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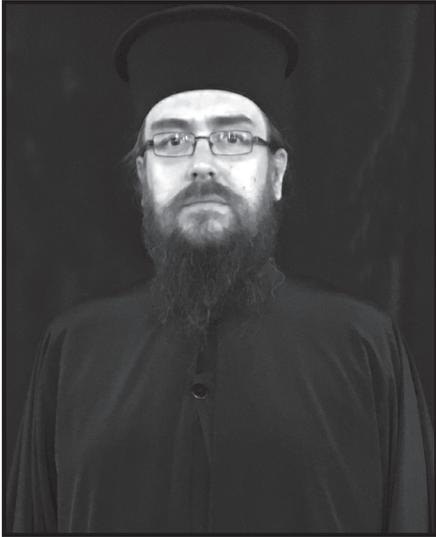
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# A MESSAGE FROM OUR PARISH PRIEST

Christ is Risen! Христос Воскресе! Χριστός Ανέστη!



Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, may the uncreated Grace of this most joyous Feast embrace you all and fill your hearts with the resounding greeting of the Resurrected Christ!

Behind us we left a year challenged by many events.

With God's Grace, during this Great Lent we are now finding ourselves once again together celebrating the most important day of the Church calendar year: the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

As your Parish Priest, my prayer was and still is the prayer of the sacrificial offering of myself for all of you.

Every Pascha is a new beginning. And every year is different. Although we celebrate the same Pascha, we can all feel and experience that everything is different and never the same. The Divine Grace of our Three Hypostatic God, the energy that emanates from His essence, fills our souls

as a new wine and overflows our hearts with the Divine Grace that comes from above. Therefore we say that our Orthodox Faith even though is not very well known in this country, it exists as hidden diadem in the fallen world, always brings something unique and totally different that can only be known through the personal relationship and experience of the Lord Himself inside of us. The Pascha of our Lord is the time to become new in Christ and acquire His mind and truly become Christians, not only by words of empty declaration.

Today many people call themselves Christians. However, in the Orthodox way of life, we can easily recognize the serious difference between those who are admirers and those who are followers of Christ. We want to follow Christ. We want to be followers! Not so much with our words and sermons toward the others, but with practical faith. Θεωρία και πράξης (Theoria kai praxis), would say the Holy Fathers. The true theology of living the Christian life is in the fulfillment of the Christ's commandments while we are still here on this earth and never forget that the time it was given to us now, can not be wasted on the superficiality of the needs and the distractions of this world. It is not enough to celebrate Pascha as spectators and only admirers of the beauty of the Orthodox services (or any other aspects of our faith for that matter) and subsequently becoming nominal (only by name) Christians. What we truly need is to become Christians in every dimension of our life. As the Fathers and the mothers before us and those before them, who always preferred Christ before the world and His Kingdom before the corrupted values of this temporary world,

we too are walking (not running) the spiritual marathon towards Him, the true destination of our spiritual struggles. Slowly but surely, we walk this marathon and even when we fall we get up, we dust our shoulders and continue to march.

This is the time to cloud ourselves with the silence that comforts the heart and listen to the whisper of the Holy Spirit, Who invites us to join Him into the never ending doxology of the never ending Divine Liturgy and always stay focused on the words of Christ who says: “Neither shall they say, Lo here! Or, lo there! For, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” (Luke 17:21).

And so we learn we can serve the Divine Liturgy of the heart always, even when we are outside of the Church walls. The true purpose of our life is to understand these words and learn how to put them in practice.

This year our Parish was blessed to welcome new Parishioners for whom we all pray to stay on the course of salvation and become faithful stewards and members of our Holy Church which is the harbor of salvation. We will continue to pray for the Catechumens, to come soon into the bosom of our Church and become partakers of the mystery of Salvation that is offered by Christ every Liturgy. No matter what happens in the world, we will always invoke the peace that comes from above and offers true spiritual comfort, for everyone and for all.

We will always try to stay attentive to the words that Christ is in our midst - and He is and He shall be, always!

Allow me to greet you once again and exclaim together for:

*Christ is Risen! Христос Воскресе! Χριστός Ανέστη!*

Through the blessing and prayers of our Most Reverend Bishop and Father Irinej, may God give us all that is necessary for our salvation!

***Thy Resurrection, o Christ our Savior, the angels in heaven sing!  
Enable us on earth to glorify Thee in purity of heart!***

*Your Servant in Christ,  
Fr. Borjan Vitanov  
Parish priest*



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT



### *Paschal Greetings to Stewards and Friends of Holy Resurrection of Christ Serbian Orthodox Church - Christ is Risen!*



As we prepare to celebrate Pascha one might ask if this is the appropriate time in the midst of global fear to proclaim the good news that Jesus Christ is risen. It is indeed, and needed now more than ever. Our belief in the Resurrection is the light of faith which brings joy and hope in the midst of fears that surround us.

Spring 2022 has been a long awaited waking from the Covid shutdown. At last we seem to be able to enjoy many of the small pleasures absent from our daily lives these past two years. As we celebrate our 106th Slava May 1, 2022 we can, after a two year hiatus, come together along with Bishop Irinej to observe this glorious day. As we enjoy this celebration of 106 years, we should not forget our past and those who have given so much of their time and talents to keep this struggling parish functioning in anticipation of potential growth. We are finally growing and continue to do so with those who have found our faith and our “Little Church with a Big Heart.” With this growth comes new and added responsibilities for all, let us enjoy the fellowship and work together to allow our faith to prosper and may God grant us many more years.

Let this Paschal Season be one of peace and joy for all people both here and abroad.

Hristos Voskrese!

*Christ is Risen!*  
*Judith J. Larson*  
*Church Board President*

Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death with death,  
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.

+++

**“In loving memory of the Jonovich - Larson family members who are asleep with the Lord.  
Vjecnaja Pamjat!**



**Milo, Marija, Milja, Stevo, Millie, Dolly, Don, Nan, Milo, Sobo,  
Pavle, Pedja, Igor, Yokana, Dorothy, Rudolph**

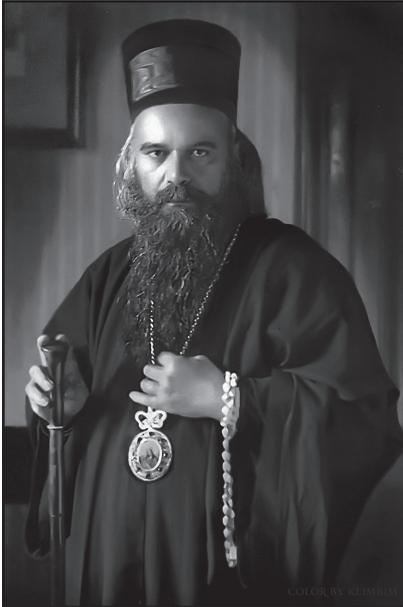
**Hristos Voskrse!! Christ has Risen!!”**

**- David and Judie Larson**

# ABOUT SEEKING THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD

St. Nikolai Velimirovich

*Why do you seek the living One among the dead?  
(St. Luke 24:5)*



The angel of God asks the Myrrh-bearing women as though in astonishment: “Why do you seek the living One among the dead?” As though the perceiver of the mystery of God and God’s power wanted to say: “How could you have thought for a moment that He is the hostage of death? Do you not know that He is the principal source of life? Do you not know that all life is through Him and that not one living thing can borrow not even a drop of life from any other source? Did He not fully reveal to you His authority over life and death on earth? Who gave life to the lifeless Lazarus? Who took away the life of the barren fig tree?”

O my brethren, let us also cease to look for the living among the dead. If there are some of us who are still seeking Christ among the dead, let them desist from this soul-destroying effort. This is the vain effort of the Jews, pagans and non-Christians. We know that the Lord and Giver of life is not in the tomb but on the Throne of Glory in the heavens.

The spirit, not darkened by sin, looks up into heaven and does not see the tomb; and the spirit, darkened by sin, looks into the tomb and does not see heaven. Sin and virtue govern the spiritual vision of man and reveals to each man its own world at cross-purposes with one another. Sin overthrows the vision of the spirit to the earth and reveals to it the corruption of the world. Virtue uplifts the spirit to heaven and reveals to it the eternal world and the resurrected Christ as the King in that world.

O my brethren, let us not seek life among creation, but from the Creator. Let us not commit an even graver sin i.e., let us not seek the Creator in the tomb of creation nor the Illuminating, Immortal One in the darkness of death.

O Lord Jesus, Victor over death, we cry out to You: resurrect us also into life eternal from the corruption and darkness of death.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

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\* Source: *The Prologue from Ohrid: Lives of Saints by St. Nikolai Velimirovič for April 7/20.*

# ***Elder Joseph the Hesychast: an account of his deeds***

***Elder Efraim Vatopeidinos***



Throughout the thousand- year long history of the saint-nurturing Mount Athos countless holy figures have been distinguished. This fact constitutes the greatest benefit which the Holy Mountain has given to Church and to the world. Many of those righteous monks have been marked out and widely recognized by the flock of the Church while still alive, some after their repose, while others wished to remain anonymous even after their death.

Demokritos' dictum "live in anonymity" constitutes the main attribute of the hagiorite monasticism. The monk from the Holy Mountain does not seek recognition in this life and diligently tries to hide his virtues. This is how St Siluan the Athonite lived. While still alive most people thought that he was an ordinary monk while in reality his was great in the face of the Lord. Only after his repose and especially after his biographer, the ever-memorable Elder Sophroni, preserved the saint's scarce writings, that his pious life came to light.

Something similar has occurred with blessed Elder Joseph the Hesychast, this hagiorite monk who lived on the Holy Mountain for almost forty years in anonymity. Twenty years after his repose some of his letters and his biography were published and the world became aware of his teachings and his virtuous life in Christ.

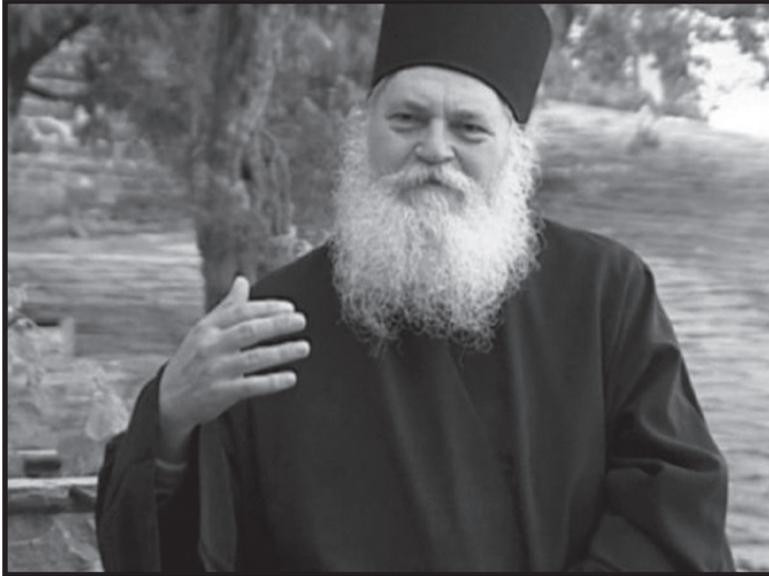
Elder Joseph, known in the world as Francis Kottis, was born in Lefkes in the island Paros on the 12th February 1897. His parents, George and Maria were ordinary but righteous people. He was destined even from “his mother’s tummy” to follow in the footsteps of Christ and become His aide in the deliverance of men. When his mother gave birth to him, she had a vision where an angel was trying to take the baby away from her. When she protested, the angel showed her a note in which it was written that he must take the baby away (See Elder Joseph of Vatopedi: “Elder Joseph the Hesychast”).

