

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

Lenten Message

FROM THE METROPOLITAN

Beloved Children of the Lord,

Having gone to Greece and attended the blessed celebrations of Theophany, we took part in the meeting of the Holy Synod of the Genuine Orthodox Church of Greece. At that time, I discussed with the Synod the issue of the consecration of a Bishop for our Church in North and South America. My proposal was accepted by all the Hierarchs. I call on all Orthodox Christians to pray fervently, especially during this season of repentance, Great Lent, for the Holy Church, for the Metropolis, for our parishes, for our monasteries, and for all our institutions.

As Christians, we always have this understanding of togetherness, of unity, even though our parishes are far apart geographically.



We know that we are united in Christ, One Metropolis in North and South America, as well as One Church worldwide, “One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church...” It is necessary for each one of us to stand before God in fervent prayer and beseech Him to cover the Church and protect Her from enemies, both visible and invisible. We need to pray that the Lord will give strength to all the presbyters and clergy of the Church, who

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Μήνυμα Τεσσαρακοστής

ΑΠΟ ΤΟΝ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΤΗ

Τέκνα εν Χριστώ Αγαπητά,

Εχοντας επισκεφθεί την Ελλάδα όπου παραβρεθήκαμε στους ευλογημένους εορτασμούς των Θεοφανείων, έλαβα μέρος στην Συνεδρίαση της Ιεράς Συνόδου της Εκκλησίας των Γνησίων Ορθοδόξων Χριστιανών Ελλάδος. Στη συνεδρίαση, συζήτησα με την Σύνοδο το θέμα χειροτονίας ενός Δεσπότη για την Εκκλησία μας στην Βόρεια και Νότια Αμερική. Η πρόταση μου έγινε αποδεκτή από όλους τους Ιεράρχες. Καλώ όλους τους Ορθοδόξους Χριστιανούς να προσευχηθούν ιδιαίτερα κατά την εποχή τούτη της μετάνοιας, την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή, για την Αγία Εκκλησία, για την Μητρόπολη, για τις ενορίες μας, για τα Μοναστήρια μας, και για όλα όσα έχει θεσπίσει η Εκκλησία μας.

Ως Χριστιανοί, έχουμε πάντα την αίσθηση μίας σύμπνοιας, μίας ένωσης, παρόλο που οι ενορίες μας

μπορεί να είναι γεωγραφικά απομακρυσμένες η μία από την άλλη. Γνωρίζουμε πως είμαστε ενωμένοι εν Χριστώ, Μία Μητρόπολη στην Βόρεια και Νότια Αμερική, καθώς και Μία Εκκλησία σε όλον τον κόσμο, «Μία Αγία, Καθολική και Αποστολική Εκκλησία...» Είναι ανάγκη να σταθεί ο καθένας μας ενώπιον Του Θεού εν θερμή προσευχή για να Τον παρακαλέσουμε να σκεπάσει την Εκκλησία και να Την προστατεύσει από τους εχθρούς Της, ορατούς και αόρατους. Πρέπει να προσευχηθούμε να δώσει δύναμη ο Κύριος σε όλους τους ιερείς και κληρικούς της Εκκλησίας, που βρίσκονται στην πρώτη γραμμή του μετώπου, ειδικά κατά τους δύσκολους καιρούς που μας περιμένουν. Πολιορκείται η Εκκλησία σε μία αληθινή, άγρια μάχη

Συνέχεια στη σελ. 4



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About The Spiritual Watch

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Please see request information
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“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»

St. Xenia Camp 2019: Help Needed

With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, St. Xenia Camp will open for its 23rd season **August 18th through 24th, 2019** in Fryeburg, Maine. Through the intercessions of St. Xenia of St. Petersburg, and through the efforts of many who have worked tirelessly to bring the camp to where it is today, St. Xenia Camp continues to grow, providing **Orthodox youth ages 8-16** a unique opportunity for recreation, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Quality counselors represent the backbone of the camp. We are recruiting young adults for counselor positions to serve as mentors and role models for our campers. Once accepted, you will be provided valuable online training in preparation for a day of in-person training on the Saturday before camp begins (August 18th). Your participation will create lasting memories for both you and our campers!

The foundation of the camp is the charitable spirit of its **committed volunteer support staff**. We seek certified adults for lifeguard and nursing staff, and qualified and responsible adults for crews in Arts & Crafts, the Kitchen, and on our Activity Support Staff. Through shared service in Christ comes its own opportunity for fellowship and spiritual growth- if you are able, please consider joining us!

Please visit SaintXeniacamp.com for more information on all of these opportunities- **online registration** for campers will open soon, and **online applications** for counselors and support staff are now being accepted. We hope you can join us for this unique and wonderful experience of spiritual invigoration, growth and fun! If you cannot offer alms in the form of volunteer service, you can still **help keep the cost of camp affordable for all**. With nearly \$22,000 in expenses last year, we hope you will

consider financially supporting the mission of the camp in one of the following ways:

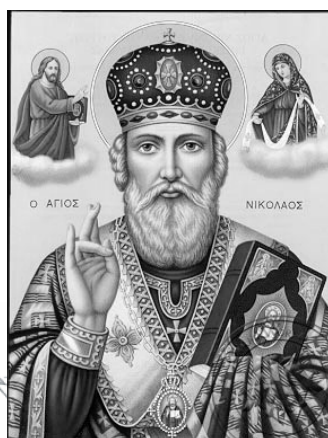
- ♦ **Sponsor a camper**- help a parish or family give their youth a unique Orthodox experience, by supporting our camper scholarship fund.
- ♦ **Set the table**- help our kitchen fuel the camp with fasting feasts for all ages. With nearly 200 in camp last year, that's a lot of mouths to feed!
- ♦ **Keep us moving**- help us save the backs of our volunteers by leaving the heavy-lifting to the camp pick-up truck. We're looking for help with a rental, loaner, or purchase/donation of an "oldie-but-goodie".
- ♦ **Volunteer transit**- with many of our volunteers flying into regional airports, we're looking for help with rental of a passenger van (also driven by volunteers) from Boston to Maine.
- ♦ **Stock the studio**- help our arts and crafts staff inspire the creative gifts of our campers. We bring it all with us, but send it all home!
- ♦ **Energize through exercise**- help our activities coordinators motivate a spirit of teamwork and adventure, from bussing to excursions in the White Mountains region, to equipment for our Activities on the Green.



