

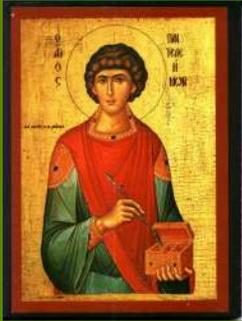
St. Panteleimon Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Fr. Andrew Bartek, Rector V. Rev. Anthony Spengler, Attached

Protodeacon Robert Northrup Reader James Tilghman

Parish Council President: Nicholas Cavaligos



Sunday, March 6, 2016

Gospel: Matthew 25:31-46

Tone 7

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2

**Sunday of Meatfare / Sunday of the Last Judgment
The 42 Martyrs of Ammoria in Phrygia**

March Bulletin Sponsor

Mr. & Mrs. John Magerko in memory of their families

Liturgical & Event Schedule

Sunday, March 6: CHILDREN SUNDAY

9:00 am: Hours

9:30 am: D. L. / Meat Social / Church School

Tuesday, March 7

6:00 pm: Monthly Chamber Meeting

7:00 pm: Village of Summit Board Meeting

7:30 pm: Monthly Healing Service

Thursday, March 10

6:30 pm: OCMC Mission Dinner

Friday, March 11

6:00 pm: Pan Orthodox roundtable for High S.
& Young adults

Saturday, March 12

5:00 pm: Missionary Priest talk in Elmhurst

6:00 pm: Great Vespers

Sunday, March 13

9:10 am: Hours

9:30 am: D.L. / 40 day Panachida / Church S. /
Cheesefare Social followed by For-
giveness Vespers to usher in the
Great Fast

40 Days Eternal Memory

March 13: Jean Mueller / Mat. Anna / Archi-
mandrite Athanasy / Archpriest John Udics /
Catherine

March 27: Dana & Blake

April 10- Steve Platko / Archpriest James
Bertolini

2016 - SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

March: St Herman's Seminary

This collection will take place
during the Litany before the *Our*
Father. Or you can speak to Steve Grabavoy to
contribute.



QUESTIONS TO PONDER ON MEATFARE SUNDAY

*Because this Sunday stresses the notion of being prepared, "before the end", are we preparing ourselves by using the ever-present "now"?

*Are we spiritually prepared to undertake the physical fast that is recommended?

*Due we understand that a "true fast" includes the virtues and charity?

SUNDAY OF MEATFARE

In your justice do not call me to judgment, scrutinizing my actions and correcting my misdeeds: in your mercy look not upon my transgressions, but save me, O God almighty.

Matins Canon, Ode 1

TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY PAN ORTHODOX VESPERS Sponsored by the Orthodox Christian Clergy Association of Greater Chicago

When: Sunday, March 20, 2016

Time: 6:30 PM

Where:

St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
893 Church Road
Elmhurst, IL 60126

Homilist:

Bishop of Chicago and the Midwest
Responses will be offered by the Pan Ortho-
dox Choir of Greater Chicago, Gordana
Trbuhovich, Director

Flier in Church Basement!

UP COMING EVENTS

19TH OCMC MISSION TEAM DINNER

When: Thursday March 10

Where:

St. John the Baptist Greek Orthodox Church
2350 East Dempster Street
Des Plaines, IL 60016

Cost: \$35

Featuring Special Guest
Very Rev Dr Chad Hatfield
Chancellor, CEO & Professor of Missiology @ St
Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary

Doors open @ 6:30pm

Please reserve your reservation or to make donation:

Mail: Missions Team Chicago, 88 Adams Ave, Glencoe,
IL 60022

Email: MTCBenefit@yahoo.com / On line:
www.MissionTeamChicago.org / Phone: 317-709-0168

Flier on Bulletin Board in Church Basement!

