condemned by God. If we embrace this mindset, we can easily forget that true piety is a life of repentance. True piety is paying attention to our own faults, and forgiving the sins of others. Folks who see themselves as expert "rule followers" can easily develop a zeal that is "not according to knowledge." They earnestly search to know, in detail, all of the "rights" and the "wrongs," and they soon lose sight of their own sins; they begin to focus on others who appear to be breaking the "rules."

"Worldly people, and many living the monastic life, through ignorance and inexperience, often praise such zeal without understanding that it springs from conceit and pride. They extol this zeal as zeal for the Faith, for piety, for the Church, for God. It consists in a more or less harsh condemnation and criticism of one's neighbors in their moral faults, and in faults against good order in church and in the performance of the church services. Deceived by a wrong conception of zeal, these imprudent zealots think that by yielding themselves to it, they are imitating the holy fathers and holy martyrs, forgetting that they – the zealots – are not saints but sinners." (St. Ignatius Brianchaninov, *The Arena*, p. 140)

What happens when we establish a home and raise children based on this "zeal not according to knowledge?" We run the risk of leading our precious children to also become expert "rule followers" who judge others who are not as good at the rules. Or even more dangerous, we run the risk of causing our children to become disillusioned with the judgmental nature of what they see – a mindset that does not match what they learn in the Scriptures and lives of the Saints. For example, in the life of St. Seraphim of Sarov, it was often observed that, on himself, he was tough, but on others, he showed love. As St. Ignatius points out, "It is worth

noticing that, after acquiring spiritual understanding, the defects and faults of one's neighbor begin to seem very slight and insignificant, and redeemed by the Savior and easily cured by repentance – those very faults and defects which seemed to the carnal understanding so big and serious." (*Arena*, p. 141)

As we develop a spiritual atmosphere in our homes, let it be one of humility and repentance, guided by the holy canons which keep us safe and lead us to salvation. Let us lead by example. Let us love

the holy canons and the holy wisdom within them. These holy guidelines are given for the purpose of our salvation. They are not meant to be a club with which we self-righteously beat on others, while ignoring our own sins. Instead, let us remember the Prophet David who confessed his sins, the holy disciple Peter who wept bitterly for his denial, the Harlot who wept at our Savior's feet, the Publican who repented, and the Prodigal who saw his sin and returned to his Father. Let us remember that it is *humility* that is the mother of all virtues: As the holy fathers exhort us, we should consider ourselves as the lowest of sinners, and as such, judge no one else. And let us keep the canons, which lead us to repentance and love. Then our homes will be a special place – a place for parents and children to grow in the Faith.



Obituary: Presbyterera Katina Patitsas

Kathleen "Katina" (Pikolas) Patitsas

Presbyterera Katina Patitsas, 59, reposed in the Lord Jesus peacefully at her home surrounded by her family and friends on August 31st, 2018 after a long battle with breast cancer that began in 2013.

Born October 5th, 1958 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, she was the daughter of Clara (Theros) Pikolas and the late James M. Pikolas. She was united in marriage to Christopher (Father Christos) Patitsas, MD on June 7th, 1980 in Lancaster, PA at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church. Her husband of 38 years survives at home in Miller Township.

Presbyterera Katina is survived by her 5 loving sons and their wives and children, George and his fiancée Maria and his son Anthony of Baltimore, Maryland; Demetri and his wife Calli and their sons Alexander and Christopher of Drums, PA; Dr. Peter Patitsas, MD and his wife Magda and their children Jacek, Katya, Christos, and Panayiota of Danville, PA; Paul and his wife Hannah of St. Paul, Minnesota, and John Auxentios of Huntingdon, PA and numerous godchildren. She is also survived by her beloved mother Clara Pikolas of Lancaster, PA and sister Sandra and her husband Lawrence Wagner Jr. of Phoenix, Maryland and numerous relatives, friends, and parishioners. She was a member of Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church of Mt. Union, PA where she served as the Presbyterera (priest's wife) and chanter.

