



## Holy Glorious Great-Martyr Demetrius



Clearly conspicuous among the martyrs, and rising above most of them in his excellence is the one we celebrate today, a native Thessalonian fellow citizen, and guardian of our city, noble wonder of the world and adornment of the church, Demetrius the wonder-worker and Myrrhstreamer, who was great in all respects.

-St. Gregory Palamas (Homily on St. Demetrius)

On October 26, Christians all around the world celebrate the feast day of St. Demetrius the Great martyr and Myrrh-streamer. St. Demetrius was born in Thessalonica of noble parents who raised him in the fear of God and in every virtue. He grew in physical and spiritual stature and developed a precious comeliness of body and soul. At a young age he was appointed governor of Thessalonica and all Thessalia under the Roman emperor Diocletian. St. Demetrius loved Christ

Άγιος Ένδοξος

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### Μεγαλομάρτυς Δημήτριος

Είναι σαφώς εμφανές ότι ξεχωρίζει ανάμεσα στους μάρτυρες και ανυψώνεται πάνω από τους περισσότερους για την αριστεία του, αυτός που γιορτάζουμε σήμερα, ένας γηγενής Θεσσαλονικιός συμπολίτης και φύλακας της πόλης μας, ένα ευγενές θαύμα του κόσμου και στολίδι της Εκκλησίας, Δημήτριος ο Θαυματουργός και Μυροβλύτης, ο οποίος ήταν μέγας σε όλους τους τομείς.  
-Αγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς (περιγράφοντας τον Άγιο Δημήτριο στους Εγκωμιαστικούς του Λόγους)

Συνέχεια στη σελ.17

## Youth Conference 2017: Another Great Success!

With the blessing of His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America, the Dormition of the Theotokos parish in Concord, NH, hosted this year's Youth and Family Conference on the weekend of October 20 – 22. The conference theme was "Reverence and the Fear of God." Their Eminences, Metropolitan Demetrius and Metropolitan Moses of Toronto joined us along with more than a dozen clergy and about 150 laity. Conferees came from New England, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, Florida, Toronto, and as far away as California. It was wonderful to get re-acquainted with old friends as well as get to know many new folks. The event began and ended with a short service ask-



Be Careful. Watch out for your soul! Turn your thoughts away from what will soon pass and turn them towards what is eternal. Thus you will find the happiness that your soul seeks...  
Προσέχετε. Φρουρείτε την ψυχή σας! Στρέψτε τις σκέψεις σας μακριά από αυτά που σύντομα θα περάσουν και στρέψτε τις προς τα αιώνια. Έτσι θα βρείτε την ευτυχία που λαχταρούν οι ψυχές σας...

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The Spiritual Watch is mailed to the homes of faithful by request only. Please see request information on p. 7

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# Self-Knowledge: A Sermon by Fr. Theologos

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

In the Gospel, we see St. John the Theologian standing by the Cross of the Lord, when all the other disciples had fled; we heard the Lord saying to him, “Son, behold thy Mother.” We hear him testifying of the piercing of the Lord’s Divine side, that blood and water issued forth therefrom. He was the beloved disciple of the Lord because of his virginal purity; he is the one that leaned on the Lord’s fiery breast and received ineffable mysteries; thereby he proclaimed the Divinity of Christ in his Gospel by thundering forth: “*In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.*” In Matins, we hear in the Oikos of St. John the Theologian: “*It is daring and beyond understanding for us to search out the heights of Heaven and to probe the depths of the sea. Just as it is impossible to count all the stars or the grains of sand from the seashore; neither is it possible to say enough concerning the Theologian. With so many crowns hath Christ crowned him whom He loved, who reclined on His Breast and ate with Him at the Mystical Supper, as the Theologian and friend of Christ.*” Likewise, we could spend all day trying to weave worthy praises to St. John the Theologian, but today I will touch on just a short sentence from his first Epistle:

*“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.”*

This short sentence is very significant, and from it we can learn what is profitable and indispensable for our souls.

