

## *St Mary Con't*

because he had not asked the saint's name. He hoped to do so the following year.

A year passed, and Abba Zosimas went into the desert. He reached the place where he first saw the holy woman ascetic. She lay dead, with arms folded on her bosom, and her face was turned to the east. Abba Zosimas washed her feet with his tears and kissed them, not daring to touch anything else. For a long while he wept over her and sang the customary Psalms, and said the funeral prayers. He began to wonder whether the saint would want him to bury her or not. Hardly had he thought this, when he saw something written on the ground near her head: "Abba Zosimas, bury on this spot the body of humble Mary. Return to dust what is dust. Pray to the Lord for me. I reposed on the first day of April, on the very night of the saving Passion of Christ, after partaking of the Mystical Supper."

Reading this note, Abba Zosimas was glad to learn her name. He then realized that Saint Mary, after receiving the Holy Mysteries from his hand, was transported instantaneously to the place where she died, though it had taken him twenty days to travel that distance.

Glorifying God, Abba Zosimas said to himself, "It is time to do what she asks. But how can I dig a grave, with nothing in my hands?" Then he saw a small piece of wood left by some traveler. He picked it up and began to dig. The ground was hard and dry, and he could not dig it. Looking up, Abba Zosimas saw an enormous lion standing by the saint's body and licking her feet. Fear gripped the Elder, but he guarded himself with the Sign of the Cross, believing that he would remain unharmed through the prayers of the holy woman ascetic. Then the lion came close to the Elder, showing its friendliness with every movement. Abba Zosimas commanded the lion to dig the grave, in order to bury Saint Mary's body. At his words, the lion dug a hole deep enough to bury the body. Then each went his own way. The lion went into the desert, and Abba Zosimas returned to the monastery, blessing and praising Christ our God.

Arriving at the monastery, Abba Zosimas related to the monks and the igumen, what he had seen and heard from Saint Mary. All were astonished, hearing about the miracles of God. They always remembered Saint Mary with faith and love on the day of her repose.

Abba John, the igumen of the monastery, heeded the words of Saint Mary, and with the help of God corrected the things that were wrong at the monastery. Abba Zosimas lived a God-pleasing life at the monastery, reaching nearly a hundred years of age. There he finished his temporal life, and passed into life eternal.

The monks passed on the life of Saint Mary of Egypt by word of mouth without writing it down.

"I however," says Saint Sophronius of Jerusalem (March 11), "wrote down the Life of Saint Mary of Egypt as I heard it from the holy Fathers. I have recorded everything, putting the truth above all else."

"May God, Who works great miracles and bestows gifts on all who turn to Him in faith, reward those who hear or read this account, and those who copy it. May he grant them a blessed portion together with Saint Mary of Egypt and with all the saints who have pleased God by their pious thoughts and works. Let us give glory to God, the Eternal King, that we may find mercy on the Day of Judgment through our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom is due all glory, honor, majesty and worship together with the Unoriginate Father, and the Most Holy and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen."

## *Complaining*

Instead of complaining, do something about your complaints. Make a difference in your life, and the lives of those around you, by keeping focused on making a difference. If there is reason to complain, change your complaint into a positive action that changes your perspective. Complainers never change a thing by their constant negativity, other than make those around them want to take a cab to the other side of town. Complaining seems to many like such a little sin, and nothing to be worried about. Yet the impact of a complaining heart is spiritually ruinous, for when we complain we bear bitter fruits that destroy our peace and the peace of those around us.

When we refuse to fill our lives with complaints, we live our lives knowing that opposing the evil that is the root of our complaints, means we preserve our inner peace. Some live as though avoiding complaining will make everything worse, for by doing so they ignore the reality of negative things. Yet when we complain, we are returning evil for evil, and giving the fallen spirits the very thing they thrive upon. Complaining never changes a thing, but only strengthens the power of the evil that is the very basis of our complaints. When we face every bad situation with a positive response, we empower the heart to good, by diminishing the power of negativity. By keeping a positive mindset, the sin of complaining is banished from our life, and everyone around us is bathed in a healing and healthy setting

### **Galatians 3:23-29 (Epistle, Saint)**

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

### **Hebrews 9:11-14 (Epistle)**

But Christ came as High Priest of the good things to come, with the greater and more perfect tabernacle not made with hands, that is, not of this creation. Not with the blood of goats and calves, but with His own blood He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of bulls and goats and the ashes of a heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifies for the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