FROM ROCK STAR ATHEIST TO ORTHODOX MISSIONARY PRIEST

When: Saturday March 12

Time: 5:00 pm Great Vespers followed by Meatless
Spaghetti Dinner (Free Will offering) followed @
7:00pm Fr. Themis Presentation

Where: St. Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church
893 North Church Road
Elmhurst, IL 60126

NOTE: Please RSVP by March 11 to 630-834-7010 or
saintdemetriosoffice@gmail.com / All Proceeds benefit
The Holy Orthodox Mission in Sierra Leone

Father Themis Adamopoulos, is an Orthodox Monk, a man of God who sold everything he had, gave it to the poor and followed Jesus into the world of poverty, affliction and oppression; a world of widows and the disabled, a world of the hungry, the sick, those in jail and those forgotten. The Holy Orthodox Mission in Sierra Leone is the outpost of Light in a place that has suffered through the darkness of civil war, poverty and most recently the scourge of Ebola. Through all these trials Rev Themis has been there doing Christ's work- giving drink to the thirsty, food to the hungry, clothing to the naked and comfort to the sick.



Metropolitan Tikhon, Archbishop Leo concelebrate Liturgy at New Valaam Monastery

On Sunday, February 28, 2016, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and His Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek con-celebrated the Divine Liturgy with His Eminence, Archbishop Leo and His Grace, Bishop Arseni at the Church of the Transfiguration of Christ at the New Valaam Monastery during the Metropolitan's official visit to the Orthodox Church in Finland.

At the conclusion of the Liturgy, Metropolitan Tikhon presented an icon and relic of Saint Herman of Alaska. In turn, Archbishop Leo presented an icon of Our Lady of Valaam to Metropolitan Tikhon. The texts of their greetings to one another appear below.

Address of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon Church of the Transfiguration of Christ, New Valaam Monastery, Finland Sunday, February 28, 2016

Your Eminence, Archbishop Leo;
Your Eminence, Archbishop Melchisedek;
Your Grace, Bishop Arseni;
Reverend Father Abbot Sergius and Brothers of this Holy
Monastery;
Reverend Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The light of the Transfiguration of Christ, shining brightly in this Holy Church, in this Holy Monastery, and in Your Eminence's words of greeting, leads us all to joy in Christ – joy in the Holy Eucharist, joy in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, joy in our common apostolic ministry in Finland and in North America.

It has been a great blessing for me and my small delegation from the Orthodox Church in America to make this pilgrimage to the Finnish lands, to witness the great presence that the Orthodox Church of Finland has established here and to catch a glimpse of the Christian life in all three of your dioceses. We have been ably assisted by bishops, clergy, monastics and faithful of your Church, but most especially by Father Rauno Pietarinen, who has been our faithful guide throughout our visit.

While separated by great distances, the Orthodox Church in Finland and the Orthodox Church in America share a common history and vision. The first saint of America came to Alaska from Valaam. The participation of the late Archbishop Paul of Finland in the 1970 canonization of Saint Herman in Kodiak, Alaska remains a living sign of our common path in mission and sanctity. The abiding presence of the monastic and missionary fruit of Saint Herman and his northern ascetic predecessors was felt very vividly during our visit. **Con't Page 8**

Five bishops to bless Parma, OH's ZOE House March 4

His Grace, Bishop Paul of Chicago and the Midwest will be one of five hierarchs who will bless the new ZOE House of ZOE for Life in Parma's original post office at 5454 State Road during its open house on Friday, March 4, 2016. The open house will begin at 6:30 p.m. with the blessing slated to take place at 7:00 p.m.

Headquartered in Cleveland Heights, OH, ZOE for Life is a non-profit Orthodox Christian ministry that helps women during and after crisis pregnancies, offers pure living resources and retreats, and assists Orthodox Christian couples seeking to expand their families through adoption. The agency, which is endorsed by the [Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the USA](#), offers its services at ZOE House, into which it moved at the end of December.

Also slated to bless the house are His Eminence, Metropolitan Savas of the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Pittsburgh; His Eminence, Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit and the Romanian Episcopate [OCA], His Grace, Bishop Daniel of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, and His Grace, Bishop Gregory of Nyssa of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA.