I remember hearing, in general or in confession, and I still hear such comments today, like, “*Well, I don’t have much to say; I’m actually a really good person...*” or “*I don’t have anything serious to tell you; I love everyone, and I don’t bother anyone,*” or “*I don’t really have any passions... I am not like that...*” or “*I don’t have the passions and sins you just enumerated to me...*” Etc., etc., etc., and perhaps we, ourselves, might believe or have believed this of ourselves to a certain extent



at some point in our lives. This however, as we have just heard in St. John’s epistle, is a great delusion. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The truth is, we are all sinners before God and fall short of the glory of God, as the Prophet tells us in the Old Testament, “*All our righteousness is as a filthy rag before Thee,*” and again, “*Even if a person were to live but one day, he would still not be without sin.*” All the Services of our Holy Church are permeated with this *fronima* or mindset reminding us of our sinfulness. In the hymns in the Octoechos we hear such things as, “*O my lowly soul, my wretched soul, mine unrepentant soul, repent and cry unto Christ: I have sinned, be gracious, O Friend of man.*” The message that St. John the Theologian wishes to convey to us is clear and is something that all of the Saints and Holy Fathers possessed or acquired after many struggles and trials: it is *Self-knowledge*. St. John is telling us, “*Know thyself!*” Now, before we begin to speak about Self-knowledge, we must first understand that this requires us to philosophize against ourselves, as St. John Climacus says. That is, we must study our faults and weaknesses.

Self Knowledge is to know and understand and believe in truth that we are great sinners and debtors before God, acknowledging our failings, our passions, our sins, weaknesses, and shortcomings. Self-knowledge is seeing ourselves truthfully, the way it really is with us, without the veil

of self-love and justification. St. Nikitas Stithatos says, in the Philokalia, “*Know thyself: this is humility, the humility that teaches us to be inwardly humble and makes our heart contrite. Such humility you must cultivate and guard. For if you do not yet know thyself, you cannot know what humility is, and have not yet embarked truly on the task of cultivating and guarding. To know oneself is the goal of the practice of the virtues.*”

St. Nektarios of Pentapolis, the Wonderworker, who wrote a whole book called “*Know thyself*” says: “*Without self knowledge, we cannot come to know God;*” St. Isaac the Syrian says: “*Blessed is the man who knows his own weakness, because this knowledge becomes to him the foundation, root and beginning of*

*all goodness. For whenever a man learns and truly perceives his own weakness, at that moment he contracts his soul on every side from the laxity that dims knowledge, and he treasures up watchfulness in himself. The man who has come to learn the measure of his weakness, has reached the perfect degree of humility.*”

Now, the way the Saints acquired self knowledge was by true, unhypocritical and sincere self condemnation. But before we can begin to see our own sinfulness and wretchedness before God, we have to stop looking at our brother’s or neighbor’s weaknesses and shortcomings and tend only to ourselves and above all ask God for this gift. Again, we are going to see how the Holy Fathers of the Church did it: St. Philaret of NY the new Confessor would say everyday: “*O Lord, grant me to see myself the way I ought, and not my supposed self righteousness;*” St. Ephraim the Syrian said: “*O Lord and Master of my life, grant me to see my own failings and not to condemn my brother.*” When, finally, we begin to pray in this way with pain of heart and contrition, our Saviour will allow us to get hit with temptations and trials, as we all well know, because this is how all the passions and sicknesses of our souls, that have been hiding in there, come to light. St. Isaac the Syrian says: “*No one can perceive his own infirmity if he is not allowed to be tempted a little, by things that oppress either his body or his soul.*” Therefore, when we get hit with such temptations or trials, and all of our passions

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# Ask His Eminence

**Question:** I often feel that I would rather just pray at home because when I go to church, I'm tempted by things that are happening around me. Is it not better to just stay home and pray in peace?