His father died when he was a teenager and thus he had to leave for the port of Piraeus in order to work and help out his impoverished family with the many children, since he was the second oldest brother. He had six more siblings. Initially he worked at various jobs; later on he joined the Navy and afterwards he became a small-time merchant. Even though he did not consciously lead a spiritual life, he was nevertheless fair and conscientious in his dealings. He became engaged to a good girl and lived in chastity. He never touched her, scared in case he reached the point where he had to kiss her (See above).

His fiancé though, died from tuberculosis and he, having had a revealing dream, recognized the futility of the world and his heart started aching for monasticism. He was practicing that which he was reading in the Patristic books. He would fast every two days, sit on the trees praying on the mountains of Penteli and would visit many places of worship to strengthen his faith and receive the blessing in order to leave the world. During one such visit to Kefallinia where he stayed one week in the monastery of St Yerasimos, he witnessed with his very own eyes a miracle whereby the Saint healed a man. There he heard from the nuns that the Saint had reposed on the feast-day of the Dormition of the Mother of God and was praying to him to intercede for the same thing happening to him. Indeed this took place almost forty years later.

After marrying his sister off, he gave away a lot of money, dispersing his small fortune. Then during the early 1920’s, burning with “the immaterial fire” which is unheard of for the many, comes to the Holy Mountain to live the most perfect life. Initially he lived for a short time in Vigla near the Great Lavra monastery, looking for spiritual guides to introduce him to the niptic work. Later on, he was receiving spiritual guidance from the discrete Elder Daniel of Katounakia for eight months. Elder Daniel, seeing the unstoppable and fierce zeal which young Francis was showing in favor of the ascetic life and foreseeing his future success, advised him to place himself under the obedience of a simple, elderly monk, named Efrem, who lived at the hut of the Annunciation of the Virgin at Katounakia. He asked him to take with him another one of his spiritual children, Fr Arsenios and after they receive the blessing of obedience from their elder to begin legitimately their great ascetic efforts. Indeed this is how it happened and Fr Arsenios became Francis’ inseparable companion.

During their stay at Katounakia, Elder Efrem tonsured Francis giving him the Great Schema with the name ‘Joseph’ at the cave of St Athanasius. Fr Euthemios who lived there, officiated at the ceremony. Just before Elder Efrem reposed, they were all transferred to the ascetic and hesychastic areas of the Skete of St Basil, seeking a more peaceful environment. Then after Elder Efrem died, the young Fr Joseph began a most austere and beyond limits practice in fasting, poverty, indigence and hardship. He combined these with the practice of the mental prayer. During their stay at St Basil’s, he launched fierce battles against the flesh and the devil, but had also received impressive visitation by divine Grace. There, he also created a small brotherhood. Even though many people wished to remain with



him, because he had become famous as a great ascetic, could not do it since he was very strict and demanding (See above).

In 1938 they move on to the caves of Little St Anne just underneath the cave of the renowned hesychast and spiritual father, Fr Savva. In the summer of 1947 our blessed Elder, Joseph of Vatopedi, joins their brotherhood, which by now includes Frs. Arsenios and Athanasius, who is the brother of senior Elder Joseph. Everyone else had already abandoned the brotherhood. In the autumn of the same year, Fr Efrem- later

Abbot of Filotheou- came to stay with them while in the summer of 1950 they are joined by Fr Charalambos, who later became Abbot of the Monastery of Dionysiou. As he had learnt from experience, blessed Elder Joseph became a little more tolerant as to the level of ascetic effort exercised by his underlings in contrast to the times he had stayed at St Basil's. That didn't mean of course that he ever gave up his austere ascetic regime which included fasting, obedience, silence, all night vigils and praying. Full of joy was telling Fr Arsenios: "Arsenios, I can now say to my Lord 'now, You may take Thy servant'. We have lived such tough lives together; we have shed our blood seeking the Lord inside us. But my constant complaint all these years was this: Many people joined us, benefited from us, but left us. They could not follow us in our spiritual efforts. I thought I will repose to my Lord with this unfulfilled wish. But, behold! But now in our old age He has brought us these last few young monks. The entire Holy Mountain will rest on them. Just remember that!"

In 1951 they moved to New Skete, where they were a little more comfortable since their three subordinates had started exhibiting some serious health problems because of the ascetic hardship and the rough environment. In the end, they were given the cells belonging to the monastery of St Paul, situated above the tower. At this time, the ministry mission of Elder Joseph is revealed since many monks from the Holy Mountain and laity from outside visit him to receive his advice; they regard him as a perceptive guide without delusions. He reposed to the Lord on the feast-day of the Dormition of the Mother of God- as it was his wish and in accordance with the promise the Virgin gave to him- on Friday morning, 15th August 1959, after the Divine Liturgy and having taken the Holy Communion.

Elder Joseph was extremely strong and brave with an iron will. He began his monastic life with great intensity and fervent zeal, something very rare nowadays. He never lost this zeal not even at the end of his life but had even increased it, something which is rarely achieved. He carried the cross of the love for effort and hardship in a spirit of utter self-disregard. He practiced fasting, all night vigils and

praying to the utmost. During Lent he only ate once a day 80 gr. of flour, cooked with a little water and salt. The rest of the time he ate food enough to fit in a small can of sardines for the whole day. This meager quantity was not cooked in oil either, unless it was during the weekend. This lasted for thirty five odd years until his last company of brothers was assembled. For the first eight years of his struggles, he never slept on a bed but sleep would overcome him sitting on a small stool. He persevered in all night vigils from sunset till dawn unto the end of his life.

He was relentless on himself and would not omit his regime of fasting and vigils even if he was sick. He was inventing ways to suffer hardship which seem unbelievable to our generation, because he was scared, as he used to say, of the monk's worst enemy: negligence. Some people accused him of being delusional because of his austere regime. This is how negligent monks fight against the conscientious and the zealous ones. This is what St Siluan the Athonite was accused of by his fellow brothers, in addition to supposedly being damned (See Arch. Sophroni: St Siluan, The Athonite).

Elder Joseph was a man of virtue. He was lusting and struggling for virtue with all his determination. He pursued perfection. He struggled with all his might to acquire virtue. As a layman he was righteous, even though he had not yet experienced any perception of the Lord. When he was working as a ticket collector, he was conscientious enough to destroy the tickets which hurried passengers purchased but did not pick up.

He struggled fiercely but was granted the charisma of perfect purity. In one of his letters he confesses: "For this reason, I have fought against the passions of the flesh more than anything else. Purity was given to me as a gift to such an extent that I am not moved if one is a man or a woman. No passion whatsoever stirs in me. With the Lord's compliments I have perceptively received the virtue of purity (Γέροντος Ιωσήφ: Εκφραση Μοναχικής Εμπειρίας).

He loved humility, viewing it as the genuine state of self-perception. Humility is not 'humble talking', like when we say "I am a sinner" etc. Humility is the truth. Namely, the fact that one learns that he is nothing. The Elder says that 'nothing' is the state of the world before the Lord created it, i.e. nothing. The monk attracts the presence of divine grace if he practices self-condemnation, which is humility in practice.

As a true Hesychast and imitator of the saints, Arsenios the Great and Fr Isaac the Syrian, Elder Joseph cried a lot during his all night vigils and prayers. He believed that if tears are not shed every time one remembers the Lord, then there is an underlying state of ignorance, pride and stiffness in his heart.

Even though he was uneducated in the normal sense of the world, he was very fond of reading and studying spiritual books. He especially insisted on the frequent, scheduled reading of the Holy Scriptures and of Patristic readings. "Spiritual studies act as a spiritual mirror, where one sees his mistakes and his weaknesses and corrects his life; he is also driven towards divine zeal. It is like the light in the darkness", he said.

He was advocating the daily reading of the New Testament. He said that one must always carry a small book of the New Testament in his pocket to read every time he had some free time. Thus: "the Lord enlightens you and guides you to adhere to his commandments. He replenishes the love inside you and guides you how to imitate Him", he said.

He believed that the entire ascetic life of the monk is void unless it directs him towards discretion.



He didn't place so much emphasis on any other charisma and was talking about discretion in admiration. He described it as the perfect weapon in the constant battles of the unseen war, especially for the monks. "You need salt, children! You need salt" he was saying, meaning the virtue of discretion.

Elder Joseph was a great struggler and enthusiast of the noetic practice. In his entire life he was constantly reciting the mental prayer. His empirical knowledge of the mental prayer was like the professional knowledge one acquires in his job or in the arts. Every night he scheduled the reciting of the Jesus' prayer for over six hours without his mind wondering. He lived in a state of constant prayer.

He had received the charismatic state of prayer from the Lord: namely, the noetic and pure prayer in his heart. Those who practice the quietude of the mind strive to accomplish the unification of the mind (nous: νοῦς) with the heart. When this is achieved, every kind of spiritual darkness which affects the soul is expelled. Then the person as a whole, as a unified psychosomatic entity, enjoys peace, joy and the sweetness of the Holy Spirit; the mind is cleansed.

His main spiritual legacy towards his spiritual children was the practice of the mental prayer. He was inciting them in this way: "Whoever wants let him try. When this practice lasts a long time, he will find Paradise inside him. He will be set free from passions; he will become a different person. If one lives in the desert as well, then there is no telling of the benefits of the mental prayer!"

The Blessed Elder, having several times tasted the experience of divine perception, had become "faith-certain" as St Isaac the Syrian says. This inward faith, i.e. the faith of contemplation, is supe-

rior to the dogmatic faith. The faith of contemplation operates in those who contemplate; that is, in those who see the Lord with their spiritual eyes. He always prioritized faith against knowledge which stems from reasoning. He was saying: “When this kind of faith takes hold, the particular knowledge, which raises doubts in everything and reduces faith and occasionally nullifies it, is totally abolished. It is crucial to note that he had absolute faith in the Lord’s providence even for the most insignificant and trivial issues. He was always stressing: “Where is the Lord? God always assists, always steps in on time, but we must be patient”.