"The Orthodox people are working together in unity, under the loving guidance of our metropolitans, bishops and clergy," said Paula Kappos, ZOE for Life President. ZOE House occupies two-thirds of the post office's space, Ms. Kappos said. With approximately 3,000 square feet, the new facility provides space for meetings, classes, prayer circles and other healing ministries. It is on the bus line and close to the freeway, occupying a single floor for easy access to pregnant women and children.

"The new facility will also allow ZOE for Life to pursue its plan to create a Women's Center to provide limited obstetrical ultrasounds, peer counseling, needed supplements and professional referrals to ensure that crisis pregnancies aren't dangerous one," Ms. Kappos added. "We are incredibly excited about what God is doing with ZOE for Life and are looking forward to whatever else He might have in store."

REFLECTION

A man becomes spiritual insofar as he lives a spiritual life. He begins to see God in all things, to see His power and might in every manifestation. Always and everywhere he sees himself abiding in God and dependent on God for all things. But insofar as a man lives a bodily life, so much he does bodily things; He doesn't see God in anything, even in the the most wondrous manifestations of His Divine power. In all things he sees body, material, everywhere and always – "God is not before his eyes." (Ps. 35:2) ~ **St. John of Kronstadt** ~

CANTON, OHIO SITE OF THIRD SMALL PARISH FORUM

The Diocese of the Midwest and the Archdiocese of Western Pennsylvania recently announced that the third annual Small Parish Forum will be held at Holy Assumption Church, Canton, OH July 14-16, 2016.

The Forum will focus on specific parish situations common to the numerous "small" parishes throughout the Orthodox Church in America and other jurisdictions. Workshops and presentations will explore ways to assist parishes with memberships of 75 or fewer souls to achieve stability, build a positive self-image, and accept their calling to live a life in Christ without necessarily becoming "big."

"Small Parishes can bring people to Christ in intimate and exciting ways often unavailable to larger parishes," said Joseph Kormos, Forum Co-chairperson and Parish Development Ministry Leader for the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh. "Forum sessions will offer actionable information, tips and good practices for strengthening small parishes that will be valuable to clergy and lay leaders alike."

The Forum's agenda, yet to be finalized, will include panel discussions, interactive workshops, sessions focusing on worship, an array of speakers, parallel sessions for clergy and laity, and case studies. Sessions will begin at 3:00 p.m. on Thursday, July 14 and conclude at noon on Saturday, July 16.

Archpriest Daniel Rentel, Co-chairperson for the Forum said, "The previous Forums, held in Byesville OH and Weirton WV, were a big success. In each of those sessions we drew 60 persons from six OCA dioceses and three other jurisdictions. We've created a great advisory team of past attendees and speakers to guide our agenda and enable people to leave with actionable ideas. And about half of the OCA's parishes are within a manageable drive to Canton."

Registration will be open April 1, 2016. Additional information on the registration procedure will be made available in advance. To maintain an atmosphere of fellowship and dialogue among attendees, registration will again be limited to 65 persons.

Sessions will take place at Canton's Holy Assumption Church. A block of rooms will be reserved at local hotels. A \$100.00 per person registration fee will include meals, breaks, a hospitality reception and Forum materials. Attendees from the Diocese of the Midwest and the Archdiocese of Pittsburgh are eligible for tuition rebates and grants to assist with travel costs.

Presentation of Stamp Honoring Patriarch Tikhon (Belavin) Held in General Consulate

On Thursday, February 25, a reception was held in the General Consulate of the Russian Federation on behalf of Consul Igor Leonidovich Golubovsky and the Administrator of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA, His Grace Bishop John of Narofominsk on the occasion of the presentation of a commemorative postage stamp honoring St. Tikhon (Belavin), Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia.