**Answer:** First of all, when we have the temptation to ask such a question, or to make such a comment, we should examine ourselves very carefully. This should be our first step because what happens oftentimes is that we can be insincere: We want to live a certain way because of our passions, and the various temptations while in church serve as an excuse. For example, a person is too lazy to go to church, so he comes up with a nice excuse as to why, "Well, look at how the people are!" This is a human weakness, so we need to examine ourselves and see if this is the reason, or if not, what exactly is the reason. Our spiritual father can be an indispensable resource in helping us to examine our own selves.

Secondly, St. John Chrysostom teaches that we need to go to church because there are multiple souls who are praying in God's House, and this can help us also to pray. There is a saying in Greek: «Ουαί το ενί,» which means, "Woe to him who is alone." We are made by our Creator to enjoy unity. The Holy Trinity is united, and all of the Christians are united unto God; Christians are united to one another, as well. This concept of unity is very important.

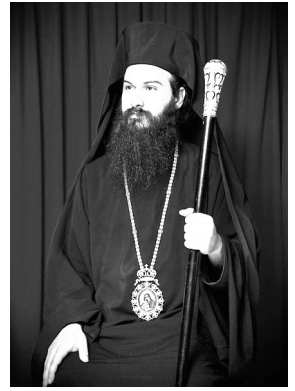
Certainly, there will be people in church who are not of the right spirit. However, the Church is a hospital, and each patient needs to look at *his own* sicknesses and weaknesses, not those of the other patients. We need to work with the Doctor, our Lord. We must give our full attention to our own self, because if we are

looking at the sicknesses of another, we will not be able to attend to our own problems.

Therefore, we should realize that it is not normal for one to stand alone, particularly in prayer, depriving our soul of the Church (although it is important to pray on our own, as well, as we should have our prayer rules). All of the Holy Fathers, with one voice, tell us that those who are anchorites or ascetics need

to be extremely mature spiritually, because it is a great podvig, a great struggle, to be on your own. It is presumptuous to say, "I don't need to go to church, I can just say my prayers at home." It is dangerous.

We see that there may be a hidden, true reason, for people to express the desire to avoid church and only pray at home; very often, it is either because they are lazy, or because they are not concentrating on themselves. St. Seraphim of Sarov says, "When you go to church, just look at the icon, or look at the lamp in front of the icon, or shut your eyes; do whatever is possible, whatever you can, to concentrate better." This is the main reason why we keep stressing attentiveness and watchfulness in church. Most likely, it will not be possible to have the same type of quiet at a parish that you may perhaps find at a monastery church. But we must make the effort and we must start with ourselves: We must try very hard to concentrate, and to look only at the sinfulness within ourselves.



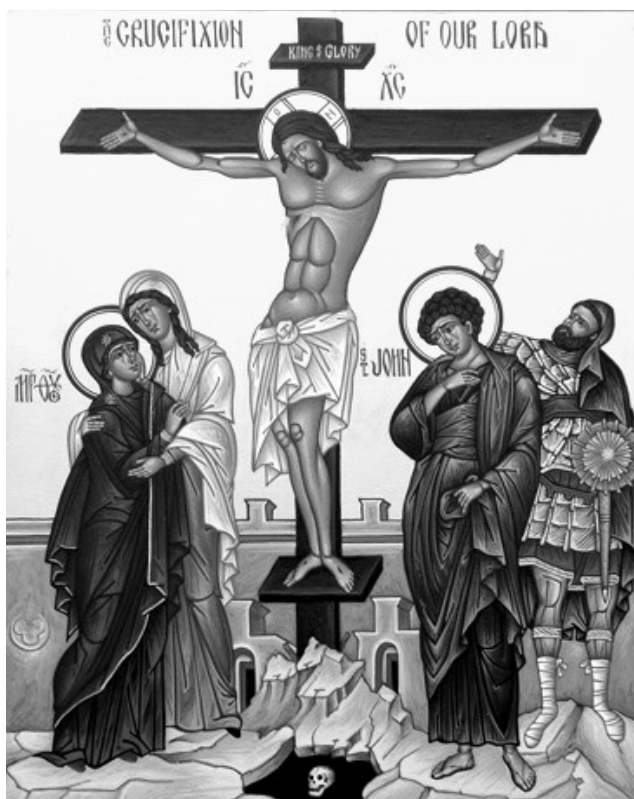
Truly, the Church is heaven upon earth; for where the throne of God is, where the terrible Mysteries are celebrated, where the angels serve together with men, where the Almighty is unceasingly glorified, there is truly heaven, and the heaven of heavens. And thus let us enter into the Church of God with the fear of God, with a pure heart, laying aside all passions and every worldly care, and let us stand in it with faith and reverence, with understanding attention, with love and peace in our hearts, so that we may come away renewed, as though made heavenly; so that we may live in the holiness natural to heaven, not binding ourselves by worldly desires and pleasures.