- ♦ **Keep us safe and on schedule**- help our directors, nurses, and office staff keep the camp well-trained, well-supplied and organized.
- ♦ **Sponsor a counselor**- while many of our youth choose to volunteer as counselors, many are college students in need of assistance with transportation costs, and our modest \$100 stipend. Help them serve our youth by supporting our stipend and scholarship fund. Please contact our camp directors at StXeniacamp@gmail.com for assistance in giving alms to support St. Xenia Camp.

The St. Xenia Camp Directors

Family & Youth Conference 2019: St. Nicholas of Myra



The annual Family and Youth Conference will take place at the Holy Orthodox Church of St. Nicholas of Myra, in Upper Marlboro, Maryland, with the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius. The Conference will take place Friday through Sunday, October 11th to 13th, 2019. Friday, October 11 will be an optional day for registrants, on which a fieldtrip to the capital, Washington, DC, will be planned.

The theme of the Family and Youth Conference this year will be "UNITY"—Unity in the marriage, Unity in the family, Unity in the parish, Unity in the Church, and Unity in the World. What true unity is will be

addressed, as well as what true unity is not. More details will be made available in the coming weeks.

The Presbyter of St. Nicholas of Myra Orthodox Church, Fr. George Psaromatis, together with Deacon Fr. John and all the parish, ask for the prayers of the faithful as we plan this event, that the Lord will bless the effort for a soul-profitting and joyous event for all.

Please look for registration information shortly, available on the parish website: www.StNicholasMd.com as well as on the Metropolitan website: hotca.org

Lenten Message from the Metropolitan

Cont'd from front cover

are on the front lines, particularly in the difficult times which are awaiting us. There is a real, full-fledged battle raging against the Church. The prince of this world has always been the devil, but the devil is gaining more and more control on earth as time passes, and we draw closer to the end of the world. As I have always said, it is a demon infested world, but the infestation is now at a very dangerous level. It is very difficult not to get affected. We should always pray that the Christians remain faithful during this time, for without Christ, it would be impossible for us to make it through, unscathed.

This holy and blessed time of year, Great Lent, is the perfect time to stand before our Creator in fervent prayer. Great Lent is a period when we may have a little more boldness before God, because we are trying to concentrate a little. Let us take this seriously, beloved faithful. We should come before the Lord and beseech Him for our families, for our children, and for all Orthodox children. The children of the Church are going to be faced with many challenges; likely, worse challenges than the ones with which we were faced. The need for prayer is immediate, as prayer calls down God's mercy on His people. It is also the duty of all the children of our Sacred Metropolis to make special prayers during this holy season that our Lord will cover our Metropolis, that He will guide us in all things, according to His holy will, and that He would send forth worthy ministers to His holy Church.

As we said, we should increase our effort at prayer during Great Lent. Great Lent has a two-fold role in the life of every Orthodox Christian. Firstly, it is a preparation period for the Feast of feasts, Holy Pascha. In the Church, there has always been the very important practice of preparation for that which is holy. Moses fasted for forty days before receiving the Tablets of the Law. Our Lord fasted for forty days after His holy baptism, as an example for us. Prophet Elias fasted; all the Holy Prophets fasted in order to receive the grace of God. They prepared themselves. Preparation is key. Preparation for Holy Pascha is so important, that there is actually a

preparatory period before the preparation of Great Lent: we call this the "Triodion," the three weeks before Clean Monday, beginning with the Sunday of the Publican and Pharisee—and this is no coincidence. In Her wisdom, the Church shows us, in the actions of the Publican, the first thing that is needed as we begin this time of preparation: to humble ourselves and fall prostrate before God in repentance, begging His mercy for our sins.

This brings us to the second part of the role of Great Lent in the life of the Christian, which is closely linked to the first: Repentance. During the Triodion, we chant, "Do Thou Open unto me the portals of repentance, O Life Giver..." In order to repent properly we certainly need God's grace because repentance does not just come on spontaneously. We need to move all the filth and darkness away from our soul, so that we can

it becomes filthy. Therefore, we need a continuous wash, so to speak, and that wash is repentance. Rightly does St. Symeon the New Theologian say that repentance is "the second baptism," out of which we emerge cleansed once again. With the gift of repentance, sinners can become more pure than the "pure."

Therefore, Great Lent is a period when we repent, and from that repentance, comes purification. With purification, we can then see the Resurrection in a manner worthy of

Orthodox Christians. This is why, in the very first hymn of the Canon of Pascha, we chant, "Let us purify our senses and we shall behold Christ..." Purification comes from repentance—from mourning over one's sins. The more we are purified, the more we see Him, and Paschal joy abounds in our souls. Therefore we see that this pain over our sins leads to unutterable joy: mourning leads to repentance, which leads to purification, which leads to beholding the Resurrected Christ! And there is the Church, helping Her children along the path of Lent with Her instructive hymnology, written by the Saints, over the centuries. The hymns during

Great Lent, especially on Monday through Friday, are penitential hymns, that are always trying to bring the mind to some sort of contrition, and the heart to some sort of pain over our sins. It would be a blessing if most of the parishes could actually have daily services during Great Lent, so that the faithful could hear these hymns. We have the blessing, in the Monastery, to hear all these hymns. It is my fervent desire that the parishes also have as many services as possible during this period.