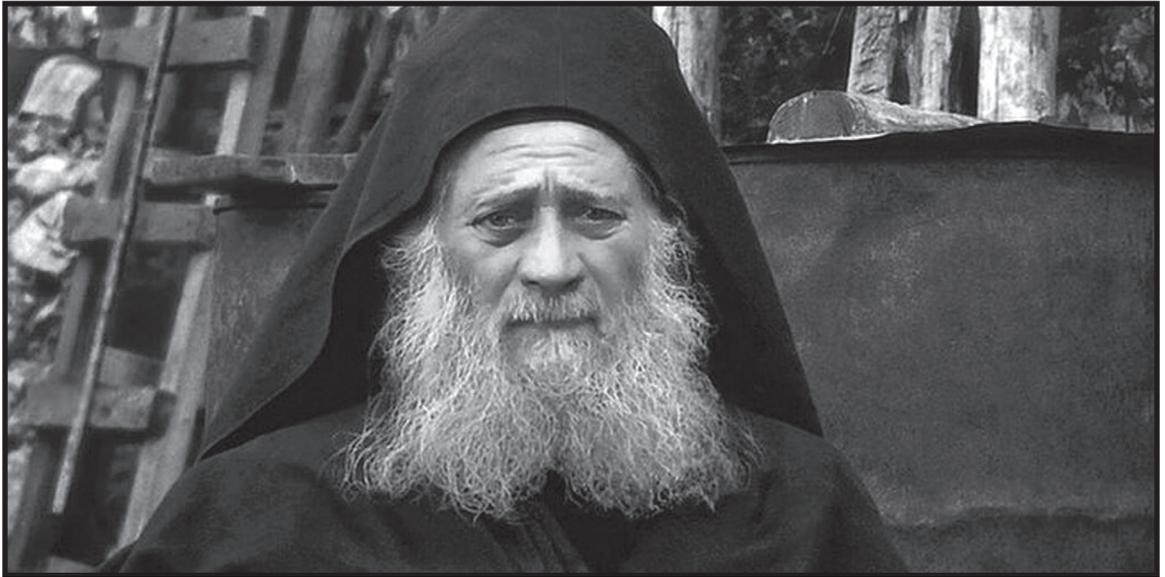
His heart was ablaze with passionate divine Eros towards Jesus and the Most Holy Lady. He perceived the energy of the uncreated divine love as a dynamic motion towards the source of love, namely Christ. The Elder’s letters are brimming with such revealing, secret, spiritually ardent movement, rising from a God-loving soul. Thus, he would prompt: “If you become fond of the mental prayer, you must mourn and weep seeking Jesus. For His part, He will reveal Himself like blazing love, which will dissipate all passions... The heart must be so alight with such divine Eros and blistering love that as soon as one hears or says “Lord Jesus Christ, my sweet love!” or “My sweetest mother, Panayia, Parthene (Most Holy Lady, Virgin)!” immediately his eyes will fill with tears”.

Often, after some really tough hardships and times of great tribulation, the Most Holy Lady would appear to console him. She was always stressing: “Didn’t I tell you to have your hope in me? Why are you discouraged?” Once at the little chapel of St John the Baptist in the caves of Little St Anne, the Lady Mother of God appeared from the icon-stand where her icon stood and told him: “Here, take Christ!” However, the Elder was mortified and didn’t move. Then the holy child caressed the elder’s forehead and his head three times with His hand and filled his heart with the uncreated light and divine consolation ( See: Elder Joseph: Elder Joseph the Hesychast).

As the recipient of the fullness of divine Grace, the Elder managed to reach the highest level of empirical theology and become the perfect theologian, through the divine enlightenment of his charismatic mind. Theology, according to the Elder, is the result of the resident divine Grace. Whoever cleanses his senses, quiets his mind and purifies his heart through obedience and spiritual quietude, receives the visitation by divine Grace and acquires the enlightenment of spiritual perception. “He becomes full of light, full of lucidity, all nous and becomes abundant with theological meanings to such an extent that if three people were to write everything down wouldn’t be able to contain the wavy current which spreads peace and totally immobilizes all passions throughout the body”.

Elder Joseph the Hesychast was the modern Hagiorite monk, who had experienced and redrawn the monastic way of life, expressively and with detail. Numerous other righteous Elders have indeed been distinguished nowadays. But they have not left the fine points of monastic life as a legacy neither did they influence those with good will- “those able to receive”- towards the path of monasticism like Elder Joseph did. With his experiential way of life he reintroduced the teachings by St Gregory Palamas on hesychasm to the modern hagiorite monasticism and generally to Orthodoxy. He became a legitimate continuator of hesychasm and of the tradition which strives for virtue, which has greatly contributed towards the spiritual revival and repopulation of the Holy Mountain.

The former Abbot of the Great Monastery Simonos Petras, Elder Emilianos, who espoused the teachings by Elder Joseph and passed them on to his innumerable spiritual children, writes about the Elder: “Blessed Elder Joseph, the Hesychast, has become the jewel in modern hagiorite history, since



during difficult times he managed to revive the centuries-old hesychastic experience, as well as the experience of prayer in mount Athos. Through the coordinated and unending practice and spiritual discipline and schooling of his spiritual children, he has prepared the new generation to practicing the ever-flowing Jesus prayer, radiating further away than the borders of Greece”.

It is estimated that more than a thousand monks and nuns are direct spiritual descendants of Elder Joseph. Six monasteries, one Skete and many cells in the Holy Mountain, eighteen monasteries throughout Greece, six in Cyprus, twenty in the United States, two in Canada and one in Italy own their spiritual paternity to Blessed Elder Joseph, the Hesychast. Since the Elder was able to foresee this happening, eight months before his repose in December 1958, he divided his disciples into four groups. This is unusual in the Holy Mountain, since the first to join the brotherhood routinely takes on the succession. However, he already knew that his disciples would later become Abbots and Elders in large coenobiums.

Elder Joseph, however, as an ascetic and a hesychast, was not unaware of the afflictions of this world just because he lived away from people. He would do his utmost to console, mitigate the pain, help and benefit all those who visited him, wrote to him or asked for his prayers. The very few of the letters he wrote, which have been preserved, attest to the missionary aspect of his life.

He devoted most of his life praying for the world. As soon as he reached impassion and became “pure at heart”- and this happened eight years into monasticism- he became the vessel of Grace who would intercede with his prayers for the deliverance of mankind. He was able to experience and communicate with mankind’s pain; his prayers would present man in the face of the Lord, so that every afflicted person would find salvation.

“Once”, says his biographer, “I saw him being anxious and asked him what was bothering him. He worryingly told me that someone we knew was suffering and was asking for help” (See Elder Joseph: Elder Joseph, the Hesychast). He was not able to listen to something upsetting about somebody and

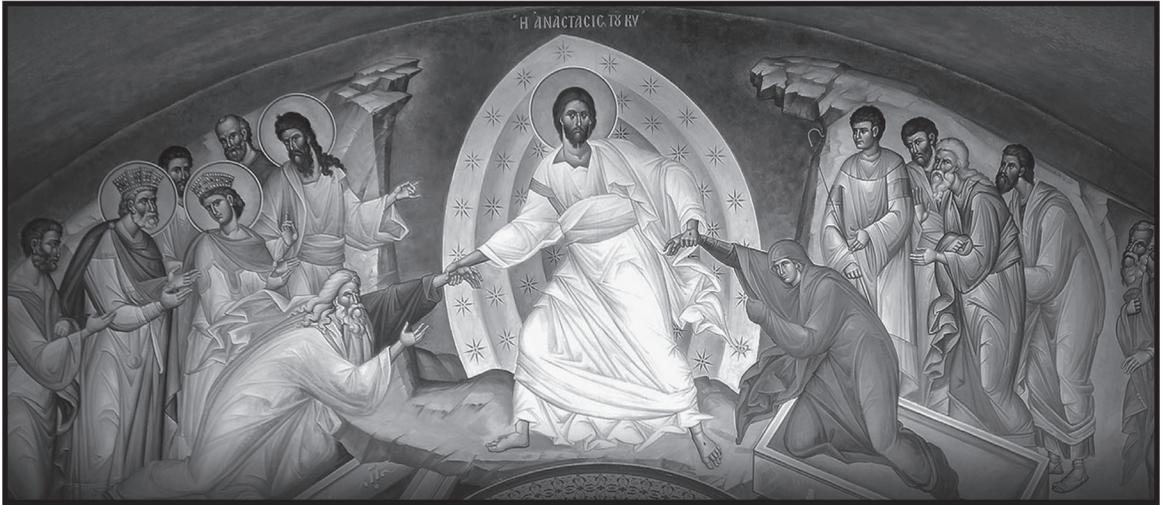
not cry in sympathy or pray for him. He was asking Jesus to exclude him from Paradise unless He would receive his brother first or unless He consoled his brother first. He was overwhelmed with zeal until his fellow brothers received spiritual benefit. His heart had extended with such love that everyone was able to fit inside. His entire being had expanded because he was feverishly praying for mankind. Even though he was very austere- even relentless- towards himself, he would show great sympathy and kindness towards others. This is a distinguishing feature of the genuine orthodox ascetic.

His love and compassion for his fellow human beings is also evident in this instance: Just before World War II broke out, a young man suffering from tuberculosis was courting the monasteries and Sketes in the Holy Mountain to see if anyone would accept him and tonsure him. However, no one would receive him despite his fervent zeal because they were scared of infection. Someone advised him that “only old-man Joseph from Little St Anne has enough love to receive you”.

Indeed, as soon as Elder Joseph set eyes on him, he liked him and was informed by the Lord to keep him. Despite the objections by the other members of his brotherhood, he kept him and built a separate cell, a little further away from the others. He personally looked after him and every night was teaching him how to recite the mental prayer, inciting him to show patience and thank the Lord for this hardship. He was also promising him that Christ would receive him as a martyr. He tonsured him and named him after St Basil the Great, who was also sickly. The young monk, Basil- little Basilakis as the Elder used to call him- with the discipline and prayers of Elder Joseph managed to attain a good spiritual state despite his physical disability and the pains from the illness. However, a few months later he reposed to the Lord. On the night of the fortieth day of his demise, when Elder Joseph was praying in his cell, he saw a light entering his room. Inside, he could see Fr Basil. The latter bowed in front of the elder to receive his blessing and thanked him for everything that he had done for him while still alive; he told him that Christ had indeed ranked him among the martyrs, as the Elder had foretold him.

Elder Joseph the Hesychast was a leading figure. The other hagiorites recognized in him the experienced, perceptive Elder and mystic of monastic life. It is not accidental that his brotherhood was created “from what they already had” while in St Basil’s place. This brotherhood, apart from Fr Arsenios and Fr Athanasius also included Fr Gerasimos Menagias (former professor of Chemistry at the University of Geneva), Fr Spyridon Kampanaos( renowned doctor from the Monastery of Great Lavra and Fr Athanasius Balsamakias ( a pharmacist). The fact that three renowned scientists- older and with longer experience in the monastic life- showed obedience to an unknown elder, indicates that Elder Joseph possessed extraordinary spiritual abilities and virtues. When we met with Elder Sophroni of Essex and referred to Elder Joseph the Hesychast, he cried out: “I have met him; I visited him three times at the caves of Little St Anne and I got the impression that I was sitting in front of a spiritual general!”