*-St. John of Kronstadt ("My Life in Christ")*

## Αυτογνωσία: Κήρυγμα του π. Θεολόγου

Είς το όνομα του Πατρός και του Υιού και του Αγίου Πνεύματος Αμήν.

Ακούσαμε στο Ιερό Ευαγγέλιο τον Άγιο Ιωάννη τον Θεολόγο να στέκεται μπροστά στον Σταυρό του Χριστού μας, όταν ήδη είχαν φύγει όλοι οι λοιποί Απόστολοι από τον φόβο τους. Ακούσαμε τον Χριστό μας, όταν κρεμόταν πάνω στο Σταυρό, να του λέει για την Παναγία μας, «Ιδού η Μητήρ σου». Ακούσαμε να μαρτυρεί περί του Θείου Αίματος και Ύδατος που εξέβλησε από την Θεία Πλευρά του Χριστού μας όταν ελοχεύθη. Ήταν ο ηγαπημένος μαθητής του Κυρίου για την παρθενική του αγνότητα. Αυτός, στον Μυστικό Δείπνο, ανέπεσε στο πύρινο στήθος του Χριστού μας και έλαβε τα άρρητα μυστήρια της Θεολογίας και εβρόντησε την Θεότητα του Χριστού λέγοντας, «Εν αρχή ην ο Λόγος, και ο Λόγος ην προς τον Θεόν, και Θεός ην ο Λόγος». Ακούσαμε, στον Όρθρον, στον Οίκο του Αγίου Ιωάννου, «Υψη ουράνια εκμανθίν, και θαλάσσης τα βάθη



έρευναν, τολμηρόν υπάρχει και ακατάληπτον, ώσπερ ουν άστρα εξαριθμήσαι, και παράλιον ψάμμον ουκ έστιν όλως, ούτως ούτε τα του Θεολόγου ειπείν ικανόν, τοσούτοις αυτόν στεφάνοις ο Χριστός, ον ηγάπησεν έστεπεν! Ου τω στήθει ανέπεσε, και εν τω μυστικώ δείπνω συνειστιάθη, ως Θεολόγος και φίλος Χριστού». Και εμείς, θα μπορούσαμε να διαθέσουμε όλη την ημέρα στην προσπάθεια να πλέξουμε άξιους ύμνους για τον Αγ. Ιωάννη τον Θεολόγον, αλλά σήμερα θα ήθελα να στρέψω την προσοχή σας στην πρώτη Επιστολή του Αγίου Ιωάννου που γράφει, «Εάν λέμε, 'δεν έχουμε αμαρτία,' ψευδόμαστε, και η αλήθεια δεν είναι μέσα μας.» Είναι πολύ σημαντικό αυτό το απόσπασμα της Επιστολής για μας, γιατί μαθαίνουμε κάτι πολύ ωφέλιμο και απαραίτητο για τις ψυχές μας.