The event was attended by clergy of the Moscow Patriarchate, the Russian Church Abroad and the Orthodox Church in America. Also attending the event was the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation G. Gatilov, and representatives of diplomatic missions, public and cultural organizations of the United States

In their opening remarks, Bishop John and Igor Leonidovich stressed the importance of Patriarch Tikhon to the Russian Orthodox Church in the USA and the Fatherland. Yuri Sandulov, the Director of the fund "Northern Cross", and coordinator of the commemorative stamp project, discussed that over five-thousand copies of the stamp have been printed. He also talked about the final stages of the naming of the section of E.97th St where St. Nicholas Cathedral is located to honor Patriarch Tikhon.

Afterwards, the stamps were ceremoniously released on a specially made envelope with an image of St. Nicholas Cathedral.



CONFESSIONS

Confession will be heard after Great Vespers every Saturday and on Sunday mornings between 9:00am and 9:25am.

Confession helps us prepare ourselves for our eternal salvation. We should be going more than once a year. At least 4 times during the four fasting periods.

By the Waters of Babylon by Fr. Lawrence Farley

Recently I was finishing up in the altar while the choir was practicing, and I heard them sing (beautifully, as always) the pre-Lenten Matins hymn, "By the waters of Babylon." After it was all over, I stopped to ask them, "Do you know where Babylon is?" After a few blank stares, someone tentatively offered, "East of here?" It was a safe guess; we live on the west coast, and pretty much everything is east of here. No doubt the person meant, "somewhere in the Middle East," which is of course correct.

But I was thinking of something else. I pointed to the doors leading out from the church into the parking lot, and said, "It is just on the other side of those doors." We live in Babylon, in world fixed in its rebellion against God and its oppression of His people. "And here," I continued, "is Jerusalem. Right here in this nave. When we stood before the chalice earlier this morning, our feet were standing within Jerusalem."

This is perhaps why we sing the hymn "By the waters of Babylon" just before we enter Great Lent. This hymn is based on Psalm 137, and the psalm is not so much a song as a cry of pain, a pang piercing the heart set to the music of a harp. Israel had been ravaged and raped by a foreign invader, both metaphorically and literally. The overthrow of Jerusalem at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC was accomplished with all the horror of ancient warfare—soldiers cut down, old men killed where they sat, women and young girls ravished, children's brains knocked out against the rocks. Then the defeated and starved survivors were taken far away to languish in exile in Babylon. To cap it all, as they languished there, their Babylonian "hosts" demanded that they take their harps and use them to play for them some of the Temple songs they had heard so much about. Zion's Temple had some great music, right? How's about playing some for us?

It was the crowning humiliation, the final blasphemy. To think of the holy hymns once sung in the sacred Temple courts to the praise of Yahweh now being used as secular entertainment, reduced to a kind of pagan drinking song! The Psalmist's heart overflowed with pain and indignation—by the rivers of Babylon, sitting beside its canals, he sat down and wept over it all. How could one sing the Lord's song like this in a foreign land, forgetting and debasing all that one once knew as holy? If I ever do that, the Psalmist promised, if I ever use my skillful right hand to play one of the songs of Zion for the amusement of Zion's ravagers, may my right hand wither up and never play anything again! No: I refuse to settle down and accept Babylon as the new normal, forgetting the joy of knowing God and worshipping **Con't Page 7**

Prayer List : UPDATED 2-28-16

Priests: Anthony Spenglar, John Kuchta, James Gleason (*Fr.'s spiritual father*), *Ted Bobosh, *Moses Berry, *John Magramm, John Duranko, Lev Holowoty, *Anastassy Fehr, *Leonid Kishkovsky, *Fr. John Zdinak, *Fr. Daniel Rental, *Fr. George Havrila, *Fr. Andrew Harrison, Fr. David Maroney

Deacons: NONE

Matushka: Kristy Lollar & her unborn child, *Carol Janacek, Pani Patricia Duranko, *Cindy Zdinak