### **Mark 10:32-45 (Gospel)**

Now they were on the road, going up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was going before them; and they were amazed. And as they followed they were afraid. Then He took the twelve aside again and began to tell them the things that would happen to Him: "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death and deliver Him to the Gentiles; and they will mock Him, and scourge Him, and spit on Him, and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again." Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to Him, saying, "Teacher, we want You to do for us whatever we ask." And He said to them, "What do you want Me to do for you?" They said to Him, "Grant us that we may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on Your left, in Your glory." But Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So Jesus said to them, "You will indeed drink the cup that I drink, and with the baptism I am baptized with you will be baptized; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared." And when the ten heard it, they began to be greatly displeased with James and John. But Jesus called them to Himself and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers over the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first shall be slave of all. For even the Son of Man

did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

### **Luke 7:36-50 (Gospel, Saint)**

Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner." And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more." And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

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*It is only necessary to seek one thing: to be with Jesus. The man who remains with Jesus is rich, even if he is poor with regard to material things. Whoever desires the earthly more than the heavenly loses both the earthly and the heavenly. But whoever seeks the heavenly is Lord of the whole world.*

— St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

## Bishop Neofitos of Kenya preaches at Cleveland Deanery Akathist Service in Campbell, OH

Clergy and faithful from the Diocese of the Midwest's Cleveland Deanery were joined by the Eastern Orthodox Clergy Association of the Mahoning Valley in hosting the celebration of the Akathist to the Holy Cross on Sunday evening, March 19, 2017 at Saint John the Baptist Church Here.



According to Archpriest Andrew Nelko, host Pastor, the guest homilist was His Grace Bishop Neofitos [Kongai] of the newly established Diocese of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, within the Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa.

“Bishop Neofitos is only the second native-born Kenyan bishop,” said Father Andrew. “His Grace was born in 1970 in the village of Kesengei, in the Nandi district of Kenya. After graduating from high school in 1992 he attended two Kenyan institutions culminating in graduation from Makarios III Seminary in 1998. In September of the same year he was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood, taking the name Neofitos after a famous Cypriot saint. His Grace enrolled at the Holy Cross Greek Orthodox School of Theology, Brookline, MA in 2001, graduating with a Master of Theology degree in Theological Studies in 2004 and a Master of Theology degree in Theology in 2005.”

Father Andrew added that in 2007, Bishop Neofitos was tonsured as a monk at the Holy Transfiguration Monastery in the Metropolis of Veria, Thessaloniki, Greece. He was elected Assistant Bishop of the Holy Archdiocese of Kenya by the Holy Synod of the Patriarchate of Alexandria in November and unanimously elected as Bishop of the Diocese of Nyeri and all Mt. Kenya Region.

“Bishop Neofitos has put his heart and soul in serving his faithful flock in Kenya, and is especially devoted to ministering to children and families in need,” said Father Andrew. “In his remarks, His Grace spoke on the message of the Cross — a message of love, self-sacrifice and struggle — and passionately related it to the challenges the clergy and faithful of his diocese face on a day-to-day basis.” Following the Akathist, a Lenten meal for the nearly 150 faithful and clergy in attendance was served by the Sisterhood of Saint John's Parish, at which time a check for \$1,600.00 was presented to His Grace as a token of love and support of his continuing work.

## All In God's Time Priest Geoffrey Korz

*“For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace” (Romans 8:6)* A priest I knew once said that it was never appropriate to have a clock in the altar: we should keep liturgical time based on the schedule of Heaven. When it comes to time, we are all deeply infected with the spirit of the world. Consider the following:

- How many times do we expect an immediate response to e-mail?
- How quickly do we feel ourselves inconvenienced if we have to stand in line for five minutes – or even one minute – in a store, to purchase something we want, but probably do not truly need?
- How impatient do we become when we cannot gain a clear and quick answer to some nagging question, be it personal, spiritual, or otherwise?
- And how often do we become frustrated when our prayers are not “answered” – i.e. When we do not get the results we have requested from God – within our own timeline?

Our patience, or lack of it, is an excellent measure of the extent to which we have acquired the heart of the saints, and the timekeeping of heaven. As we begin to acquire this mindset, we will discover many things:

Time for prayers is an investment, not a sacrifice; The regular cycle of Church services slows us down – in a good way; All our rushing about (which already leaves us feeling empty) is more easily set aside, in order to allow us to seek out time to read the Scriptures, the Church Fathers, or other spiritual books. The next time you find yourself in a rush, ask yourself: will all this fuss matter a month from now? Will it matter when I die and stand before Christ?

If the answer is no (and one expects, it probably will be), perhaps it is time to reset our approach to time based on God's schedule, bit by bit, adjusting our speed, and the priorities in our day. And – for certain – removing the clocks from our icon corners.