Θυμάμαι, γενικά ή σε εξομολογήσεις, να ακούω πράγματα ως εξής: «Εγώ δεν έχω τίποτα σοβαρό

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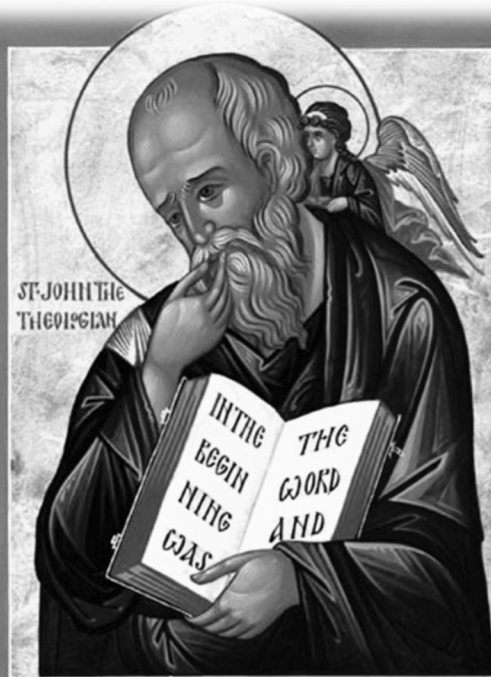


να σου πω, είμαι καλός άνθρωπος...» και «Ε, τι να σου πώ, δεν έχω κάνει τίποτα κακό σε κανέναν. Είμαι καλός/ή και τους αγαπάω όλους. Δεν έχω τίποτα με κανέναν...» ή ακόμα ακούνε οι πνευματικοί πατέρες, «Ε, εγώ δεν έχω αυτά τα πάθη ή αμαρτίες, δεν έχω τίποτα κακό...» κτλ. Μπορεί ο καθένας μας, σε κάποια στιγμή της ζωής μας, να είχαμε ή να έχουμε τέτοιες θεωρίες για τους εαυτούς μας. Αλλά, όπως ακούσαμε στην Επιστολή του Αγίου Ιωάννου, αυτό είναι μια μεγάλη πλάνη, και τίποτα δεν θα μπορούσε να απέχει πιο πολύ από την αλήθεια.

Η αλήθεια είναι ότι είμαστε όλοι αμαρτωλοί έμπροσθεν του Θεού και «πέφτουμε έξω από την Δόξαν του Θεού», όπως λέει ο Προφήτης στην Παλαιά Διαθήκη. Συνεχίζει ο Προφήτης, «Όλη η δικαιοσύνη μας είναι ως ένα βρωμερό κουρέλι έμπροσθεν Του Θεού», και «Ακόμη και εάν ζούσαμε μόνο μία μέρα πάνω στη γη, δεν θα είμασταν χωρίς αμαρτία». Οι ακολουθίες της Εκκλησίας μας είναι γεμάτες από το φρόνημα ότι είμαστε όλοι αμαρτωλοί. Στην Οκτώηχο ακούμε, «Ω ταπεινή μου ψυχή, άθλια μου ψυχή, αμετανόητη ψυχή μου, μετανόησον και κράξε στον Χριστόν, 'ήμαρτον, ιλάσθητι, Φιλάνθρωπε'» (Αγίου Ιωάννου του Δαμασκηνού).