During Great Lent, the services are longer; indeed, there



His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos and Hierarches of the Sacred Synod, at the celebration of Holy Theophany 2019 in Peiraeus, Greece
Ο Μακαριότατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Καλλίνικος και Ιεράρχες της Ιεράς Συνόδου, στον Εορτασμό των Αγίων Θεοφανείων 2019, Πειραιεύς, Ελλάδος

see clearly enough to see ourselves, and this is not possible without God. The filth and darkness are our sins and passions. When a person starts to truly see himself, then he sees more of the details of his soul. We need to see ourselves clearly enough to feel pain over our spiritual state. Anyone who does not feel pain over his or her spiritual state, will not have true or meaningful repentance. We chant the hymn, "Thy Bridal Chamber, O my Savior, do I behold... and a garment I have not... Illuminate the garment of my soul, O Light Bestower..." We have a garment—the garment of baptism—and just like any garment, it needs to be washed. If you do not wash it, the stains will keep growing and multiplying until



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Μήνυμα Τεσσαρακοστής

Συνεχίζεται από την πρώτη σελίδα

εναντίον Της. Ο άρχων του κόσμου τούτου ήταν πάντα ο διάβολος, μα η εξουσία του διαβόλου όλο και αυξάνεται στη γη με το πέρασμα του χρόνου, καθώς πλησιάζουμε το τέλος του κόσμου. Όπως πάντα έλεγα, ο κόσμος τούτος υπόκειται σε προσβολή δαιμόνων, αλλά η προσβολή έχει φτάσει τώρα σε πολύ επικίνδυνες διαστάσεις. Είναι πολύ δύσκολο να μην επηρεαστούμε. Πρέπει να προσευχόμα-

στε πάντα πως οι Χριστιανοί θα παραμείνουν πιστοί τον καιρό αυτό, γιατί χωρίς τον Χριστό, θα ήταν αδύνατον να τα καταφέρουμε χωρίς πληγές.

Τούτη η αγία και ευλογημένη εποχή του χρόνου, η Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή, είναι ο ιδανικότερος καιρός να σταθούμε ενώπιον Του Δημιουργού μας σε θερμή προσευχή. Μπορούμε να έχουμε λίγο περισσότερο θάρρος ενώπιον Του Θεού κατά την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή, γιατί κάνουμε κάποια προσπάθεια να αφοσιώσουμε λίγο. Ας το πάρουμε σοβαρά αυτό, αγαπητοί μου Χριστιανοί.

Πρέπει να έρθουμε ενώπιον Του Κυρίου και να Τον ικετεύσουμε για τις οικογένειες μας, για τα παιδιά μας, και για όλα τα Ορθόδοξα παιδιά. Τα παιδιά της Εκκλησίας θα αντιμετωπίσουν πολλές δυσκολίες—πιθανότατα χειρότερες προκλήσεις από αυτές που αντιμετωπίσαμε εμείς. Η ανάγκη προσευχής είναι άμεση, γιατί η προσευχή προσελκύει το έλεος Του Θεού στον λαό Του. Επίσης, είναι καθήκον όλων των τέκνων της Ιεράς Μητρόπολης μας να προσευχηθούν ιδιαιτέρως και για την Μητρόπολη μας κατά την περίοδο αυτή της αγίας Τεσσαρακοστής, ώστε ο Κύριος να μας καθοδηγή σε όλα, αναλόγως με το θείο Θέλημα

Του, και να στείλει άξιους ποιμένες στην Αγία Εκκλησία Του.

Όπως είπαμε, πρέπει να

αυξήσουμε την προσπάθεια μας στην προσευχή κατά τη Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή. Η Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή έχει διπλό ρόλο στη ζωή κάθε Ορθοδόξου Χριστιανού. Πρώτον, είναι περίοδο προετοιμασίας για την Εορτή των εορτών, το Άγιο Πάσχα. Στην Εκκλησία πάντα υπήρχε η πολύ σημαντική δραστηριότητα της προετοιμασίας για τα Θεία. Ο Μωυσής νήστεψε για σαράντα ημέρες πριν λάβει τις πέτρινες τα-

σουμε στα γόνατα ενώπιον Του Θεού εις μετάνοια, ικετεύοντας το έλεος Του για τις αμαρτίες μας.

Έτσι ερχόμαστε στο δεύτερο μέρος του ρόλου της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής στη ζωή του Χριστιανού, το οποίο είναι στενά συνδεδεμένο με το πρώτο: την Μετάνοια. Κατά το Τριώδιο, ψάλλουμε: «Της μετανοίας άνοιξον μοι πύλας Ζωοδότα...» Για να βιώσουμε σω-

στή μετάνοια χρειαζόμαστε σίγουρα την χάρη Του Θεού γιατί η μετάνοια δεν έρχεται μόνη της, αυθόρμητα. Χρειάζεται να απομακρύνουμε όλη την βρωμία και το σκοτάδι από την ψυχή μας, για να μπορέσουμε να δούμε πραγματικά τους εαυτούς μας—και αυτό δεν είναι δυνατόν χωρίς Τον Θεό. Η βρωμία και το σκοτάδι είναι οι αμαρτίες και τα πάθη μας. Όταν ο άνθρωπος αρχίζει να βλέπει πραγματικά τον εαυτό του, τότε βλέπει περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες της ψυχής του. Πρέπει να δούμε τους εαυτούς μας με αρκετή σαφήνεια ώστε να αισθανθούμε πόνο για την πνευματική μας κατάσταση. Όποιος δεν αισθανθεί πόνο για την πνευματική του κατάσταση, δεν έχει αληθινή ή ουσιώδη μετάνοια. Ψάλλουμε τον ύμνο: «Τον νυμφώνα Σου βλέπω, Σωτήρ μου... και ένδυμα ουκ έχω... Λάμπρυνόν μου την στολήν της ψυχής, Φωτοδότα...» Εμείς έχουμε ένδυμα—το ένδυμα της βαπτίσεως—αλλά όπως όλα τα ενδύματα, χρειάζεται να το πλένουμε. Αν δεν πλύνεις το ρούχο, οι λεκέδες μεγαλώνουν και πολλαπλασιάζονται, ώσπου το ρούχο γίνεται καταλερωμένο. Επομένως, είναι απαραίτητη η συνεχόμενη πλύση, αν θέλετε, και αυτό το πλύσιμο είναι η μετάνοια. Ορθώς λέει ο Άγιος Συμεών ο Νέος Θεολόγος ότι η μετάνοια είναι «δεύτερο βάπτισμα» από το οποίο βγαί-

νουμε εκ νέου καθαρισμένοι. Με το δώρο της μετάνοιας, οι αμαρτωλοί μπορεί να γίνουν πιο αγνοί από τους «αγνούς».