She was a 1976 graduate of Manheim Township High School of Lancaster, PA where she received the Altdoerffer Orchestra Award, was "first chair violinist" and award winning artist. She attended Millersville State University, Hellenic College and Juniata College. She played the guitar and she had a voice of an angel. She was one of the foremost female chanters of Byzantine music in the English language in the world. She was a composer of folk music with over 70 copyrights. She is credited with the creation of the genre of original Orthodox Christian folk music in the English language. Her songs were recorded on numerous tapes, CDs and videos which have been distributed in great numbers throughout the world and can even be bought and listened to (<https://store.cdbaby.com/Artist/Katina>). She performed her original works on TV and radio, and for Jesus Ministries at the Agape Camp Farm. She also performed at Boston University and the Stoneham Theater in Massachusetts and at numerous church camps, churches, and private homes.

She was the foundress of St. Xenia of Petersburg Orthodox Christian Church Camp in 1997. The camp has continued annually for 22 years. She was chanter and benefactress of St. Xenia Church in Canton, Ohio, St. Spyridon's Church in Cleveland, Ohio, Three Pillars of Orthodoxy Church in Carlisle, PA and Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Mount Union, PA over a 36 year period. She served as a missionary in Guatemala where she helped

found Santa Xenia Orthodox Church in Guatemala City, and in Long Island, Bahamas where she helped found St. Spyridon's mission church.

Presbyterera Katina was a master Greek pastry chef and famous for her baklava. She was an accomplished chef of Lebanese, Italian, French, Thai, Greek and American cuisines. She loved to cook for her family and friends and was well known for her hospitality. She enjoyed drawing and portrait painting in her spare time.

She traveled to the Holy Land twice in her life time and washed in the Jordan River. She also traveled to her grandparents' homeland of Greece three times.

In addition, together with her husband Father Christos, she performed a funeral for her beloved Uncle T. Sergeant John M. Pikolas at Omaha Beach, Normandy, France 70 years after his death fighting the Nazi SS troops in Belle Lande near St. Lo.

She most enjoyed quiet contemplation for prayer and her creative works. She was a devoted and faithful wife, mother, and "Yiayia".

[Editor's Note:] Hundreds of friends and family from all over America and Canada traveled to attend our beloved Presbyterera Katina's funeral on Monday, September 3rd, 2018. An all night vigil around her, with the continuous reading of the Psalter, preceded on the previous night, at Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church. The burial took place at the homestead of Father Christos at the recently consecrated cemetery there, on a beautiful hill with stunning views of the valley. A mercy meal took place at McAlevy's Fort at the Fire Hall, where Presbyterera Katina's five sons shared memories and loving stories of their extraordinary mom. Fr. Christos also spoke to the large crowd of friends and family, who were deeply moved and inspired by his deep faith and hope in the Resurrection.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in her memory to Sts. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church, PO Box 495, Mt. Union, PA 17066 with memo stating "Katina."

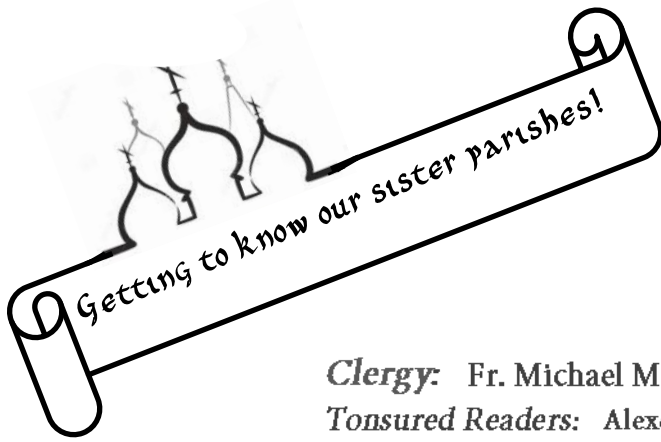


Featured in this issue:

St. Philaret the New Confessor Mission Chapel

Located in Chicopee, Massachusetts

Clergy: Fr. Michael Marcinowski, Presbyter; Fr. Jacob Wojcik, Deacon
Tonsured Readers: Alexey Nikiforov and Jason Finnie