Το μήνυμα του Αγίου Ιωάννου του Θεολόγου είναι ξεκάθαρο, και είναι κάτι που όλοι οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας μας απόκτησαν μετά από πολλούς πόνους και πειρασμούς, δοκιμασίες και αγώνες. Το μήνυμά του είναι το εξής: Αυτογνωσία. Σαν να μας λέει ο Αγ. Ιωάννης, «Γνώθι σεαυτόν». Προκειμένου τώρα να μιλήσουμε για την αυτογνωσία πρέπει να στρέψουμε την φιλοσοφία μας εναντίον του εαυτού μας, όπως λέει ο Άγιος Ιωάννης της Κλίμακος. Δηλαδή πρέπει να αναλύσουμε τα ελαττώματα και τις αδυναμίες μας. Η αυτογνωσία είναι να βλέπουμε τους εαυτούς μας ως αμαρτωλούς ανθρώπους, και να γνωρίζουμε τις αδυναμίες μας, τα πάθη μας, και τις αμαρτίες μας, όπως είναι στ' αλήθεια, χωρίς το καταπέτασμα της δικαιολογίας και του εγωισμού. Ο Άγιος Νικήτας Στιθάτος λέει στην Φιλοκαλία, «Γνώριζε τον εαυτόν σου: αυτό είναι ταπείνωση—η ταπείνωση που μας διδάσκει να είμαστε εσωτερικά ταπεινοί και μας συντρίβει την καρδιά. Τέτοια ταπείνωση πρέπει να καλλιεργήσουμε και να φυλάμε. Γιατί εάν δεν γνωρίζεις ακόμη τον εαυτόν σου, δεν μπορείς να γνωρίσεις τί είναι η ταπείνωση».

Ο Άγιος Νεκτάριος ο Πενταπόλεως, ο Θαυματουργός, έγραψε ολόκληρο βιβλίο με τον τίτλο «Γνώθι Σ'εαυτόν», και λέει ο Άγιος, «Χωρίς την αυτογνωσία, δεν μπορούμε να γνωρίσουμε τον Θεό». Ο Άγιος Ισαάκ ο Σύρος λέει, «Ευλογημένος είναι ο άνθρωπος που γνωρίζει την αδυναμία του, γιατί αυτή η γνώσις του γίνεται θεμέλιο, ρίζα, και η αρχή κάθε αγαθού. Όταν εννοήσει κανείς την αδυναμία του και την αισθανθεί αληθινά, εκείνη την στιγμή βγάξει την ψυχή του από την νωθρότητα που σκοτίζει τη γνώση, και κερδίζει για τον εαυτό του τον θησαυρό της φρουρήσης. Ο άνθρωπος που έφτασε να μάθει το μέτρο



της αδυναμίας του, αυτός έφτασε στον τέλει βαθμό της ταπείνωσης».

Θα ρωτήσει κανείς, πώς μπορούμε να αποκτήσουμε την αυτογνωσία? Οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας μας την απόκτησαν με ανυπόκριτη και ειλικρινή αυτομεμψία, αυτοκατήγηση, και αυτοκατάκριση. Αλλά πριν μπορέσουμε καν να δούμε την αμαρτωλότητά και την αθλιότητά μας έμπροσθεν του Θεού, πρέπει να σταματήσουμε να βλέπουμε τα σφάλματα, τις αδυναμίες και τα ελαττώματα του αδελφού μας. Πρέπει να αρχίσουμε να βλέπουμε μόνο τα δικά μας χάλια. Πάλι θα αναφέρουμε τους Αγίους Πατέρες για να μας δείξουν πώς γίνεται αυτό. Ο Άγιος Φιλάρετος της Νέας Υόρκης, ο Νέος Ομολογητής, έλεγε κάθε μέρα, «Κύριε, δώρισέ μου να δω τον εαυτόν μου όπως πρέπει, και όχι την υποτιθέμενη δικαιοσύνη μου». Ο Άγιος Εφραίμ ο Σύρος έλεγε, «Κύριε και Δέσποτα της ζωής μου, δώρισέ μου του οράν τα εμά πταίσματα και μη κατακρίνω τον αδελφό μου».