Επομένως, η Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή είναι περίοδος μετάνοιας, και μέσα από την μετάνοια αυτή, έρχεται ο εξαγνισμός. Με τον εξαγνισμό έρχεται η ικανότητα να δούμε την Ανάσταση με τρόπο που αρμόζει στους Ορθοδόξους Χριστιανούς. Γι' αυτό ψάλλουμε, στον πρώτο ακριβώς ύμνο του Πασχαλινού Κανόνα:

«Καθαρθώμεν τας αισθήσεις και οψόμεθα τω απροσίτῳ φωτί της Αναστάσεως Χριστόν...» Ο εξαγνισμός έρχεται από την μετάνοια—από το να πενθούμε τις αμαρτίες μας. Όσο περισσότερο εξαγνίζομαστε, τόσο περισσότερο Τον βλέπουμε, και η Πασχαλινή χαρά αφθονεί στις ψυχές μας. Επομένως βλέπουμε πως ο πόνος αυτός που αισθανόμαστε για τις αμαρτίες μας

Συνεχίζεται στην επόμενη σελίδα



*Hierarchs of the Sacred Synod, at the celebration of Holy Theophany in Greece
Left to Right: Their Eminences, Metropolitan Demetrius of America, Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Attiki & Voiotia, Metropolitan Gerontios of Piraeus & Salamina, Metropolitan Moses of Toronto
Ιεράρχες της Ιεράς Συνόδου, στον εορτασμό των Αγίων Θεοφανείων στην Ελλάδα
Αριστερά προς Δεξιά: Οι Σεβασμιώτατοι, Μητροπολίτης Δημήτριος Αμερικής, Μητροπολίτης Χρυσόστομος Αττικής και Βοιωτίας, Μητροπολίτης Γερώντιος Πειραιώς και Σαλαμίνος, Μητροπολίτης Μωσής Τορόντο*

μπλέτες του Νόμου. Ο Κύριος νήστεψε για σαράντα μέρες μετά από την θεία βάπτισή Του, σαν παράδειγμα για εμάς. Ο Προφήτης Ηλίας νήστεψε—καθώς και όλοι οι Άγιοι Προφύτες νήστεψαν για να λάβουν την Χάρη Του Θεού. Προετοίμασαν τους εαυτούς τους. Η προετοιμασία είναι κλειδί. Η προετοιμασία για το Άγιο Πάσχα είναι τόσο σημαντική που υπάρχει περίοδος προ-προετοιμασίας πριν από την προετοιμασία της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής: αποκαλείται «Τριώδιο» και είναι οι τρεις εβδομάδες πριν από την Καθαρή Δευτέρα, ξεκινώντας με την Κυριακή του Τελώνη και του Φαρισαίου—και δεν είναι σύμπτωση αυτό. Εν σοφία, η Εκκλησία μας δείχνει, μέσω της συμπεριφοράς του Τελώνη, το πρώτο πράγμα που χρειάζεται καθώς ξεκινάμε την περίοδο αυτή της προετοιμασίας: να ταπεινώσουμε τους εαυτούς μας και να πέ-

Μήνυμα Τεσσαρακοστής

Συνεχίζεται από την προηγούμενη σελίδα

οδηγεί σε αμείλικτη χαρά: το πένθος οδηγεί σε μετάνοια, η μετάνοια οδηγεί στον εξαγνισμό, και ο εξαγνισμός οδηγεί στην ικανότητα να δούμε Τον Αναστάντα Ιησού! Και να η Εκκλησία, βοηθώντας τα παιδιά Της στην πορεία της Σαρακοστής με την διδακτική Υμνολογία Της, γραμμένη από τους Αγίους ανά τους αιώνες. Οι ύμνοι της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής, ειδικά Δευτέρα με Παρασκευή, είναι ύμνοι μεταμέλειας που επιχειρούν πάντα να φέρουν τον νου σε κάποια ταπεινότητα και την καρδιά σε κάποιο πόνο για τις αμαρτίες μας. Θα ήταν ευλογία εάν οι περισσότερες ενορίες μπορούσαν να κάνουν καθημερινές Ακολουθίες κατά την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή, για να μπορούσαν οι πιστοί να ακούσουν τους ύμνους αυτούς. Έχουμε την ευλογία στο Μοναστήρι να ακούμε όλους τούτους τους ύμνους. Είναι ένθερμη επιθυμία μου να γίνονται όσες δύνανται ακολουθίες στις ενορίες κατά την περίοδο αυτή.

Κατά τη διάρκεια της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής, οι ακολουθίες είναι εκτενέστερες—και πραγματικά, πρέπει να υπάρχει περισσότερη προσευχή, καθώς και αυστηρότερη νηστεία. Η νηστεία ενισχύει την μετάνοια. Καλούμαστε να παρουσιάσουμε «καρπούς άξιους της μετανοίας.» (Ματθ. 3,8) Η νηστεία είναι ένας τέτοιος καρπός μετάνοιας. Η ελεημοσύνη είναι άλλος ένας τέτοιος καρπός. Ο Κύριος μας καλεί να δώσουμε στους φτωχούς και να συντηρήσουμε τις Εκκλησίες Του και τα Μοναστήρια Του. Άλλοι καρποί της μετάνοιας είναι η προσευχή, οι ολονυχτίες, η υπομονή, η μακροθυμία, και κάθε τι καλό που μας βοηθάει να ελκύσουμε την χάρη Του Θεού.