Parishioners: Karen Muzyka, Mark Hruban, Ronald Stachowiak, Rebecca Eggers, Jason Kirnbauer, Sonja Harris, Andrei Davik

Parishioner's Friends / Family: Donna Parhas (*Nick's Cousin*), Ron (*Mark's Friend*), Mary Ann Magerko, John Magerko, Stephen Holly & Walter Litzie (*Fr.'s cousin*), George Cavaligos (*Nick's brother*), Christos Parhas (*Nick's cousin*), Constantine Cavaligos (*Nick's dad*), John Hartel (*Joann's Step-dad*), Sandra (*Karen's sister*), Erika Northrup, Danielle Krush, Mark Svava, Linda Davik, Mary Northrup, Sandra Leonchik, Dianne Northrup, Raymond Northrup, Joey Krush, Carol Bregin (*Friend of Lynn*), Ann Lazo (*Friend of Lynn*), George Lazo (*Friend of Lynn*), Bruce (*Fr. Kurt's brother*), Christine & her unborn baby, Chrissy Marron, Kelly Flynn, Baby Faith, Daniel Tiani (*friend of Becky Eggers*), Vivian (*friend of Becky Eggers*), Tim Kendra (*Rich Wolfe's father*), Joan (*Hruban friend*), Julianna (*Hruban Family*), John, Robert, Aubrey, James, June & James (*Hruban Friend*), Jacob (*Spengler Family*), Emilian (*Spengler Family*), Joyce (*Spengler Family*)

Other Requests: Lucille (*Duke*), Dianne (*Bill Rudolph*), Elizabeth Lilos, Jemsey Pradun, Mae Joanna Bass, Hermenegil (*Neighbor*), Lidiya (*Neighbor*), Cathleen Rebollar, Patricia Schuster, *John Sedor, *Maria Sokolova & her 3 new born babies (Lydia, Yekaterina, Helena), *Daria Petrykowski

Military: Amber, Caleb, Nicholas, David, Timothy, Robert, Kristen, Matthew, Brian, Daniel, Joseph, Joseph (*Fr.'s cousin*)

Captives: Metropolitan Paul (*Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo*), Archbishop John (*Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo*)

For the UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria / Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world / Those held captive throughout the world.

Additions or removals from the list? Please notify Fr. Andrew. (*Bishop Request)

Archpriest James Bertolini- MEMORY ETERNAL

LAS VEGAS, NV [OCA]: rchpriest James Bertolini, who in retirement was attached to Saint Paul the Apostle Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on February 29, 2016.

Born in Brooklyn, NY in 1942, he was received into the Orthodox faith in 1971 at Brooklyn's Saint Mary Antiochian Orthodox Church after spending some time in Roman Catholic religious orders. He received a BA from Kean University in 1973, MSW from Wayne State University in 1979, and MDiv from Saints Cyril and Methodius Seminary in 1981. He was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood by His Eminence, Metropolitan Philip [Saliba] of the Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese in 1973. He was received into the OCA in the early 1980s. He served Antiochian and OCA parishes in Michigan prior to his move to Las Vegas, NV, where he worked as a family counselor for the US Air Force.

The Funeral Service for a Priest will be celebrated at Saint Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, PA at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, March 5, at 10:30 a.m. Interment will follow.



REFLECTION

Speak well of those who speak evil of you. Pay good for evil. Pray for those who cause you various offenses, wrongs, temptations, persecutions. Whatever you do, on no account condemn anyone; do not even try to judge whether a person is good or bad, but keep your eyes on that one evil person for whom you must give an account before God—yourself.