Many hagiorite monks and laity, who knew about his spiritual state visited him and were asking for advice on spiritual issues. The Elder wrote about this mission: “A lot of people come here from various monasteries and Sketes from the Holy Mountain. With the Grace of the Lord, we tell them what the Lord provides”. His contribution did not just extend to the Holy Mountain or within Greece but was ecumenical. He says. “All this time I am writing to all those who ask me. They visited me from Germany this year just to find out about the mental prayer. From the United States people write to me with such eagerness. In Paris, there are also so many people who ask questions so keenly”.



His heart, which became purified by the practice of the virtues, his enlightened and fine-tuned mind because of prayer and the love he showed for his fellow human beings as well as the rest of nature, granted him the kind of state Adam had before the fall. Thus, through divine Grace he would perform signs which were beyond natural phenomena. The Elder, of course, was not paying any attention to such events and would keep quiet about most of them. However, we will refer to some instances as a testimony to our account.

When they lived with Fr Arsenios at the Skete of St Basil, the mice were eating their dry bread. One night he caught them by surprise and told the mice: “We cannot go on like this. This is what we are going to do. We will divide our bread in two, one piece for you and one for us. You will only take yours and not touch ours”. Indeed, the mice obeyed his command and did as they were told! Often when he was praying in his cell many birds would gather by his window and would chirp happily. His mere presence would attract the mindless animals, creating a relationship reminiscent of paradise.

In the beginning of the 1930s while still at the Skete of St Basil, blessed Elder Joseph saw with his spiritual eyes through the Holy Spirit the mortal danger his natural brother, Nickolas, was facing when live, high-voltage cables had been wrapped around him while working on an electric pylon in Athens. Elder Joseph saved his brother with his prayer. Afterwards, Nickolas became a monk and was named Athanasius. Similarly, he saw and saved with his prayer a monk called David when a bear threatened to devour him in the garden of the monastery of St Paul. On another occasion when still at the caves of Little St Anne, he was able to watch the entire course Fr Athanasius was taking from the monastery of St Paul up to the caves. Elder Paisios would later compare this kind of vision with “seeing on television”.

After his repose he would also appear to his spiritual children as well as to strangers, conveying divine Grace and revealing to them God’s will. Even today, he appears in front of young people, known to us, and incites them to follow the monastic life. He consoles many monks and nuns in their times of hardship. He told one monk that the way towards salvation is to practice sobriety and inner spiritual work. He carried out a long conversation with a hagiorite Abbot on spiritual issues. One night he

showed up in front of a woman in Crete and was discussing the matter of the many heretics who had been surrounding her. The following day, that woman saw the picture of the Elder in a bookstore and learnt that the man who was talking to her had been dead for many years. In Texas, he showed up and blessed a protestant worker at the monastery of the Archangels. The worker later became a catechumen in the Orthodox Church. Lately, he appeared in front of a pregnant woman in Cyprus, who was worried sick about her pregnancy. He comforted her and blessed her. Afterwards everything went well and she had a natural childbirth.

In summing up, we may say that blessed Elder Joseph the Hesychast, the one who stayed away from the world and worldly worries, who was seeking seclusion in the most ascetic and isolated places of the Holy Mountain in the Skete of St Basil and the caves of Little St Anne, was able to influence his immediate circle of people and all those who were asking for his advice. During his last few years at the New Skete, his influence and authority as a spiritual bearer of divine Grace was more pronounced and obvious to monks and laity alike. However after his repose, the glowing crop of his ascetic struggles have become especially evident throughout the entire planet through his few published writings- which were, nevertheless, brimming with divine Grace- and through his successors and his spiritual descendents. His writings have already been translated into eight languages. In Elder Joseph, the words of the Scriptures “you shall know them by their fruits” (Matthew 7, 16) have been fulfilled. That is, the quality of the tree is revealed through the fruit it produces. We believe that this particular tree will not stop supplying the Church with the succulent fruits, which are the bearers of the genuine and perfect spiritual life in Christ. Amen.



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Source: Pemptusia - Translated by Olga Konari Kokkinou from the Greek edition: Αρχιμ. Εφραίμ Βατοπαιδινού Καθηγουμένου Ι. Μ. Μ. Βατοπαιδίου, Αθωνικός Λόγος, Ιερά Μεγίστη Μονή Βατοπαιδίου, Αγιον Ορος 2010.

## *Easter Greetings - Messages*



+++

**“May your Day be filled with blessings of love, peace and joy.  
Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!”**

**- Joseph and Louise Rahalewich**

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**“Glorify the Lord Who sacrificed His own Son for us! Give thanks and celebrate His life!  
Happy Easter”**

**- Joseph and Louise Rahalewich**

+++

**“We remember Willlliam and Dolores Saylor and David (Milo) Saylor.  
Christ is Risen!”**

**- Love - Dr. & Mrs Robert Saylor**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese! - Voistinu Voskrese!  
Happy Easter - Srecna Pascha!”  
To all family and friends that have passed into the Kingdom of Heaven,  
Vjecnaj Pamjat! Memory Eternal!**

**- Bobby and Vanessa Sentz**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese! Vaistinu Voskrese!**

**Blessed Easter greeting from the Pantelich Family in York, Maryland and Philadelphia:  
Nesho, Barbara, Nesho Jr., Erica, Blake, Stephanie, Skyler, Todd, Rose, Chad & Briggs,  
Darren & Jessica, Tim!**

**Memory eternal to Miroslav Pantelich.“**

**- Nesho, Barbara & Family Pantelich**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese - Voistinu Voskrese!”**

**A blessed Easter to all!**

**In loving memory of the departed members of the Resanovich family!”**

**- Gil and Elaine (Resanovich) Darlak**

+++

**Christ is Risen! Indeed He has Risen!**

**In memory of Peyachkie family.**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese - Voistinu Voskrese! Christ is Risen - Indeed He is Risen!**

**In loving memory of my parents Stefan and Radmila - Bella Milosevich,  
and many family members overseas.”**

**-Love you - your Daughter Marija Milosevich**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese - Voistinu Voskrese!**

**Memory eternal to my beloved wife Nancy Mrakovich Yetter.”**

**- Dewey Yetter**

+++

**“Greetings to our family and friends for a blessed Easter!**

**Christ is Risen, glorify Him!”**

**- Helen and John Gingrich**

+++

**“Memory Eternal!**

**In loving memory of our family members and friends!”**

**- Helen and John Gingrich**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese - Voistinu Voskrese!  
Greetings and love from the Vracarich Family!”**

**- Vracarich Family**

+++

**“In loving memory of Dolores J. and William D. Saylor and brother Milo  
Vjecnaja Pamjat!”**

**- The Merrill and Holtz Family**

+++

**“Arise oh Lord and judge the earth!  
Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!  
Glory be to God!”**

**- Vasilios and Georgia Anstine**

+++

**“Hristos Anesti - Alithos Anesti!  
Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling death by death  
and upon those in the tomb bestowing life!”  
Wishing everyone a Glorious Pascha!**

**- Giovanis Family**

+++

**“Christos Anesti! Alithos Anesti!  
May the light of Christ shine in all of our hearts,  
and may we proclaim His Resurrection withjoy”**

**- Chris, Kate, Panayioti, Kassiani and Seraphima Giovanis**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese - Voistinu Voskrese!  
We wish everyone peace, family wellbeing, and God’s blessing in everyone’s home!”**

**- Family Soltanov**

+++

**“Arise O God, and judge the earth, for Thou shall inherit all the nations!  
In loving memory of Gregory, our son and brother.”**

**- Tony, Sue and Stephanie Anstine**

+++

**“Christ is Risen! Truly He is Risen!**

**May the blessings of Pascha bring hope, peace and happiness to all”**

**- James and Barabara Tautkas**

+++

**“Χριστος Ανεστη !**

**Αληθως Ανεστη !**

**A Blessed Pascha to everyone!”**

**- Panagiotis, Viktoriya, Stefanos,  
Serafima and Loukia Billis**

+++

**“In Loving Memory of  
Grandparents Ralph & Nellie Lebo**

**In Loving Memory of  
Baba & Dedo  
Alexa & Stephania Kormushoff**

**In Loving Memory of Parents  
George A. & Violet K. Lebo**

**Father  
John H. Barnhart**

**THE VERY BEST OF HEALTH FOR  
Stephen George Lebo & Sandra Ann Barnhart  
Mrs. Gail Barnhart  
Stephen E. & Kristie L. Lebo,  
Children Lucas George, Lucy May and Leona Hope**

**Alexandra Erika & Jonathan Andrew Bailey  
Sons Rory Alexander and Rhys William”**

**- Stephen Lebo**

+++

**“Hristos Voskrese! - Christ is Risen!**

**In loving memory of departed members of the Jonovich Family - Vecnaja Pamjat!**

**- B. Jonovich Family**

+++

***“On behalf of all living and departed Kotey family members: Hristos Voskrese!  
Christ is Risen! Blessings of peace and love on this most Holy Pascha!”***

**- Stacy DeMott**

+++

***“Christ is Risen!  
May the memory of John, Ale, Thomas & Stacy be eternal.”***

**- Jennifer Lewis**

+++

***“Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!  
In loving memory of  
Djoka and Draga Peyachkie  
Veselin and Christina Peyachkie  
and children Lepasava and Ljuba”***

**- Natalie Ratzkovich, Paul, Leigh and Nikolai**

+++

***“Christ is Risen! Glorify His third day Resurrection!!!  
Death has been swallowed up in victory.  
Death, where is thy victory?  
Death where is thy sting? But thank be to God,  
who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.  
Therefore beloved be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,  
knowing that in the Lord your labor (of love) is not in vain.” (I Cor. 15:54-8).***

**- Ed and Tina Blain**

+++

***“Christ is Risen!  
Hope to see you all at Church Slava!”***

**- Joe, Donald & Tom Maransky**

+++

***“In memory of my father John and my husband Chrysovalantis  
- Memory Eternal!”***

**- Eleni Veron**

+++

***“Bob and I are extending our Easter wishes to our Church Families  
near and far, a happy blessed Easter!  
Christ is Risen - Hristos Voskrese!”***

**- Bob & Lillian Sentz**

+++

***Christ is Risen !  
Truly He is Risen !  
A Blessed and Glorious Resurrection to Everyone!***

**- Panagiotis, Viktoriya,  
Stefanos, Serafima, & Loukia Billis**



***Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death with death,  
and upon those in the tombs bestowing life.***



On the Sunday of Forgiveness, on March 6, 2022, our Parish of the Holy Resurrection of Christ in Lebanon PA, had the blessing and the honor to welcome our Father and Bishop Irinej who presided with the Divine Liturgy.