Ο Θεός διέταξε τον λαό Του να πράττει την Αρχή του Δεκατισμού στην Παλαιά Διαθήκη—δηλαδή να δίνει ο κάθε πιστός το ένα-δέκατο του πλούτου του ή των εισοδημάτων του για ελεημοσύνη. Αποκαλούσαν τη δωρεά αυτή «το δέκατο». Πολλοί Ορθόδοξοι Χριστιανοί επιλέγουν να συνεχίζουν την Θεάρεστη αυτή συνήθεια, που πάντα φέρνει μεγάλες ευλογίες σε όποιον την εξασκεί, αναλόγως με την υπόσχεση Του Κυρίου. Ο Άγιος Δωροθέος της Γάζης μας διδάσκει για ένα άλλο είδος «δέκατου»—10% του χρόνου του κάθε Χριστιανού. Ο Άγιος Δωρόθεος θεωρεί την ίδια την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή ως έναν «δεκατισμό» και διδάσκει ότι η διάρκεια της Σαρακοστής είναι ακριβώς το ένα δέκατο του ημερολογιακού έτους. Στα γραφόμενα του εξηγεί ότι το νούμερο ημερών της Μεγάλης Τεσσαρακοστής, από την Καθαρά Δευτέρα έως την Παρασκευή πριν από το Σάββατο του Λαζάρου (εφόσον τότε λήγει η Σαρακοστή, μια και η Μεγάλη Εβδομάδα είναι κανονικά χωριστή νηστεία) υπολογίζεται μαθηματικά να είναι το ένα-δέκατο όλου του έτους, και έτσι πρέπει να αφιερώνεται στον Θεό ως δέκατο. Αγαπητοί Χριστιανοί, αυτός είναι ένας πνευματικός υγιής τρόπος να σκεφτόμαστε την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή: Είναι Του Θεού. Ας δώσουμε Στον Θεό αυτό που Του ανήκει, τις μέρες της Σαρακοστής, όσο ολοκληρωτικά γίνεται.

Ας είμαστε ευσυνείδητοι. Ας αγωνιστούμε περισσότερο κατά τη Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή. Η Σαρακοστή είναι μία μεγάλη ευκαιρία για τον

άνθρωπο, ένας θαυμαστός καιρός ανανέωσης και συγκέντρωσης στα αιώνια, αντί για τα πρόσκαιρα γύρω μας που τελικά δεν έχουν νόημα—είναι προσωρινά και γρήγορα θα περάσουν. Ας προσπαθήσουμε να πλησιάσουμε Αυτόν, ο Οποίος μας έπλασε και μας αγαπά πέρα από ό,τι μπορούμε να κατανοήσουμε. Ας κάνουμε προσπάθεια να αγωνιστούμε περισσότερο, να στερηθούμε περισσότερο. Οι πιστοί πρέπει να περιορίζουν τα ηλεκτρονικά, το διαδίκτυο, ή την τηλεόραση, και να χρησιμοποιούν την τεχνολογία μόνο για πολύ αναγκαίες ενασχολήσεις κατά την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή. Όσο περισσότερο υστερηθείτε, τόσο περισσότερα θα κερδίσετε. Όσες περισσότερες θυσίες κάνετε, τόσο περισσότερο θα λάβετε την χάρη Του Θεού. Πως εκφράζουμε την αγάπη εμείς οι Χριστιανοί; Την εκφράζουμε με θυσίες. Ας δείξουμε στον Κύριο πως Τον αγαπούμε, Τον Θεάνθρωπο, που τέντωσε τα χέρια Του και καρφώθηκε επάνω στο Ξύλο Του Σταυρού για μας.

Το Ευαγγέλιο που διαβάζεται κατά τον Εσπερινό της Αγάπης, το Πάσχα, αναφέρεται στην «όγδοη ημέρα», που εννοεί την Κυριακή του Θωμά, δηλαδή το Πάσχα συν επτά μέρες. Αλλά υπάρχει και μια άλλη σημασία της όγδοης. Οι Άγιοι Πατέρες αναφέρονται στην «όγδοη εποχή»—η δημιουργία πραγματοποιήθηκε σε επτά μέρες, και η «όγδοη» θεωρείται ο «μέλλοντας αιώνας». Ο χωρισμός της ψυχής από το σώμα που συμβαίνει στην κοίμηση του ανθρώπου δεν είναι φυσικός—είναι συνιστώσα της πεσούσας φύσης μας, αποτέλεσμα της αμαρτίας. Στην Δευτέρα Παρουσία του Κυρίου, δηλαδή όταν έλθει η όγδοη εποχή, τότε οι ψυχές και τα σώματα μας θα ξαναενωθούν στην Ανάσταση. Κατά το Πάσχα, οι πύλες του Παραδείσου είναι ανοιχτές, και εν μέρει, μπορεί να χαρεί η ψυχή μια γεύση των μελλόντων αγαθών. Με άλλα λόγια, δια της Αναστάσεως Του Σωτήρος μας και της χαράς του Πάσχα, η ψυχή μας μπορεί να ρίξει μια ματιά στην μακάρια όγδοη εποχή από τώρα.

Πρέπει να βιώνουμε την Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή πάντα με την συγχώρεση. Ως Μητροπολίτης σας, με την ευκαιρία αυτή, ζητώ συγχώρεση από όλους, και προσεύχομαι ο Κύριος να χαρίσει την συγχώρεση Του σε όλους. Όλα τα καλά που έχουν συμβεί στην Μητρόπολη μας είναι έργα Του Ελεήμονος Κυρίου μας, και ότι λάθη είναι εξαιτίας της δικής μας αδυναμίας. Είθε να έχετε όλοι μία πνευματικώς καρποφόρα Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή. Και σας παρακαλώ να θυμάστε, αγαπητά τέκνα, αφήτε αυτά που πρέπει να αφήτε: μην κρατάτε κακιές ή θυμό γιατί πρέπει να προφέρουμε με καθαρή συνείδηση το «...άφες ἡμῖν τα οφειλήματα ἡμῶν, ὡς και ἡμεῖς ἀφίεμεν τοῖς οφειλέταις ἡμῶν...» Είμαστε όλοι οφειλέτες ενώπιον Του Θεού. Ως εκ τούτου, ας κάνουμε μια καινούργια αρχή και να ξεκινήσουμε την αποπληρωμή του «χρέους» μας στον Θεό με αυτήν την εποχή, «το δέκατο» του Θεού που είναι η Μεγάλη Τεσσαρακοστή.