*Source: All Saints of North America Orthodox Church*

## THE SATURDAY OF LAZARUS

The week following the Sunday of St Mary of Egypt is called Palm or Branch Week. At the Tuesday services of this week the Church recalls that Jesus' friend Lazarus has died and that the Lord is going to raise him from the dead (*Jn 11*). As the days continue toward Saturday, the Church, in its hymns and verses, continues to follow Christ towards Bethany to the tomb of Lazarus. On Friday evening, the eve of the celebration of the Resurrection of Lazarus, the "great and saving forty days" of Great Lent are formally brought to an end: *Having accomplished the forty days for the benefit of our souls, we pray to Thee, O Lover of Man, that we may see the holy week of Thy passion, that in it we may glorify Thy greatness and Thine unspeakable plan of salvation for our sake. ... (Vesper Hymn)*

Lazarus Saturday is a paschal celebration. It is the only time in the entire Church Year that the resurrectional service of Sunday is celebrated on another day. At the liturgy of Lazarus Saturday, the Church glorifies Christ as "the Resurrection and the Life" who, by raising Lazarus, has confirmed the universal resurrection of mankind even before his own suffering and death.

By raising Lazarus from the dead before Thy passion, Thou didst confirm the universal resurrection, O Christ God! Like the children with the branches of victory, we cry out to Thee, O Vanquisher of Death: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he that comes in the name of the Lord! (Troparion).

Christ—the Joy, the Truth and the Light of All, the Life of the world and its Resurrection—has appeared in his goodness to those on earth. He has become the Image of our Resurrection, granting divine forgiveness to all (Kontakion).

At the Divine Liturgy of Lazarus Saturday the baptismal verse from Galatians: As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ (*Gal 3:27*) replaces the Thrice-holy Hymn thus indicating the resurrectional character of the celebration, and the fact that Lazarus Saturday was once among the few great baptismal days in the Orthodox Church Year. Because of the resurrection of Lazarus from the dead, Christ was hailed by the masses as the long-expected Messiah-King of Israel. Thus, in fulfillment of the prophecies of the Old Testament, he entered Jerusalem, the City of the King, riding on the colt of an ass (*Zech 9:9; Jn 12:12*). The crowds greeted him with branches in their hands and called out to him with shouts of praise: Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!

The Son of David! The King of Israel! Because of this glorification by the people, the priests and scribes were finally driven "to destroy him, to put him to death." (Lk. 19: 47; Jn 11:53, 12:10.)

## STS. PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH 85TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

**When:** Sunday, April 23, 2017, (St. Thomas Sunday) @ 5:00pm / Dinner to be served @ 5:30

**Where:** Capri Banquets @ 6240 Joliet Rd., Countryside, IL 60525

**Price:** Adults: \$40 / Teens 13-17: \$30 / Children 5-12: \$15 / Under 5 is free

**RSVP:** by April 9 (Palm Sunday) to *85th Anniversary Dinner* c/o Deacon & Matushka Kenny, 2805 Yosemite Dr., Aurora, IL 60503

PLEASE SIGN UP IN BACK OF CHURCH IF YOU PLAN TO GO & WE CAN SEND IN THE FORM FOR OUR CHURCH. SEE FR. ANDREW FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.

The following opportunities for special donations are being offered. A portion of the profits will go to benefit the Holy Trinity Building and Restoration Fund.

- **THE 85 CLUB:** Enjoy a special VIP reception beginning @ 4:00pm for 85 Club & 185 Club members only. Includes hors d'oeuvres, two drink tickets, and recognition in the program. (\$85 per family)
- **THE 185 CLUB:** Benefits of the 85 Club plus a commemorative icon and two additional drink tickets. (\$185 per family)
- **SPONSOR GUEST CLERGY:** Sponsor a clergy member's complementary ticket, with recognition in the program. (\$40)

### MENU

First Course: Freshly Baked Bread & a Caesar Salad

Second Course: Rigatoni w/ Vodka Sauce / Chicken Vesuvio with garlic, white wine, special seasonings & peas / Homemade Italian Sausage with tri-colored peppers / Vesuvio Potato Wedges / Fresh Green Beans with garlic & oil

Children's Menu: Chicken fingers & fries

Third Course: Tiramisu & Gourmet Anniversary Cupcakes

My neighbor is a being with equal rights as myself, a man, like me, also made after the image of God, and as he is the same as I am I must love him as I love myself. Therefore, I must watch over him as over my own flesh and blood, behave lovingly, gently, and kindly to him, forgiving his thoughts as I should willingly forgive myself my own, as I long for forgiveness or indulgence from other toward my own weaknesses—that is, that other people should not even notice them, as though they did not exist, or that they should notice them gently, kindly, pleasantly and benevolently.

~ St. John of Kronstadt ~