After two difficult years of separation during the pandemic, seeing our Shepard in our midst, His Grace Bishop Irinej, was a true blessing and an opportunity for many of our new Parishioner to meet with him and talk to him in person.

As St. Paisios the Athonite used to say, the visit of His Grace to our Parish “charged our spiritual batteries” before the beginning of Great Lent. This much needed spiritual visit by our Father and Bishop Irinej was indeed a true blessing for all of us here in the Holy Resurrection of Christ Parish.

During his edifying sermon His Grace Bishop Irinej, emphasized the importance of the Great and Holy Lent and returning into the Garden of Eden where, after the food that became the reason of our fall and eviction from paradise, through the Eucharist, now it becomes “the new food” and the nourishment of our salvation, that brings us back into to bosom of our God. His Grace’s homily interpreted the three most important components of this Cheesefare Sunday’s Gospel reading: the forgiveness, fasting and riches.

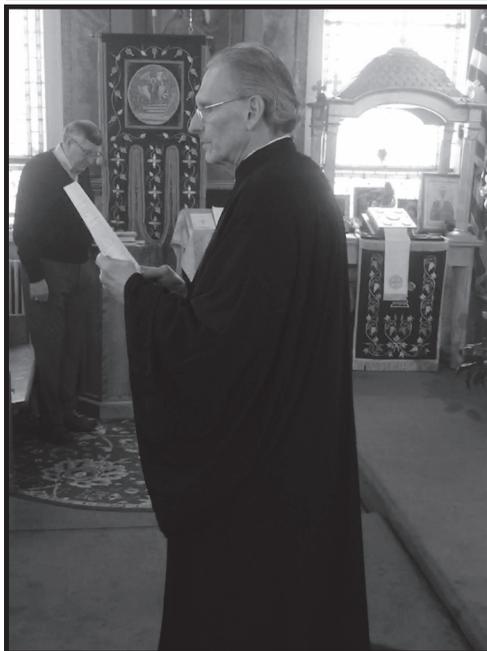
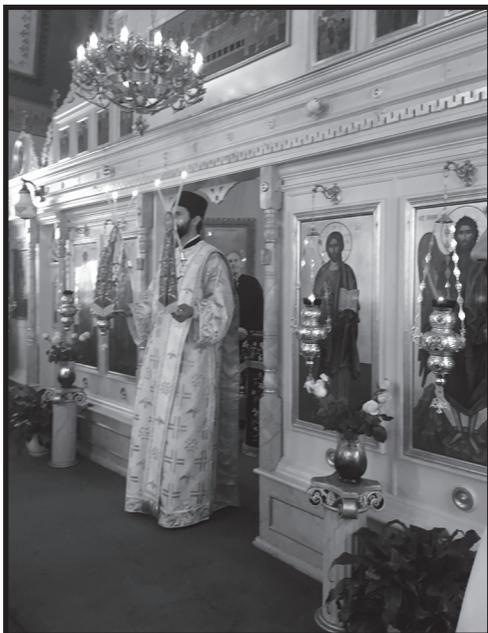
Our Parishioners received the Body and Blood of Christ through the hands of our First Hierarch and many of our catechumens were able to meet His Grace and get his blessing upon their personal journey through the Great and Holy Lent and entering in the Orthodox Church.

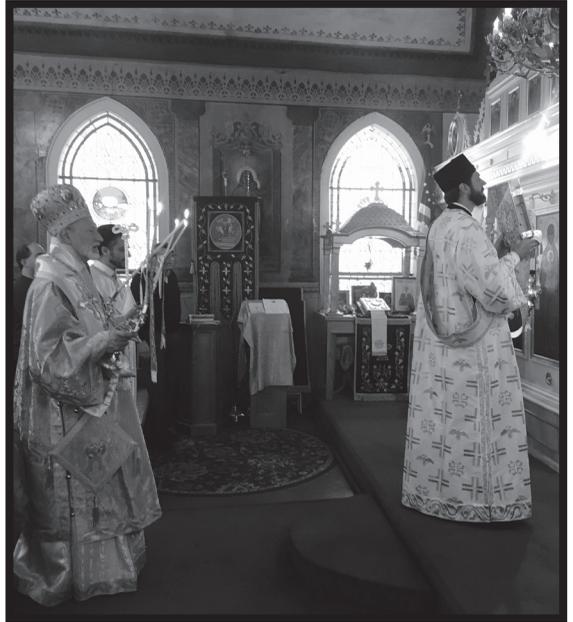
As always, our Parishioners prepared a feast Agape meal in our Church Hall for all who were able to come and share this joyful and blessed event for our Parish.

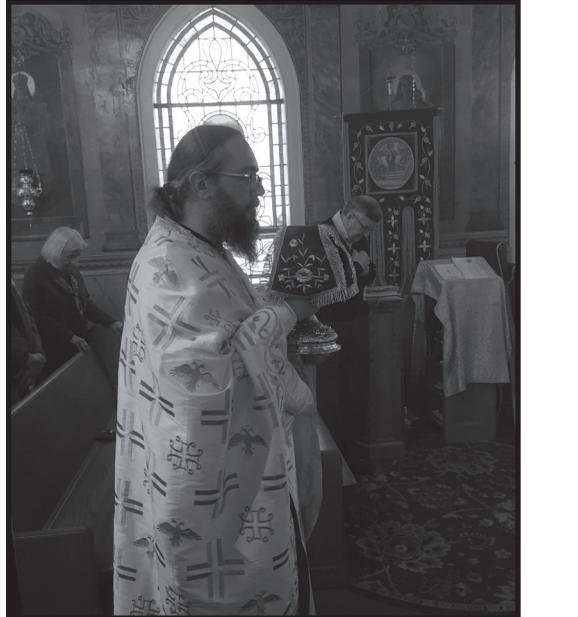
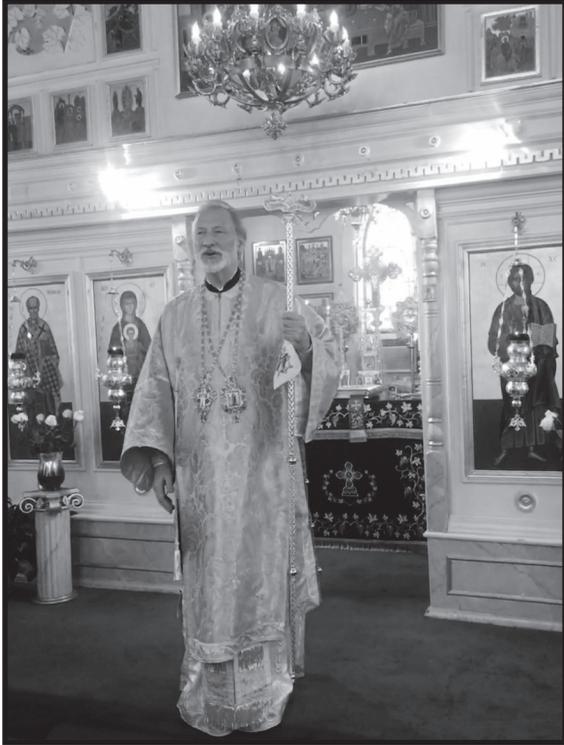
The words of the Psalm: “blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord” were fulfilled since we realized the time flew so fast when we had to separate from our Father and Bishop Irinej whom we hope, with God’s help to see him again on our Parish Slava celebration on Antipascha – St Thomas Sunday this May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

We hope and pray to see each other soon and feast together in the Lord for many years. Asking for forgiveness and blessed beginning of the Great and Holy Lent, through the prayers of our Father and Bishop Irinej, Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and save us!

Many Years, Eis polla eti Despota!









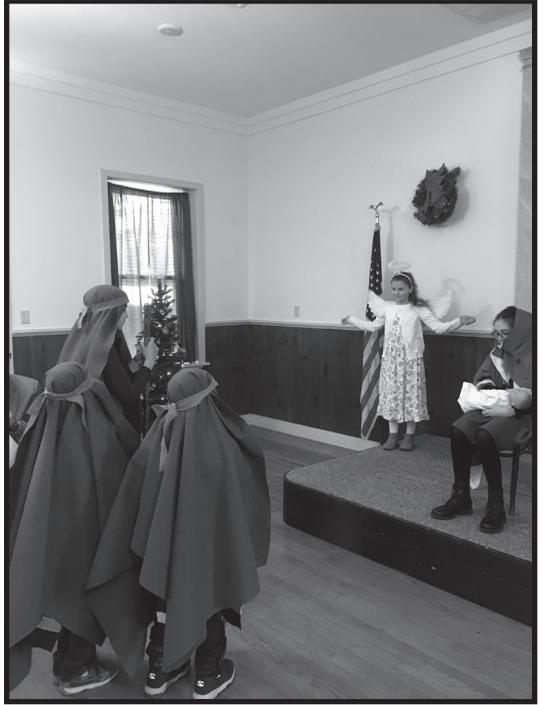


Glory to God, on January 6 - 7,<sup>th</sup> 2022 we celebrated the Nativity of Christ. The children in our Parish had their Christmas Pageant organized by our new Sunday School Teacher Mr. Chris Giovanis and Mrs Kyra Lentz, whom we thank for their work with our youngest.















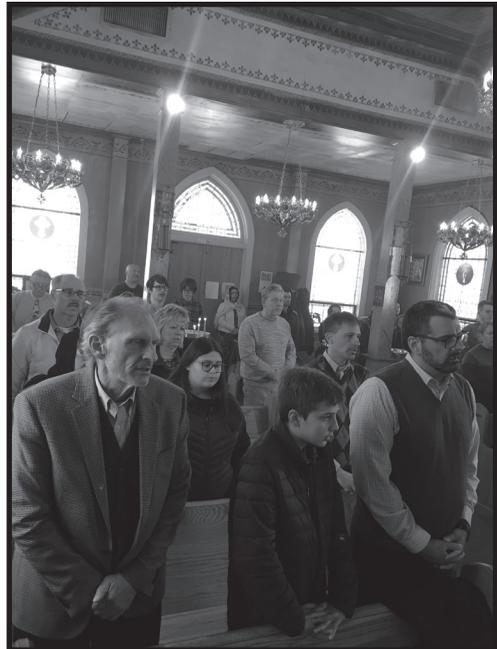
BEGINNING OF THE GREAT LENT - MARCH 7, 2022