Διάπυρος προς Χριστόν ευχέτης,
+ ο Αμερικής Δημήτριος

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Kid-Corner



POEM REPRINTED for Holy Week

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 thought.

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



Instructive Interviews...

Q : Bless Master! Your Eminence, how old were you when you started fasting for Great Lent?

A: I do not remember ever *not* fasting. As far back as I have memories, the fasts of the Holy Church were a part of my consciousness. I remember, as a child, that non-fasting treats like pizza or ice cream happened to be offered on Wednesdays or Fridays at my school. But it was *not conceivable* for me to not keep the fast on these days, because that's how things were always done in my house and in my Church, ever since I could remember.

From Fr. Nicodemos's discussion with His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius

Q: Bless, Fr. George! Wow, you have nine children! How do you manage the fasts in your house, with kids and babies of all different ages?

A: Simple. Everybody fasts. There are no separate, non-fasting meals cooked in our house during Great Lent. Toddlers get milk, but other than that, everyone keeps the holy fasts of the Church. And as you can see, my kids are fat and healthy! Glory to God for all things!

From an Interview with Fr. George Psaromatis, Presbyter of St. Nicholas Orthodox Church





The Orthodox Home: Teaching Children to Fast



Before each fast period of the Holy Church, especially Great Lent, it is important to remind ourselves and our families of the extraordinary opportunity that lies before us. During Great Lent, in particular, we apply ourselves to the all-important disciplines of fasting, prayer, and almsgiving; we are taught not to engage in these things in an external or superficial manner but to learn these things with our hearts. There is no reason why children, even small children, cannot practice these disciplines and begin to learn the value of them.

“Suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the Kingdom of God.” (Luke 18:16)

The most important thing for parents to understand is that their example is the greatest teacher. Parents who fast and include their children in fast-

ing will be the most successful. If we as parents are lax, how will we show our children the benefits of this holy discipline?

First, let’s look at the most basic guidelines for fasting during Lent. These guidelines include avoidance of meat, meat products, fish, eggs, dairy, wine and oil. All Orthodox Christians are encouraged to keep this level of fasting, unless there is a pastoral reason not to do so. What are those exceptions? Traditionally, spiritual fathers have spoken with their parishioners about lightening the fasting expectations for the sick, the very old, small children, as well as pregnant and nursing mothers. These are “economias,” not an alternate set of rules. Some folks have fallen into the mistaken conclusion that the groups listed above are *exempt* from fasting. There are no exemptions from fasting. There are only *economias*, reached in consultation with one’s spiritual father, in which a person, because of

their condition, can be allowed to relax the strictness of the fast.

In this article, we will focus on children and fasting. When should a child start fasting and how strict should their fast be? Again, this is a matter that should be decided in consultation with one’s spiritual father. But let us look at some of the issues that inform this discussion. Will children be adversely affected by fasting?

the fast will be much harder for them. Not having learned to eat fasting foods from their early years, they can easily begin to grumble and resent the fast, once they finally begin fasting at age seven, for example. Furthermore, what parents often do not realize, is that this sets the stage for the child to fast at home, when he or she is under the eyes of the parents, but then break the fast at school and when out with friends. Beginning at age seven or eight, the child will begin repeatedly confessing this to his or her spiritual father, but of

course, the priest will be restricted in passing this on to the parents, since it was from the child’s confession. If a priest begins reporting behaviors to a child’s parents, he not only breaks the canons, but he will lose the trust of the child and cause the



Some people think so, but there is no data to support this idea. There are roughly 800,000 people in the U.S. that consider themselves Orthodox Christians. The latest statistics show that twice that many people (1.6 million) are vegan (eating no animal products) every day, all year long. They have learned to eat a nutritious diet and it is considered to be quite healthy.

One often hears that children cannot get proper nutrition if they fast (without animal products) so the age for fasting is postponed until age 7, or even later. This thinking begs the question, “Will they not need good nutrition at age 7 or age 12?” Does an active teenager not need “good” nutrition? Postponing fasting for children actually *causes* more problems than it solves. If a child begins fasting at an age at which they will have a clear memory of not having to go without animal products,

child to begin holding things back in confession. On the other hand, if a child has always fasted to some degree, they feel quite different about breaking the fast because the fast has become an integral part of who they are.

One of the reasons that young children and others have been released from strict fasting is because this fasting, in some cases throughout history, required restricting the quantity of food available, and how often one could eat. The Church realized that children needed to have enough nourishment for their growing bodies, and that eating often enough and having oil was helpful in this. Once again, the key point is not that children are released from fasting, but that they are released for a while from *strict* fasting.

There are some key goals that are vital to the spiritual life of a



Cont’d on page 8

Teaching Children to Fast *Cont'd from p.7*

family. One goal is that the family sees itself as a *united* family in which everyone, from the oldest to the youngest, takes part in prayer, fasting, and almsgiving...and regular attendance at Church services. Another goal is that family members see themselves as co-strugglers in the spiritual life—that they are in the struggle together. In this environment, children are taught that they are “big boys” and “big girls” because they have taken on spiritual discipline. And they can be rewarded for good behavior that shows that they are learning to be responsible in the spiritual life. If we wait too long to offer this spiritual gift of fasting to our children, we run the risk of getting results that are the opposite of what we wanted.

We have read articles from new-calendarists who say that fasting is too difficult in our modern world. The fact is that fasting has never been as easy as it is now. We are minutes away from grocery stores that have fresh fruits and vegetables throughout the year. There are many types of nuts and fasting breads. There are even prepared foods that are fasting. There are fresh ingredients which allow the cook at

Key goals
As one united family of co-strugglers:
 ⇒ pray
 ⇒ fast
 ⇒ give alms
 ⇒ & attend Church services together

home to make marvelous dishes. Perhaps, some of the best proof that this is true can be found at our own St. Xenia Camp. I have heard children and adults alike talk about how great the food is at camp—which takes place in its entirety during the strict fast of the Nativity of the Theotokos! The children spend time learning important lessons and being with their friends from all over North America, and not only do they not complain about the food, but they say they love it!