St. Philaret the New Confessor Mission Chapel is located in Chicopee, Massachusetts, about two hours west of Boston. Soon after the Glorification of St. Philaret the New Confessor, on the weekend of May 19-20, 2001, our mission Parish was originally established in Worcester, Massachusetts to serve Traditional Orthodox Christians. When the name for the new mission was being determined, at the suggestion of dedicating it to St. Philaret, all the lit candles in one of the pots united as a single flame! In 2005 it was decided and blessed that the mission parish should be moved to Western Massachusetts to serve a wider community of Orthodox Christians. For the next year or so, we rented space in the greater Springfield area.

Over time, our mission parish acquired holy vessels and more icons, and built an altar and a portable iconostasis. Father Deacon Jacob, who was elevated to the diaconate in 2003, with the help of a few but determined Orthodox faithful, held services on Sundays at various locations. In those days, we had weekly services, and occasionally a visiting priest to serve Liturgy.

It was in 2007, that God blessed us with our mission parish priest, Father Michael Marcinowski! The mission Parish followed our most Reverend Metropolitan Demetrius to the Genuine Orthodox Church over matters of faith. From those first few families, our mission parish has grown to nine families, 39 adults and children, who are now regularly active in the parish. They come from Greek, Russian and convert backgrounds. Our record attendance, at Pascha, was forty-eight! Our membership includes seventeen children, nine whom are under the age of five. Father Michael Marcinowski serves as priest and Father Jacob Wojcik serves as deacon. We have two tonsured readers, Alexey Nikiforov and Jason Finnie. Matushka Nina directs

the small diros.

We are a "commuter Parish." Most of our dedicated parishioners live at least forty-five minutes from the chapel. However, it is centrally located to our families who come from Central Massachusetts,

Western Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut and New Hampshire. Our current rental location has served our parish well and allowed us to grow, but comes with some challenges as it is a shared building where other functions are also held, sometimes creating a distraction for our services. At these times, we are called upon to be patient, and keep the hope that this is only temporary until we are blessed with a permanent church building.

Our rental space is temporary, and may not be available to us in the near future. Given this situation, only 700 square feet of space, and the growth in the number of families and children, the Parish Council is actively considering other property options. Building costs raise financial challenges for the members of the parish. We would also like to stay in or near Chicopee, to accommodate all of our parishioners.

We are blessed to be the only parish dedicated to St. Philaret of New York, the New Confessor. St. Philaret was the First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad, under whom parishes of different ethnic backgrounds were formed. Some of our parishioners had direct contact with Saint Philaret. Coming from diverse backgrounds—convert, Russian, and Greek, we reverence St. Philaret's outreach and concern for preserving the True Church. It is our heartfelt intention to acquire property and establish a permanent church for our growing Parish. Those who would like to contribute towards this effort, and help become founders of a Church building, can contact our treasurer by email at:

jfinnie_pps@yahoo.com or at the following address:

Jason Finnie
26 Horseshoe Circle
Ware, MA 01082



His Eminence, Met. Demetrius, Center, with Fr. Michael on the right, and Fr. Jacob far right



Some of the children of St. Philaret's Mission Chapel





Monastic tactics

GUIDANCE FOR ALL ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS, OUT OF THE SPIRITUAL BATTLEFIELD OF MONASTICISM

The holy Fathers on Self-knowledge

It is impossible for us to become reconciled and united with God, if we do not first return to ourselves, as far as it lies in our power, or if we do not enter within ourselves, tearing away from the whirl of the world with its multitudinous vain cares, striving constantly to keep attention on the Kingdom of Heaven which is within us.

-St. Niphoros the Solitary

For man to know God, it is indispensable for him to come to deeply know himself, because, one who does not know himself is unable to know God. It follows, then, that he who does not know God neither does he love Him, neither does he worship Him, neither does he long

for Him from his heart, nor does he pursue Him, nor is he assuredly drawing near to Him. However, for one to come to self-knowledge, it is first necessary to take up the search of one's self.