Όταν επιτέλους αρχίσουμε να βλέπουμε

μόνο τον εαυτόν μας και να προσευχόμαστε με συντριβήν καρδιάς και με πόνο, Ο Κύριός μας θα επιτρέψει να περάσουμε πειρασμούς και δοκιμασίες, γιατί μόνο έτσι βγαίνουν όλα τα πάθη που κρύβονται μέσα στην καρδιά μας. Ο Άγιος Ισαάκ ο Σύρος γράφει, «Κανένας δεν μπορεί να αντιληφθεί την ασθένειά του εάν δεν αφήνεται να πειρασθεί λιγάκι, είτε με πράγματα που ταλαιπωρούν το σώμα ή με πράγματα που ταλαιπωρούν την ψυχή». Όταν περάσουμε αυτούς τους πειρασμούς και τις δοκιμασίες, τα πάθη αρχίζουν να φανερώνονται και μας ταπεινώνει ο Θεός. Τότε όμως δεν πρέπει να πέσουμε σε ακηδία ή σε απελπισία, όπως μας προτρέπουν οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας μας, αλλά μάλλον να χαιρόμεθα, γιατί η ταπείνωση αυτή είναι φώς, είναι φώτιση από τον Θεό, είναι αλήθεια, δηλαδή, να βλέπουμε και να γνωρίζουμε επιτέλους, τι πονηρά και βλαβερά πάθη κρύβονται μέσα στις καρδιές μας. Έτσι μας δίνεται η ευκαιρία να ζητήσουμε συγχώρεση και λύτρωση απ' τον Θεό. Όταν ο Θεός μας δώσει αυτό το χάρισμα, του να δούμε έστω και λιγάκι, τί κρύβεται μέσα στα βάθη της καρδιάς μας, αυτό πρέπει να μας φέρει στα βάθη της ταπεινώσεως δια μέσου της αυτομεμψίας, της αυτοκατήγησης, και της αυτοκατάκρισης, και να μας κάνει να εξομολογηθούμε με συντετριμμένη καρδιά, «καρδιαν συντετριμμένην και τεταπεινωμένην ο Θεός ούκ εξουδενώσει» όπως λέει ο προφήτης Δαβίδ.

Σκότος όμως είναι να μην γνωρίζουμε τι κρύβεται στ' αλήθεια μέσα στα βάθη της καρδιάς μας και να έχουμε μια διεστραμμένη και πλανεμένη γνώμη για τον εαυτόν μας. Αυτό είναι στα αλήθεια σκότος, και δεν είναι η αλήθεια μέσα μας! Πρέπει γι' αυτόν τον λόγο να προσευχόμαστε σαν τον Αγ. Γρηγόριο τον Παλαμά, που πάντοτε έλεγε στην προσευχή του στο Θεό, «Κύριε, φώτισόν μου το σκότος».

Τώρα ας δούμε πως οι Άγιοι Πατέρες της Εκκλησίας μας προσεύχονταν με συντετριμμένη και τεταπεινωμένη καρδιά.

Ο Άγιος Βασίλειος λέει στην πρώτη του Ευχή της Θείας Μεταλήψεως, «Διό καγώ, ει και ανάξιός είμι του ουρανού και της γης και αυτής της προσκαίρου ζωής, όλον εμαυτόν υποτάξας τη αμαρτία, και ταις ηδοναίς δουλώσας, και την Σήν αχρειώσας εικόνα». Ο άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος λέει στην προσευχή του της Θείας Μεταλήψεως «...και ουκ απώσω την ομοίαν μοι Πόρνην και αμαρτωλόν προσερχομένην και απομένην Σου, ούτω σπλαγχνίσθητι και επ'εμοί τω αμαρτωλώ προσερχομένω και απομένω Σου. Και ως ουκ εβδελύξω το ρυπαρόν εκείνης στόμα και εναγές καταφιλούν Σε, μηδέ εμού βδελύξη το ρυπαρότερον εκείνης στόμα και εναγέστερον, μηδέ τα





Featured in this issue:

## St. Mark of Ephesus

Orthodox Cathedral, Westwood, Massachusetts

Getting to know our sister parishes!