Let us hold fast to our dear children as we hold fast to our Faith. Let us include them as early and as often as possible in what we do so that we may hear them say, “I fast like Mama” or “I fast like Papa.” “We say our prayers together every morning and every evening.” “We talked about it and gave some money to someone who really needed it.” “We are weak, so we have to go to Church often.” “My Mama and Papa help out at the Church, and we go with them.” The sum of such remembrances will help to solidify the faith in their hearts, to turn it into a mighty oak that will not bend with each passing wind. Let us learn to care about our children’s souls as much as we care about their bodies.

Fr. Nicodemos Gayle is the Presbyter of St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church in Richmond, Virginia, and has been an Orthodox Priest for over 25 years. Fr. Nicodemos is a Psychology Professor and has been a leader in the fields of education, health and family counseling for decades. The SW is grateful to Fr. Nicodemos for sharing his wisdom and expertise in this column.

From the Synodal Celebration of Theophany 2019 in Greece

Στιγμιότυπα εορτασμού Θεοφανείων 2019 στην Ελλάδα



Thousands of faithful took part in the Sacred Theophany procession in the streets of Piraeus

Χιλιάδες πιστοί έλαβαν μέρος στην Ιερή Λιτανεία Θεοφανείων στον Πειραιά



Youths dive into the frigid sea to get the Cross for the blessing
 Νέοι βούτηξαν στην θάλασσα για τον Σταυρό, για την ευλογία



His Beatitude, Archbishop Kallinikos, throws the Cross in the sea for the blessing of the waters at the port of Piraeus
 Ο Μακαριώτατος Αρχιεπίσκοπος Καλλίνικος ρίχνει τον Σταυρό στη θάλασσα για τον αγιασμό των υδάτων στο λιμάνι του Πειραιά



Lenten Message from the Metropolitan *Cont'd from p. 3*

should be more prayer, and there should be stricter fasting. Fasting is an aid in repentance. We are asked to “Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance.” (Matt 3:8) Fasting is one of the fruits of repentance. Almsgiving is another one of these fruits; the Lord calls upon the faithful to give alms and to support His churches, His monasteries, and the poor. Other fruits of repentance are prayer, vigils, patience, longsuffering, and all good things which help us to attain God’s grace.

God commanded His people to “tithe” in the Old Testament—that is, to give away one-tenth of their wealth or income to alms. This one-tenth was called a “tithe.” Many Orthodox Christians choose to continue this God-pleasing practice, which always brings great blessings upon the giver, as the Lord has promised. St. Dorotheos of Gaza teaches of another kind of “tithe”—one of 10% of each Christian’s year. St. Dorotheos calls Great Lent itself a “tithe,” and teaches that the duration of Great Lent is exactly one-tenth of the calendar year. In his writings, he explains that the number of days in Great Lent, from Clean Monday to the Friday before the Saturday of Lazarus (the end of Lent, since Holy Week is technically a separate fast) mathematically works out to be 1/10 of the entire year, and thus should be given as a tithe to God. Beloved faithful, this is a healthy way to think of Great Lent: it is God’s. Let us give to God what is His: this season of Lent, to the extent possible.

Let us be conscientious. Let us struggle more during Great Lent. This is a great opportunity, and a wondrous time of spiritual rejuvenation and focus on the eternal, rather than on the earthly concerns all around us, which are ultimately meaningless—they are temporary and will quickly pass away. Let us try to draw closer to Him, Who created us and loves us beyond comprehension. Let us try to struggle more, to give up more. The faithful should limit access to television or the internet, and use technology only for important necessities during Great Lent. The more you give up, the more you gain. The more sacrifices we make, the more we will receive God’s

grace. How do we Christians express love? Through sacrifice. Let us show our Lord that we love Him, the Godman, Who stretched out His arms on the Tree for us.