-St. Nektarios of Pentapolis

Know thyself: this is true humility, the humility that teaches us to be inwardly humble and makes our heart contrite. Such humility you must cultivate and guard. For if you do not yet know yourself you cannot know what humility is, and have not yet embarked truly on the task of cultivating and guarding. To know oneself is the goal of the practice of the virtues.

-St. Nikitas Stithatos



A Request for Help from St. Nicholas of Myra Orthodox Church

Glory to God, through the intercessions of our Patron and all the Saints, we, at St. Nicholas in Maryland, were able to purchase a beautiful property for our Church! With the funds, we were able to renovate and beautify the interior of our Temple. However, on the outside, it looks like a three-car garage. We have begun a fundraiser in order to make the God-pleasing changes on the exterior of His House, to make it look like an Orthodox Church from the outside, too. If anyone is able and wishes to help St. Nicholas with this effort, to the glory of God, we need prayers and donations. Checks can be made out to "St. Nicholas Orthodox Church" with *Building Fund* in the Memo line, and mail to: 18433 Queen Anne Rd, Upper Marlboro, MD 20774, or visit StNicholasMD.com to donate. Thank you.

Θείο Τρόπαιο Ελευθερίας

Συνεχίζεται από την σελίδα 2

του Θεολόγου διά να εμποδίσουμε την αγρυπνία», μαρτυρά ο Γλυμής και συνεχίζει...

«Εκεί οι Παλαισημερολογίτες θα αγρυπνούσαν διότι ξημέρωνε η εορτή της υψώσεως του Τιμίου Σταυρού.

Επειδή είχε συγκεντρωθεί πολύς κόσμος, περισσότερα από 2000 άτομα, δεν επιχειρήσαμε να συλλάβουμε τον Ιερέα, όπως είχαμε εντολή, αλλά ξαπλώσαμε ήσυχα στην κοντινή πλαγιά και περιμέναμε να τελειώσουν.

Στις έντεκα και μισή περίπου την νύκτα ακούσαμε μεγάλο και παράξενο θόρυβο που προερχόταν από τις φωνές του πλήθους. Χωρίς να χάσουμε καιρό τρέξαμε να δούμε τι συμβαίνει... και είδαμε...».

Η περιγραφή του διώκτη γίνεται συνταρακτική: «Όλο το πλήθος των πιστών βρισκόταν σε θρησκευτική παραφορά.

Άλλοι κλαίγοντας και άλλοι φωνάζοντας το «Κύριε ελέησον» γονατιστοί είχαν στρέψει το βλέμμα τους προς τον ουρανό, ενώ μερικοί λιποθυμούσαν από μεγάλοι συγκίνηση. Τότε κοιτάξαμε και εμείς και είδαμε το θαυμάσιο, ένα δηλαδή τεράστιο ολόφωτο Σταυρό, πολύ ψηλά πάνω από τον ναό, να φωτίζει ολόκληρη την περιοχή. Στην αρχή μας έπιασε φόβος αλλά αμέσως συνήλαθαμε και γονατίσαμε ξεχνώντας την αποστολή μας και κλαίγοντας σαν μικρά παιδιά.

Περιττό, βέβαια, να σας πώ ότι παρακολουθήσαμε την ιερά αγρυπνία μέχρι τέλους γεμάτοι συγκίνηση, όχι πια σαν καταδιωκτικά όργανα, αλλά σαν πιστοί Χριστιανοί.

Το πρωί όταν κατεβήκαμε στην σχολή, διηγηθήκαμε σ' όλους το μέγα Θάυμα που εντυχήσαμε να ιδούμε.

Κατόπιν έγιναν ανακρίσεις και όλοι μας ενόρκως καταθέσαμε ότι είδαμε πεντακάθαρα τον Τιμό Σταυρό στον ουρανό ψηλά».

Φυσικά αυτή δεν είναι η μοναδική σωζόμενη μαρτυρία. Παρόμοιες ήταν και οι περιγραφές όλων των αυτοπτών μαρτύρων, όπως του Αλέξανδρου Κοντού, του Αθανάσιου Πριμάλη, του Ηλία Αγγελόπουλου, του Ιωάννη Δάβαρη κ.α.