~ St. Ignatius Brianchaninov ~

M A R C H

HAPPY BIRTHDAY		NAMES DAY
James Ho: Child 3- Tanya Wolfe 23- Valerie Boswell 27- Ronald Svara 30- Steve Grabavoy	2- Arlene Tilghman 8- Jason Kirnbauer 23- Steve Nemic 28- John Sutko	1- The Rt. Rev. David, Bishop of Sitka & Alaska 9- Valerie Boswell 17- Alexis Northrup 17- The Most Rev. Alejo, Archbishop of Mexico City & Mexico 23- The Most Rev. Nikon, ArchBishop of Boston & New England & the Albanian Archdiocese

If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

In blessed repose: M A R C H

13- Metropolitan Nicholas (11) 19- George Michals (09) 22- "Mike" Dushan Daniel Bellich (88) 29- Ronald E. Anderson (01) 1942: Vasilij Makovskiy Matrey Kuchek Julia Simrak	1943: Adam Korenchuk Vasilij Brayko Anna Homko Theodore Yarmotzek Philip Gritzuk (Rizdy)	Timothy Starko Justin Tsypugh Paul Makovetsky Boris Golubovich
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Remember those who have gone before us in prayer. If there is a name missing from the above list, please speak to Fr. Andrew to have them added.

Bulletin Sponsor: Would you be interested in being a bulletin sponsor in memory of, or in honor of, a loved one or friend?

Sponsors will be remembered during Divine Services for that month. Donation: \$40 for the month.

Memorial Candle(s): *(Give names to Fr. Andrew)*

Option 1: The Tray of Candles under the Cross is now the area of remembrance for the deceased. If you would like the tray of candles placed in memory of a deceased loved one, the suggested donation is \$30. The Sponsors will be remembered during the Divine Services for that Sunday.

Option 2: One of the small Tray's under the Theotokos in the back of the Church. Donation \$25

Option 3: If this tray is full, one or more candles may be gotten at the candle desk & be placed in the sand box.

Candles for the Health of a Loved One *(Speak to Fr. Andrew to make arrangements)*

Option 1: One of The small tray's of 40 candles in front of the icon of woman saints in the back of the Church - donation \$25.

Option 2: The altar candles in the Sanctuary & Eternal Light candle - donation \$20.

Option 3: If Candles are filled more candles may be gotten at the candle desk & placed in the sand box.

Monthly Panachida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Panachida. If you would like your loved one(s) to be remembered, please give a list of names to Fr. Andrew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month. If there is a remembrance (newly departed or 40th day remembrance) of your family or friends we will remember them on the closest Sunday otherwise they will be remembered on the third Sunday. If it is an remembrance not related to our parish family we will just sing Memory Eternal on the 40 Day remembrance.

Hospitalization/Shut-ins: If anyone goes into hospital, or is a shut-in, please let Fr. Andrew know as soon as possible so he can attend to them and their family members.

Celebration? Achievement?: Your spiritual family would like to share in your achievement, celebration, and accomplishment. Send in a picture or email to Fr. Andrew, by Wednesday @ 5:00 pm so he can place it in the bulletin!

By the Waters Con't

Him in His courts. I refuse to become Babylonian. In my secret heart, I will live and die as one from Jerusalem. I will exalt Jerusalem above my highest joy.

This must be our song too, for we also live in Babylon. Is the world so very different? Christians and their faith are openly mocked in the public square, and icons are sold as *objets d'art*. The values enshrined and protected by law fly in the face of everything the Church has held dear, and the pressure is constant for Christians to acquiesce and support the secular status quo. Forget the old ways, and the Church's dogmas and values and canons. It's a new day; it's 2016. You're in Babylon now.

Indeed we are. But our hearts do not forget where we came from or where we truly belong. Babylon is not our home. Here we are but strangers and sojourners, exiles upon the earth (1 Peter 2:11). Our true home is Jerusalem. If we ever forget this and settle down and live like the Babylonians, may our right hands wither and our tongues cleave in silence to the roofs of our mouths. Let us take courage. The exile will not last forever. Jesus is coming. Soon enough we will all go home.