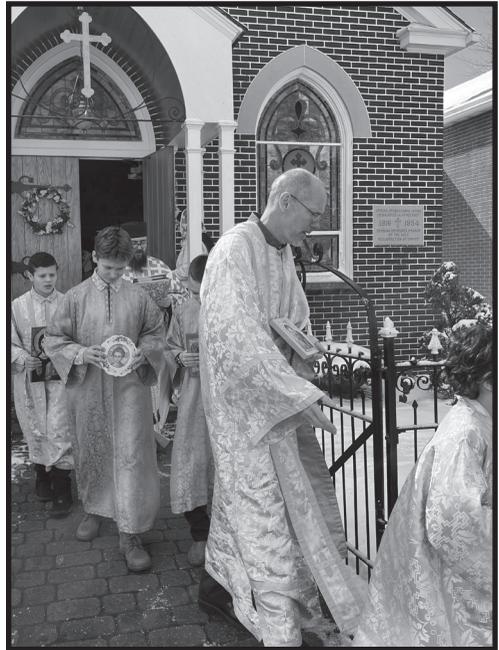
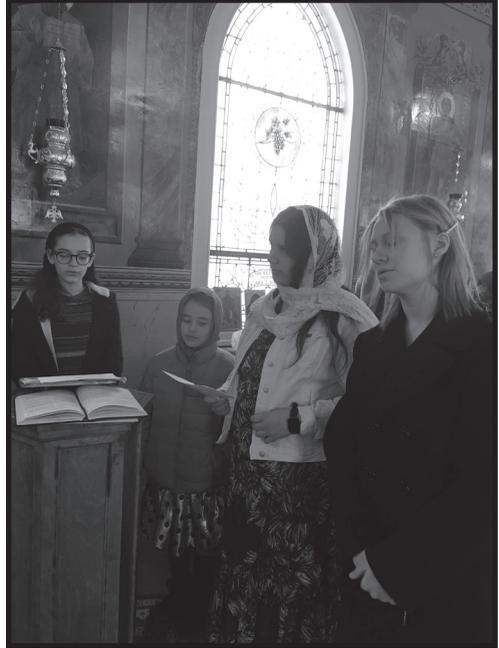


Glory to God, on March 7, 2022 we started the journey of the Great and Holy Lent, towards the Glorious Pascha of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May God bless all who with faith and humility followed the every day services throughout this blessed period of the Church Calendar.



SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY - MARCH 13, 2022



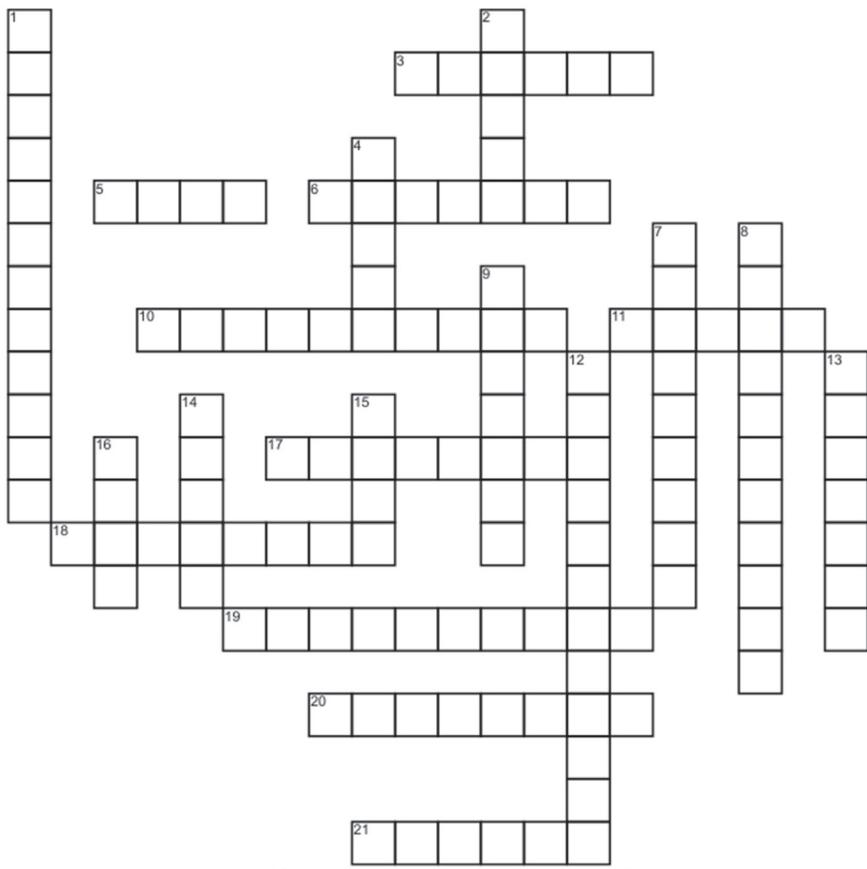






# Nicene Creed

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**Across**

- 3. He has \_\_\_\_\_ through the Prophets.
- 5. He was born of the Virgin \_\_\_\_\_.
- 6. His \_\_\_\_\_ will have no end.
- 10. In fulfilment of the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 11. He will come again in \_\_\_\_\_ to judge.
- 17. He has spoken through the \_\_\_\_\_.
- 18. He \_\_\_\_\_ into heaven.

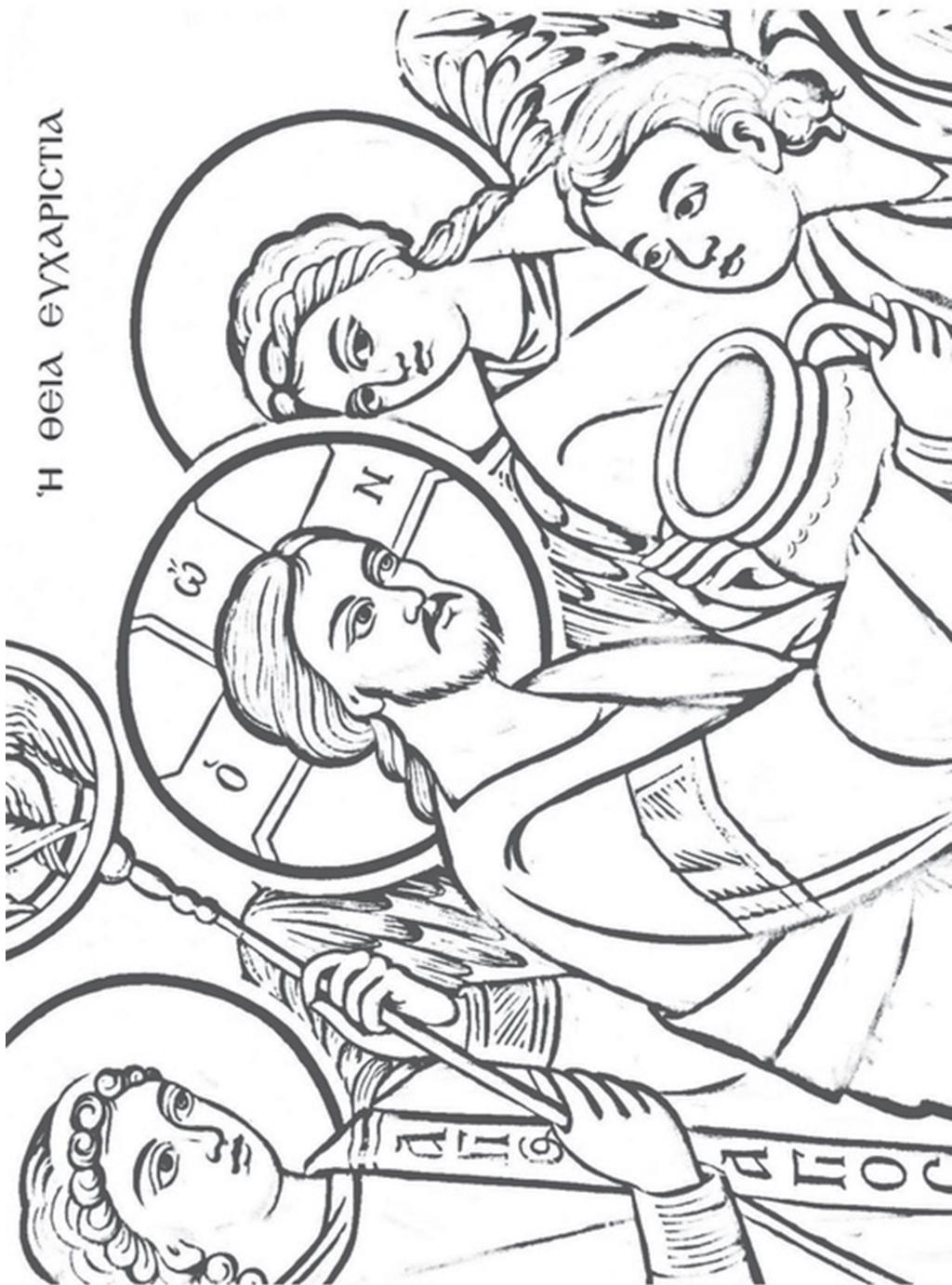
- 19. Is \_\_\_\_\_ and glorified.
  - 20. The Father, the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 21. Maker of \_\_\_\_\_ and earth.
- Down**
- 1. We look for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the dead.
  - 2. The life of the \_\_\_\_\_ to come.
  - 4. God for God, \_\_\_\_\_ from \_\_\_\_\_.
  - 7. For us men and for our \_\_\_\_\_.

- 8. For the \_\_\_\_\_ of sins.
- 9. We \_\_\_\_\_ in one God.
- 12. We look for the \_\_\_\_\_ of the dead.
- 13. We acknowledge on \_\_\_\_\_.
- 14. By the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Spirit.
- 15. We believe in one \_\_\_\_\_, Jesus Christ.
- 16. On the third day he \_\_\_\_\_ again.

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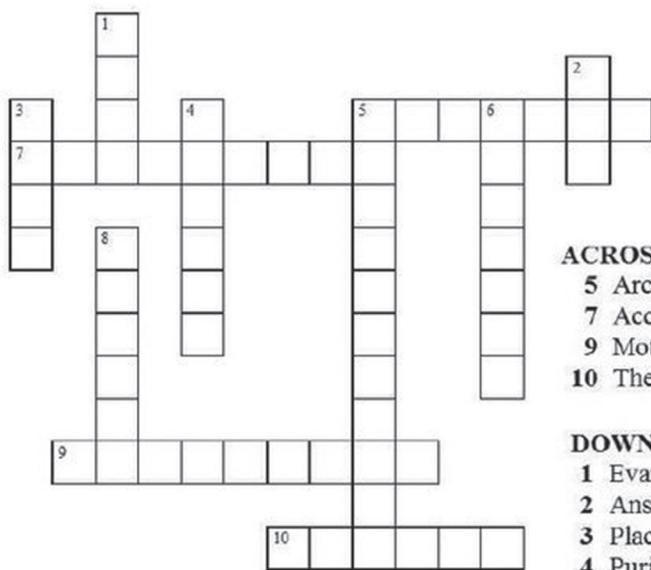


Ἡ ΘΕΙΑ ΕΥΧΑΡΙΣΤΙΑ



MARCH 25

*"Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb"*



**ACROSS**

- 5 Archangel who brought good news
- 7 Accordance to God's will
- 9 Mother of God
- 10 The one betrothed

**DOWN**

- 1 Evangelist who records Song of Panagia
- 2 Answer from Panagia
- 3 Place where God dwelt
- 4 Purity without stain
- 5 All "these" shall call her blessed
- 6 Greeting
- 8 Prophet who said "Behold, Virgin shall conceive in her womb and bear a son"

THE PASCHAL SERMON  
OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM ARCHBISHOP  
OF CONSTANTINOPLE

*The Catechetical Sermon of St. John Chrysostom is read during Matins of Pascha.*

If any man be devout and love God, let him enjoy this fair and radiant triumphal feast. If any man be a wise servant, let him rejoicing enter into the joy of his Lord. If any have labored long



in fasting, let him now receive his recompense. If any have wrought from the first hour, let him today receive his just reward. If any have come at the third hour, let him with thankfulness keep the feast. If any have arrived at the sixth hour, let him have no misgivings; because he shall in nowise be deprived thereof. If any have delayed until the ninth hour, let him draw near, fearing nothing. If any have tarried even

until the eleventh hour, let him, also, be not alarmed at his tardiness; for the Lord, who is jealous of his honor, will accept the last even as the first; he gives rest unto him who comes at the eleventh hour, even as unto him who has wrought from the first hour.