Αυτό το οποίο έζησαν στον Υμητό οι πατέρες μας και πιστοποιήσαν ακόμη και οι διώκτες τους, δεν ήταν κάτι απλό, κάτι σύνθησε.

Η πρώτη εμφάνιση του Τιμίου Σταυρού ήταν εκατοντάδες χρόνια πριν, στο όραμα του Μεγάλου Κωνσταντίνου, μετά το οποίο άλλαξε η ροή της Ιστορίας. «Εν Τούτῳ Νίκα!», τον προέτρεψε ο Ουρανός.

Η δευτέρα εμφάνισις του τιμίου Σταυρού έγινε στην Ιερουσαλήμ επί του φρικτού Γολγοθά κατά την ημέρα της Πεντηκοστής,

όταν Αυτοκράτορας ήταν ο Κωνσταντίνος, υιός του Μ. Κων/νου, και Πατριάρχης ο Άγιος Κύριλλος.

Και η Τρίτη ήταν στην εποχή μας. Στην αγρυπνία των κατατρεγμένων χριστιανών που αφηρόντας τον κίνδυνο έσπευσαν να τιμήσουν την μεγάλη εορτή της Υψώσεως του Τιμίου Σταυρού στον Υμητό, για να γίνουν θεατές και μάρτυρες της Θείας Παρουσίας.

Μπορεί την εποχή εκείνη να μην υπήρχε η ευκολία στην επικοινωνία. Μπορεί να μην υπήρχε η τηλεόραση και το διαδίκτυο, όμως αυτή η μεγάλη αλήθεια δεν μπόρεσε να κρυφτεί. Το γεγονός μαθεύτηκε και οι εφημερίδες της εποχής το κατέγραψαν.

Πέρασαν 90 χρόνια από εκείνη τη βραδιά. Σχεδόν ένας αιώνας. Τα περισσότερα από αυτά τα χρόνια οι διώξεις συνεχίστηκαν, ο πόλεμος δεν σταμάτησε και η πίστη φούντωνε στις ψυχές των Γνησίων ορθοδόξων, που δοκιμάζονταν συνεχώς «ως χρυσός εν χωνευτηρίῳ».

Από την Ομιλία του Σεβασμιωτάτου Μητροπολίτου Γεροντίου γιά την Γ' Εμφάνιση του Τιμίου Σταυρού, Αθήνα 20-09/03-10-2015

In Gratitude to Our

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The Holy Metropolis needs the support of Her faithful in order to successfully meet Her responsibilities and objectives in the administration of the Genuine Orthodox Church. May our Savior richly bless all who help His Church, as He has said.

Η Ιερά Μητρόπολη χρειάζεται την υποστήριξη των πιστών Της για να ανταποκριθεί επιτυχώς στις ευθύνες και στους στόχους Της στην διοίκηση Της Γνήσιας Ορθόδοξου Εκκλησίας. Είθε ο Σωτήρας μας να ευλογεί πλουσιοπάροχα όλους όσους βοηθούν Την Εκκλησία Του, όπως μας είπε.

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KeepSpiritualWatch@gmail.com

In Memoriam

"...And on those in the graves hath He bestowed life!"



In Memory of Fr. Mark Gilstrap, Oklahoma, USA
In Memory of Marianthi Vasseliou, Michigan, USA
In Memory of Hannah Walker, New Hampshire, US
In Memory of Theano and Carl



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"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."

-Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Τίμα τον Κύριο από τα υπάρχοντά σου, και με τους πρώτο-καρπούς όλων των γεννημάτων σου. 10 και θα γεμίσουν οι σιταποθήκες σου από αφθονία, και οι ληνοί σου θα ξεχειλίζουν από νέο κρασί.

-Παροιμία Σολομώντος

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“In order for parishes to function well, the Metropolis must function well. Who will support the Metropolis if not Her faithful?”
«Για να λειτουργούν καλά οι ενορίες, πρέπει να λειτουργεί καλά η Μητρόπολη. Ποιος θα υποστηρίξει την Μητρόπολη αν όχι οι πιστοί της?»



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