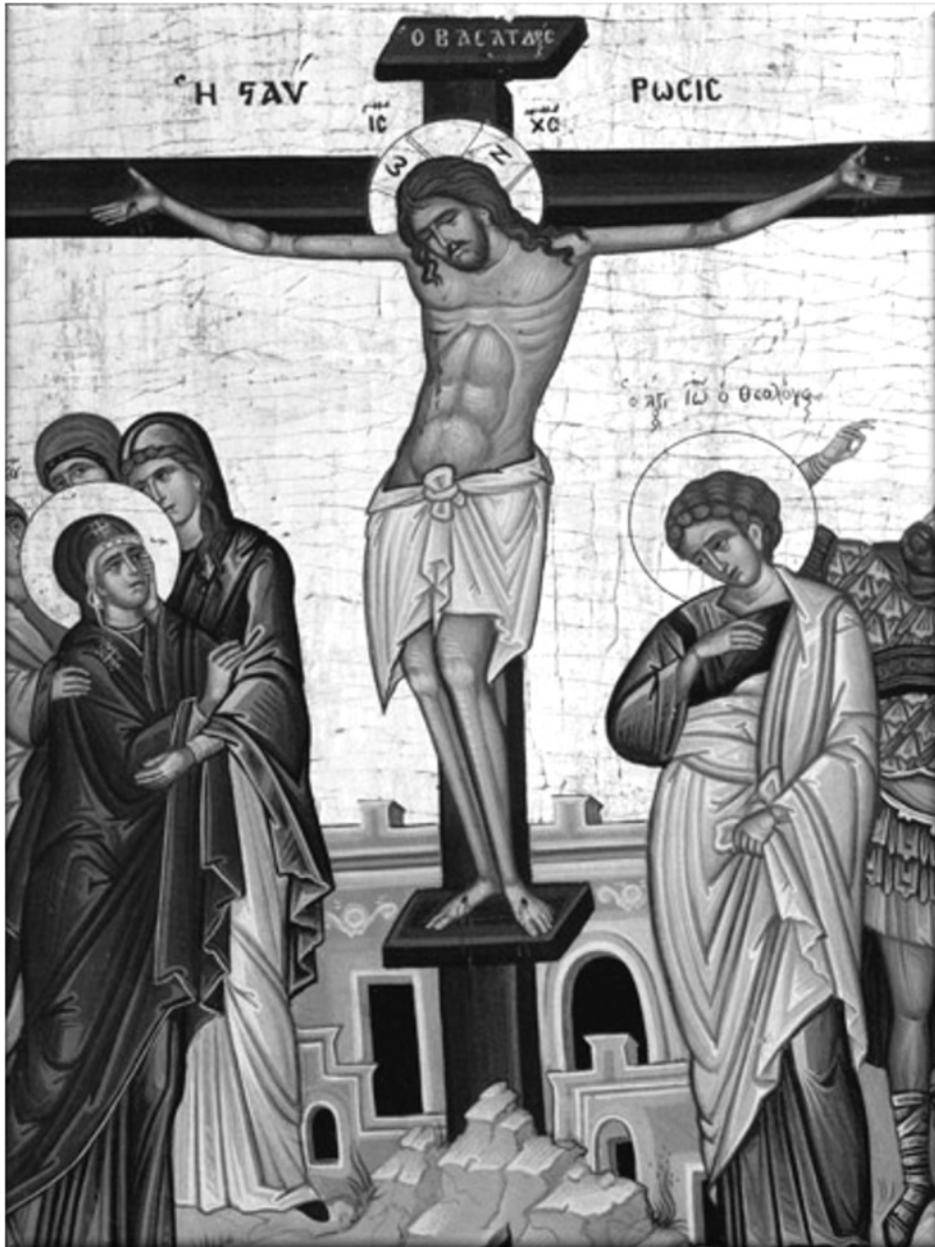
The Gospel that we read during Agapi Vespers, on Pascha, refers to the “eighth day,” meaning Pascha plus seven days, which is Thomas Sunday. There is another significance to this. The Holy Fathers refer to the “eighth age”—the world’s creation was accomplished in seven days, and the eighth age is the “age to come.” The separation between body and soul

that occurs at our repose is not natural; it is a component of our fallen nature, a result of sin. At the Second Coming of the Lord, that is, when the eighth age comes, then our souls and bodies will be reunited at the Resurrection. On Pascha, the doors of Paradise are opened, and in part, we can have a “preview of coming attractions” so to speak. In other words, through our Savior’s Resurrection and the joy of Pascha, we can glimpse, in part, that blessed eighth age.

We should always start Great Lent with forgiveness. As your Metropolitan, I wanted to take this opportunity to ask forgiveness from everyone, and I pray that our Lord bestow forgiveness on everyone. Whatever good has been done in our Metropolis is the work of our merciful Lord; whatever mistakes have been made are because of our frailty. I pray that you all have a soul-profitting Great Lent. And please remember, dear faithful, to let go of the things that you

need to let go of: do not hold on to grudges or anger because we must utter with a clear conscience “...Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” We are all debtors to the Lord. Therefore, let us make a new beginning in paying off our “debt” with this season, our “tithe” of Great Lent.

Your fervent intercessor before Christ,
+ Demetrius of America



Hierarchical Pilgrimage to the Holy Land 2018

A Pilgrim's Summary

The pilgrimage to the Holy Land this past fall 2018 was a spiritual journey of a lifetime. His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, with Father Nicholas of St. John Maximovitch Monastery, led over 50 pilgrims on a two-week journey to venerate the Holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ was born, lived, walked, called his Apostles, and performed countless miracles during his 33 years on earth. We prayed at Golgotha, wept at the Anointing Stone (where our Lord's body was prepared for burial, after He was taken down from the Cross), and chanted Christos Anesti at our Lord's tomb, where the Resurrection took place! We also prayed at the holy places where the Theotokos lived, received the message from Archangel Gabriel on the Annunciation, and we were greatly moved when we visited her tomb, which temporarily held her earthly body until she was translated unto her Son. We sailed a boat on the Sea of Galilee, where our Lord walked on the water and where His Apostles

were transformed from fishermen to "fishers of men." We followed Christ's footsteps from the fertile land of Jerusalem to Jericho and the Dead Sea into the Judean desert. We prayed in the holy caves, where our Lord Jesus Christ survived 40 days without food or water, where Prophet Elias was fed by a raven, and where, on the blessed day of our Savior's birth, the shepherds gathered their sheep; the same place which was filled with the relics of infant and monastic martyrs. We drank water from Jacob's well. We felt like the Gospel came alive in all the places that we venerated. And accompanying all these holy sites, we had the great blessing of having our Metropolitan's poignant and powerful explanations, somber prayers and chanting.

We were also greatly moved when a local monk recounted how a new-martyr St. Philoumenos courageously suffered and was numbered among the martyred saints in 1979 at the hands of some local Hebrew radicals. Our group also experienced an extraordinary

chance encounter—that is, *planned* by Providence as a joyous blessing for us—an encounter with fellow pilgrims from the Genuine Orthodox Church in Greece, led by His Eminence, Metropolitan Klimis.

We bathed in the baptismal waters at the Jordan River, where our Savior stood before His Forerunner. One of the many Holy Land miracles occurred at the Jordan River, as I witnessed countless open-mouthed fish gather around His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, as he was consecrating the Holy Mysteries. The Metropolitan's wooden cross was broken in four pieces inside its metal casing. However, after the cross had been submerged several times during the blessing of the waters, Metropolitan Demetrius observed that the wooden cross had miraculously become whole again! Glory to God for all His blessings, and for counting us worthy to be accepted as pilgrims to the Holy Land.

Submitted by Vasilios Fotopoulos, Pilgrim

Visit <http://hotca.org/videos/825-pilgrimage-to-jerusalem-2018> for two fantastic Hierarchical Pilgrimage summary videos, Part 1 and Part 2, created by the talented pilgrimess, Ruthie Schenone



In Gratitude to Our

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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
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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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«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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