And he shows mercy upon the last, and cares for the first; and to the one he gives, and upon the other he bestows gifts. And he both accepts the deeds, and welcomes the intention, and honors the acts and praises the offering. Wherefore, enter you all into the joy of your Lord; and receive your reward, both the first, and likewise the second. You rich and poor together, hold high festival. You sober and you heedless, honor the day. Rejoice today, both you who have fasted and you who have disregarded the fast. The table is full-laden; feast ye all sumptuously. The calf is fatted; let no one go hungry away.

Enjoy ye all the feast of faith: Receive ye all the riches of loving-kindness. let no one bewail

his poverty, for the universal kingdom has been revealed. Let no one weep for his iniquities, for pardon has shown forth from the grave. Let no one fear death, for the Savior's death has set us free. He that was held prisoner of it has annihilated it. By descending into Hell, He made Hell captive. He embittered it when it tasted of His flesh. And Isaiah, foretelling this, did cry: Hell, said he, was embittered, when it encountered Thee in the lower regions. It was embittered, for it was abolished. It was embittered, for it was mocked. It was embittered, for it was slain. It was embittered, for it was overthrown. It was embittered, for it was fettered in chains. It took a body, and met God face to face. It took earth, and encountered Heaven. It took that which was seen, and fell upon the unseen.

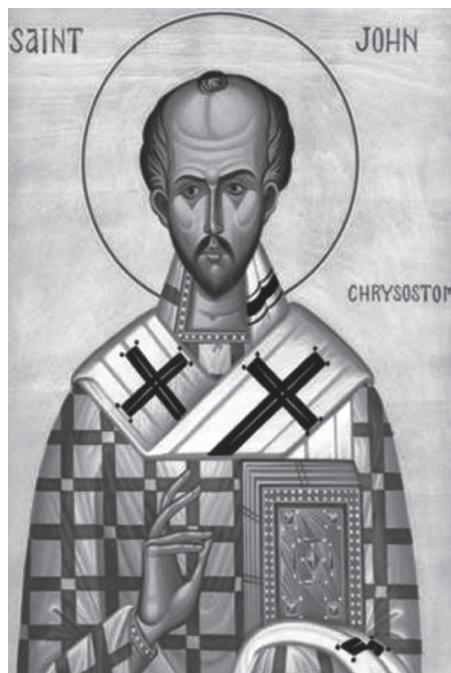
O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? Christ is risen, and you are overthrown. Christ is risen, and the demons are fallen. Christ is risen, and the angels rejoice. Christ is risen, and life reigns. Christ is risen, and not one dead remains in the grave. For Christ, being risen from the dead, is become the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. To Him be glory and dominion unto ages of ages. Amen.

## ABOUT ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM:

St. John Chrysostom (“The Golden Tongue”) was born at Antioch in about the year 347 into the family of a military-commander, spent his early years studying under the finest philosophers and rhetoricians and was ordained a deacon in the year 381 by the bishop of Antioch Saint Meletios. In 386 St. John was ordained a priest by the bishop of Antioch, Flavian.

Over time, his fame as a holy preacher grew, and in the year 397 with the demise of Archbishop Nektarios of Constantinople—successor to Sainted Gregory the Theologian—Saint John Chrysostom was summoned from Antioch for to be the new Archbishop of Constantinople.

Exiled in 404 and after a long illness because of the exile, he was transferred to Pitius in Abkhazia where he received the Holy Eucharist, and said, “Glory to God for everything!”, falling asleep in the Lord on 14 September 407.



# Saint Makarios the Egyptian - Homily XXV



How we came into bondage to the passions and are delivered by the Cross. Also the power of tears and the divine fire.

How then should we not be serpents, since we don't behave in obedience to God, but in the disobedience which came by the serpent? Given this, I don't know how best to lament the calamity. I don't know how I should cry and weep to him who has the power to expel the delusion entrenched within me. 'How shall I sing the Lord's song in a strange land?'. How shall I lament for Jerusalem? How shall I flee from the grievous bondage of Pharaoh? How am I to leave this vile dwelling-place? How can I renounce the bitter tyranny? How can I exit the land of Egypt? How can I cross the Red Sea? How can I cross the great wilderness? How shall I not be lost to the bite of a snake? How shall I defeat foreigners? How shall I destroy the heathen within me? How shall I receive the words of the law of God upon these tablets of mine? How shall I see the true pillar of light and the cloud, proceeding from the Holy Spirit? How shall I enjoy the manna of everlasting delight? How shall I drink the water from the life-giving rock? How shall I pass

over the Jordan and into the blessed land of the promise? How shall I see the Lord's chief captain, at the sight of whom Joshua, the son of Nun, immediately fell down and venerated him? Yet unless I accomplish all this and destroy the heathen within me, I can't enter the sanctuary of God and be at ease, nor can I become a partaker of the glory of the King.

Therefore labor to become a child of God without blemish, and to enter into that rest, where Christ entered for us, as the forerunner. Labor to be enrolled in the church in heaven together with the first-born, so that you may be found at the right hand of the majesty of the Most High. Labor to enter the holy city, pacified and sublime Jerusalem, where Paradise also is. You will not be able to perform these wonderful and blessed feats in any other way than by pouring out tears day and night, as did the person who said: 'Every night I wash my bed, and water my couch with my tears' (Ps. 4, 6). You know well that they who sow in tears shall reap in joy (Ps. 125, 6). As the prophet boldly says, 'Hearken to my

tears; do not ignore me' (Ps. 38, 13). And again, 'Set my tears before you, according to your promise' (Ps. 55, 9) and, 'My tears have been my bread day and night' (Ps. 41, 4). And in another psalm, 'I have mingled my drink with weeping (Ps. 101, 10).

The tear that is really shed out of much affliction and anguish of heart, in the knowledge of the truth and with visceral burning, is, indeed, food for the soul, supplied from the heavenly bread, of which Mary formerly partook when she sat at the feet of the Lord and wept, according to the testimony of the Savior himself. For he says, 'Mary has chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her'. Oh, those precious pearls in the flood of blessed tears! Oh, that keen and readily persuaded attention! What a strong, wise mind! What sharpness of the Spirit of the Lord, drawn inexorably towards the unsullied Bridegroom! What a spur of desire in the soul for God the Word! What swift communion of the bride with the heavenly Bridegroom!

Imitate that soul then, my child; imitate the soul whose eyes were fixed solely on him, who said: 'I have come to send fire upon the earth, and I wish that it had already been kindled' (Luke 22, 49). There is indeed a kindling of the Spirit, which makes hearts burst into flame. Because the immaterial and divine fire has the effect of enlightening souls and trying them, like unalloyed gold in the furnace. Iniquity, on the other hand, it consumes like thorns or stubble: 'for our God is a consuming fire' (Heb. 12, 29); 'in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey his gospel. (2 Thess. 1, 8). It was this fire that worked in the apostles, when they spoke with fiery tongues. It was this fire which shone brightly on Saint Paul through the voice which enlightened his mind, but blinded his sense of sight. For it was not without the flesh that he saw the power of that light. It was this fire which appeared to Moses in the bush. This fire, in the shape of a chariot, snatched up Elijah from the earth. The blessed David was seeking the action of this fire when he said, 'Test me, Lord, and prove me: set fire to my reins and my heart' (Ps. 25, 2).

It was this fire which warmed the heart of Cleopas and those with him while the Savior talked after His resurrection. The angels and ministering spirits share in the shining of this fire, according to what is said: 'Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire (Ps. 103, 4). It is this fire which consumes the beam that is in the inward eye, making the mind clear, so that it recovers its natural power of penetration and can see in perpetuity the wonderful things of God: 'Uncover my eyes and I shall see the wondrous things of your law' (Ps. 118, 18). This fire drives away devils, and destroys sin; and it's the power of resurrection, and the action of immortality, the illumination of holy souls, and the constitution of rational powers. Let us pray that this fire may reach us also, so that, always walking in the light, we may never for a moment dash our feet against a stone. Rather, shining as lights in the world, may we hold fast the word of everlasting life, so that, enjoying God's blessings, we may rest with the Lord in life, glorifying the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, to whom be glory and dominion to the ages. Amen.

# MONK CHRISTODOULOS, KATOUNAKIOTIS (1894 – 23 APRIL 1982)



*The late Elder Christodoulos Katounakiotis (right),  
with his exceptional disciple, Monk Kallinikos*



*Elder Christodoulos (in the middle) with his disciples  
Kallinikos and Yerasimos*

He was born in Lamia in 1894 and his name then was Christos Kontonikolos. When he was young he was a cobbler in Halkida, on Evia. He was ten years old when his father died. He was immersed in the waters of piety by his mother, who ended her days as Sister Magdalini, a nun of the Great Habit.

In 1923, with divine zeal he entered the Athonite arena. He loved the wilderness and his soul found a haven in the delightful quiet of the desert of Katounakia. There isn't any greenery, any trees or birds here, just unyielding rocks. The harshness of the location brings sanctity to the souls of the 'wounded sparrows of heaven', the monks who live there. At the feet of the niptic/hesychast Elder Kallinikos (†1930) he found a teacher experienced in obedience and the prayer of the heart. There are no human consolations there. There's no running water, the everyday meal featured dried out rusks, the timetable was exhausting and made them very tired, the location was a desert and the constant cutting off of one's personal will was a bloodless sacrifice. He was tonsured a monk in 1924.

There are, however, some small and some great joys associated with prayer, obedience and the ascetic life. The Jesus prayer, the blessing of the Elder, and divine worship brought grace to his soul. He remained steadfast to the words he heard at his tonsure. He suffered patiently 'every sorrow and worry of the solitary life, for the kingdom of God', with the help and grace of our All-Good God. This very strict monastic life wasn't for many people. Fr. Christodoulos was one of the



*The blessed Elders Christodoulos and Kallinikos, at Katounakia*

very few who could live it. He reminds you of the ancient fathers of the desert in Nitria.