REFLECTION

Love never hates anyone, never reproves anyone, never condemns anyone, never grieves anyone, never abhors anyone, neither faithful nor infidel nor stranger nor sinner nor fornicator, nor anyone impure, but instead it is precisely sinners, and weak and negligent souls that it loves more, and feels pain for them and grieves and laments, and it feels sympathy for the wicked and sinners, more than for the good, imitating Christ Who called sinners, and ate and drank with them. For this reason, showing what real love is, He taught saying, "Become good and merciful like your Father in Heaven," and as He rains on bad and good and makes the sun to rise on just and unjust alike, so also is the one who has real love, and has compassion, and prays for all.

~ Abba Ammonas ~

REFLECTION

"The Church is like Noah's ark that was full of both clean and unclean animals. It must have had an unholy smell, and yet it was carrying eight persons to salvation. The world today is tearing up the photographs of a good society, a good family, a happy, individual personal life. But the Church is keeping the negatives. And when the moment comes when the world wants a reprint, we will have them."

~ Archbishop Fulton Sheen ~

Sunday of Meatfare of the Last Judgment

Commemorated on [March 6](#)

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemmann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

Matthew 25:31-46 (Gospel)

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left.

Then the King will say to those on His right hand, ‘Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ’for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; ’I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.’ Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? ’When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? ’Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ And the King will answer and say to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.’ Then He will also say to those on the left hand, ‘Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: ’for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; ’I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.’

Then they also will answer Him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?’ Then He will answer them, saying, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.’ And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

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Metropolitan’s Address Con’t

The Orthodox Churches in Finland and North America live in democratic western societies, offering us many opportunities for witness and mission, for pastoral work, for the proper ordering of our Church life. Our churches benefit from structures of shared responsibility of the whole people of God, bishops, priests, and lay people.

Our societies also present us with many challenges. At times, these challenges require of us the courage to be critics of our societies, to be counter-cultural. At other times our societies challenge us to search our faith, our tradition, our conscience to answer difficult questions troubling our nations and our people. At all times, we should strive to speak the truth in love, which can only

be done by acquiring the humility of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Orthodox Churches of Finland and America are united with the Orthodox Churches of Eastern Europe and the Middle East in faithful adherence to the Orthodox Tradition and in confessing the Orthodox Faith. Yet in carrying the western experience within us, our Churches contribute to the wholeness of Orthodoxy today, giving clear evidence that the Orthodox Faith is a living faith, capable of bearing witness in the West as well as in the East. In view of this, it is to be regretted that our Churches have not been able to participate in the preparation of the Great and Holy Synod that will be convened on the island of Crete in June of this year.

Nevertheless, the integrity and authenticity of our Church life is not dependent on status or recognition. What matters is the quality of our mission and witness. As the Orthodox Church of Finland and the Orthodox Church in America strive to “increase the measure of grace committed to us,” seeking to be faithful to the Gospel in all dimensions of ministry, we can, and must, strengthen and support one another. This mutual support and encouragement should be expressed in co-operation and collaboration. Your Eminence has identified three dimensions of desirable collaboration and exchange. We join you in this vision.

Seminary exchange programs are an excellent starting point. Our young people – and through them our Churches – would benefit from direct experience of one another’s seminaries and parishes, from growing knowledge of one another’s Church institutions and ministries.

The North American societies of the United States and Canada and the Finnish society present questions and challenges to human existence which our Churches are not fully prepared to address. A dialogue in the field of ethics would enhance our ability to discuss difficult issues and would help equip our Churches to take up these difficult issues responsibly, honestly, and competently.

Finally, the United States and Canada, together with Finland and other Nordic countries, have important connections to the Northern or Arctic region. We affirm the need to strengthen the cooperation of our Northern areas – Finnish Lapland and the Oulu Diocese in Finland, Alaska, and parts of Canada. We share a common concern for our indigenous people in the North.

Without delay let us set up a joint mechanism to initiate and encourage collaboration in these areas, and to remain alert for other areas of collaboration which will emerge.

We look to Your Eminence as Archbishop of the Church of Finland to be our partner in this common work and this common vision. ***Con’t Page 9***