His Elder was very strict. He would send him to Karyes for a single letter, which meant a ten-hour walk, and he would return laden with supplies. Nor was he allowed to read much. 'What's the good of you reading if you're not going to apply it?' the Elder would say. Shortly after the demise of his Elder, God sent him an exceptional disciple, to whom he gave the name of his former Elder and this monk served him willingly and cheerfully until the end of his life. We actually knew both these blessed elders and to be honest, we didn't know which one to admire most. Their few words were most beneficial to the soul, and they also taught through their silence.

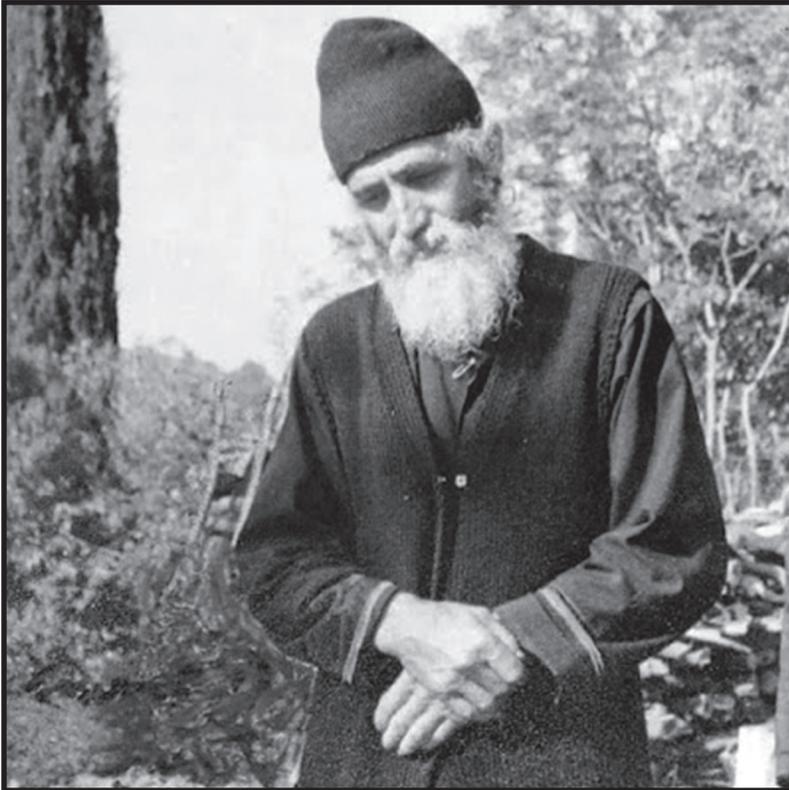
Elder Christodoulos' end was painful: his whole body was covered in sores from his illness and he suffered constant and dreadful pain, which he bore without complaint. He said: 'Illnesses are a purgatory for our soul'. He asked forgiveness of his disciples for tiring them, and called them angels. He also called upon the mercy of our all-compassionate God. He asked

that he might leave this life without his sickness being a burden on others. He really did believe what he said, and wasn't just pretending to be humble.

He lived in repentance and humility, contrition and compunction. He had remembrance of death, a sense of his sinfulness, glad sorrow, and joyful mourning. He used to teach, in restrained tones: 'The prayer's a good habit. Christ enters us, without our realizing. Don't worry if your mind sometimes strays during prayer. Just carry on saying it, because God hears you and the demons are driven away... A monk is 'a mind seeing God'. How can we reach this state? Through the simplicity of our life, and working at the prayer which is a sword against the devil... If you fast, take communion, read, and don't have love, everything's null and void, because God is love. Each of you imitate the good points of the other, and as for their weaknesses, pray that God will be merciful towards them...'

This great ascetic of the twentieth century, this observer of the authentic monastic tradition, who loved the fathers, his brothers, his children and his fellow men, went to his rest on 23/4/1982. He tried hard to benefit others with Patristic words, and blessed examples, rather than strict penances and harsh words. He was strict enough to himself, but lenient towards others. He was a wonderful image of meekness and sanctity.

# The Greatest and most Wonderful Thing I Experienced with Saint Païsius



During the course of the vigil I was inside the main church. By the light of the lamps and a few candles, the prayerful atmosphere in the church reached its peak. I wasn't used to standing for such long services, though. About eight hours after the start of Great Vespers, around 4 o'clock in the morning, I felt exhausted.

So I decided to leave the church for a bit and take a break. As I went out, when I was still in the inner narthex, I noticed a light to the left of me which resembled something light the flash on a camera, but which didn't bother the eyes.

I turned round spontaneously to see where it was coming from and what it actually was, because at the time the only lighting in that part of the church was two oil-lamps and two candles. Looking at the line of monks in their prayer-stalls, I saw that this light was coming from the head of one of the elders, who was bent low. There must have been more than forty fathers in the inner narthex at that moment.

Without another thought but with a certain reluctance, I went towards this monk, to see who it was. The closer I got, the more intense the light became. As I approached, without meaning to, I touched him on the shoulder.



He lifted his head and looked at me. Immediately, the light was lost. The monk was none other than Father Paΐsios, who had been lost in contemplation in the light of the Transfiguration. As soon as I touched him, he landed back in earthly reality.

He seemed a little annoyed, but still smiled. When I asked him about it, he said ‘Hush, son. Let’s not disturb the other elders (who, I have to say, hadn’t noticed anything).

I went outside into the courtyard feeling full of joy and blessed by the Grace of the Light. Then I was filled with a divine fragrance, an inconceivable divine fragrance, so powerful that, for some moments, I had difficulty in breathing.

But my joy was twofold, because that fragrance came as confirmation of what I’d experienced just before. The exultation I felt was beyond description.

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Sources– *Pemptusia*

From the book «Γέροντας Παΐσιος ο Αγιορείτης (1924-1994), Μαρτυρίες προσκυνητών» [Elder Paΐsios the Athonite (1924-1994, Visitors’ Testimony], vol. 2, published by Ayiotokos Kappadokia [ that is ‘Saint-bearing Cappadocia’].

# SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

## **EVERY FRIDAY**

at 6:30 PM CANON TO THE THEOTOKOS

## **EVERY SATURDAY**

at 6:00 PM VESPERS

## **EVERY SUNDAY**

at 10:00 AM HOLY LITURGY

## **LAZARUS SATURDAY** APRIL 16, 2022 -

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy

6:00 PM Great Vespers

## **PALM SUNDAY,** APRIL 17, 2022 - **PALM SUNDAY**

10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

6:00 PM Bridegroom Matins

## **WEDNESDAY,** APRIL 20, 2022

6:00 PM HOLY UNCTION

## **THURSDAY,** APRIL 21, 2022

9:00 AM Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great

6:00 PM MATINS OF HOLY FRIDAY (READING OF THE 12 GOSPELS)

## **HOLY FRIDAY,** APRIL 22, 2022

9:00 AM Royal Hours with Vespers

6:00 PM MATINS OF HOLY SATURDAY (EPITAPHIO)

## **HOLY SATURDAY,** APRIL 23, 2022 **HOLY SATURDAY**

9:00 AM VESPERAL DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. BASIL THE GREAT

11:45 PM **HOLY MATINS (SERVICE CONTINUES INTO SUNDAY - PASCHA)**

*THE DIVINE LITURGY ON PASCHA CONTINUES INTO THE EARLY MORNING OF APRIL 24 2022*

## **HOLY PASCHA** APRIL 24, 2022 - **RESURRECTION OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST**

## SCHEDULE OF SERVICES... CONTINUED

**00:00 AM      HOLY MATINS AND LITURGY (SERVICE CONTINUES INTO SUNDAY, MAY 2)  
BLESSING OF THE FOOD & AGAPE FELLOWSHIP FOLLOWS THE PASCHAL SERVICE**

**SUNDAY PASCHA,      APRIL 24, 2022 - PASCHAL VESPERS  
4:00 PM              VESPERS (READING THE GOSPELS IN MULTIPLE LANGUAGES)**

**MONDAY,              APRIL 25, 2022 (BRIGHT WEEK)  
9:00 AM              Paschal DIVINE LITURGY AT CHRIST THE SAVIOR**

**FRIDAY,              APRIL 29, 2022 (BRIGHT WEEK)  
9:00 AM              DIVINE LITURGY - (THEOTOKOS, LIFE-GIVING FOUNT)**

**SATURDAY,          APRIL 30, 2022 (BRIGHT WEEK)  
6:00 PM              VESPERS**

**SUNDAY,              MAY 1, 2022 - CHURCH SLAVA, (ANTIPASCHA)  
10:00 AM              (Slava celebration - Hierarchical Divine Liturgy)  
                                Divine Liturgy - Sunday of St. Thomas - Antipascha.**

**MONDAY,              MAY 2, 2022  
10:30 AM              PARASTOS - MEMORIAL MONDAY**

**THURSDAY,          MAY 6, 2022 (BRIGHT WEEK)  
9:00 AM              Paschal DIVINE LITURGY - HOLY GREAT MARTYR GEORGE**

**FRIDAY,              MAY 6, 2022  
6:00 PM              CANON TO THE THEOTOKOS**

**SATURDAY,          MAY 7, 2022  
6:00 PM              VESPERS**



DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST,  
WITH PASCHAL JOY,  
WE WOULD LIKE TO INFORM YOU THAT

ON MAY 1<sup>ST</sup>  
OUR 106<sup>TH</sup> HOLY RESURRECTION OF CHRIST  
PARISH SLAVA CELEBRATION

WILL BE CELEBRATED WITH  
HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY FROM 10 AM ON  
THE SUNDAY OF ST. THOMAS, PRESIDED BY  
HIS GRACE AND FATHER BISHOP IRINEJ!

YOU ARE WELCOME TO SHARE WITH US THIS JOYFUL EVENT!  
CHRIST IS RISEN!

MUSIC PROVIDED BY "SVIRAJ"



*Visit our Parish Church web site on: [holyresurrectionofchrist.com](http://holyresurrectionofchrist.com)*



**HOLY RESURRECTION THANKS YOU IN ADVANCE FOR SENDING YOUR  
EASTER DONATION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE!**



**Due to the increase of mailing costs of the Church Messengers,  
Holy Resurrection is asking you to consider future Messengers  
by E-mail or continue to receive a hard copy by mail.**

**Please RSVP:  
[raha1311@aol.com](mailto:raha1311@aol.com)**



**Visit our Facebook page at:  
<https://www.facebook.com/HolyResurrection/>**



## **Upcoming Events in our Parish:**

**Church Slava Celebration - May 1, 2022**

**Chicken BBQ & Pulled Pork Dinner**

**- May 21, 2022**

**- September - (date to be determined)**

**Food Fest - October 1, 2022 (tentative)**

**“Berba” Harvest Dance - November 5, 2022**

**Potato Filling Sale - November 19, 2022**

**Potato Filling Pick up - November 22, 2022**

**Bake Sale - December 10, 2022**

**Snow date - December 17, 2022**