Those familiar with the Parish of Saint Mark of Ephesus, the Cathedral of the Holy Diocese of Boston and New England, know the hard work that many of the parishioners offer to the parish and to our Holy Metropolis as well. For over forty years, the Parish has held many events to raise funds for the Saint Philothei Philoptochos, St. Mark's society of parishioners that helps the poor and needy. On many an occasion, as recently, for example, as last year's Clergy Synaxis held in our Metropolis Office Headquarters, parishioners from Saint Mark have offered countless hours to help out with Diocesan events, i.e. Clergy Synaxes, Ordination Banquets, and Youth Conferences. The parishioners are always working for the parish, the Diocese, and really, for the whole Church, which is the Body of Christ.

Now, the Parish of Saint Mark has the custom, for over twenty years, of holding an Annual Banquet in the fall. Although the Annual Banquet has been a source of fundraising for the Parish, the Banquet's primary purpose has been, and always will be, an opportunity for all the members of the Parish to get together in Christian communal love, following the celebration of the Sacred Eucharist, which binds us all together in the one Body of our Savior.

### Glory to God! Good News from St. Mark's!

The Annual Banquet is an event where no one from the Parish is doing any work; someone else is cooking and serving. So the parishioners of St. Mark use this banquet as an occasion just to relax and enjoy each other's company.

So it was that the most recent Annual Banquet was held on Sunday, November 5th, 2017. But this banquet was extra special. Fr George Kamberidis, the Presiding Priest of the Parish, unveiled to the Parish the rendering of the new nave, together with the renderings of the outside of the church. The Parish of Saint Mark has begun its new endeavor, the renovation of the current building into an Orthodox structure. From the moment we Christians were able to worship and practice our Faith openly and freely, for almost 2,000 years, we have adorned the world with beautiful Church structures, all for the Glory of God. And now that the Parish

of St. Mark has its own building, the faithful have set out to follow the traditions that we have inherited from our Christian ancestors. Father George and the Parish Council, ever since the Parish moved to its new location four years ago, have been meeting with architects and contractors, working to put down on paper the vision of a new church structure. In the last year, the members of the parish have approved both the concept and the project, and the design of the new building has begun to honor God and our Patron Saint, Mark Evgenikos of Ephesus. The fruits of the hard work are the architectural renderings that were displayed to the Parish at the banquet. This is a big undertaking, which requires a few years to accomplish. The existing building needs much work, both inside and outside. All of this work needs to be coordinated

with the life of the Parish because the plan is that the church will continue its liturgical worship, its ministries (church school, weekly adult study, etc.), and its growing Greek School, while the renovations are being done.

A final estimate of the cost has not yet been firmly established (the renderings need to be finalized and approved), but it is very likely that this project will cost the Parish at least 1.5 million dollars. Whenever a major task is to be undertaken, either by an individual, by a family, or by a Parish, doubt always creeps in. Man wonders if something is attainable, especially something of this magnitude. For the Parish of Saint Mark, this was the fear, that the faithful would never be able to accomplish this dream of ren-

**Clergy:** Fr. George Kamberidis, Protopresbyter  
Fr. Christos Constantinou, Protopresbyter  
Fr. John Fleser, Archpriest  
Fr. Demetrios Houlares, Protodeacon



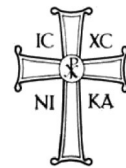
ovating their building to become a beautiful Orthodox structure. The Holy Gospel teaches us, though, that if we, as Orthodox Christians, are obedient to Christ and His Church, and that our actions are God-pleasing, then we will be rewarded for our efforts.

The truth of this teaching has been abundantly manifested in the history of this Parish of St. Mark of Ephesus. For 45 years, the Parish of Saint Mark has had to surmount many obstacles. Starting in a small home on a side street of a Boston neighborhood in 1972, a small number of families began their journey of building an Orthodox community that kept the Faith "pure and undefiled." After the first church building burned down, the parish, growing slowly, moved into a former Protestant

Cont'd on p.12

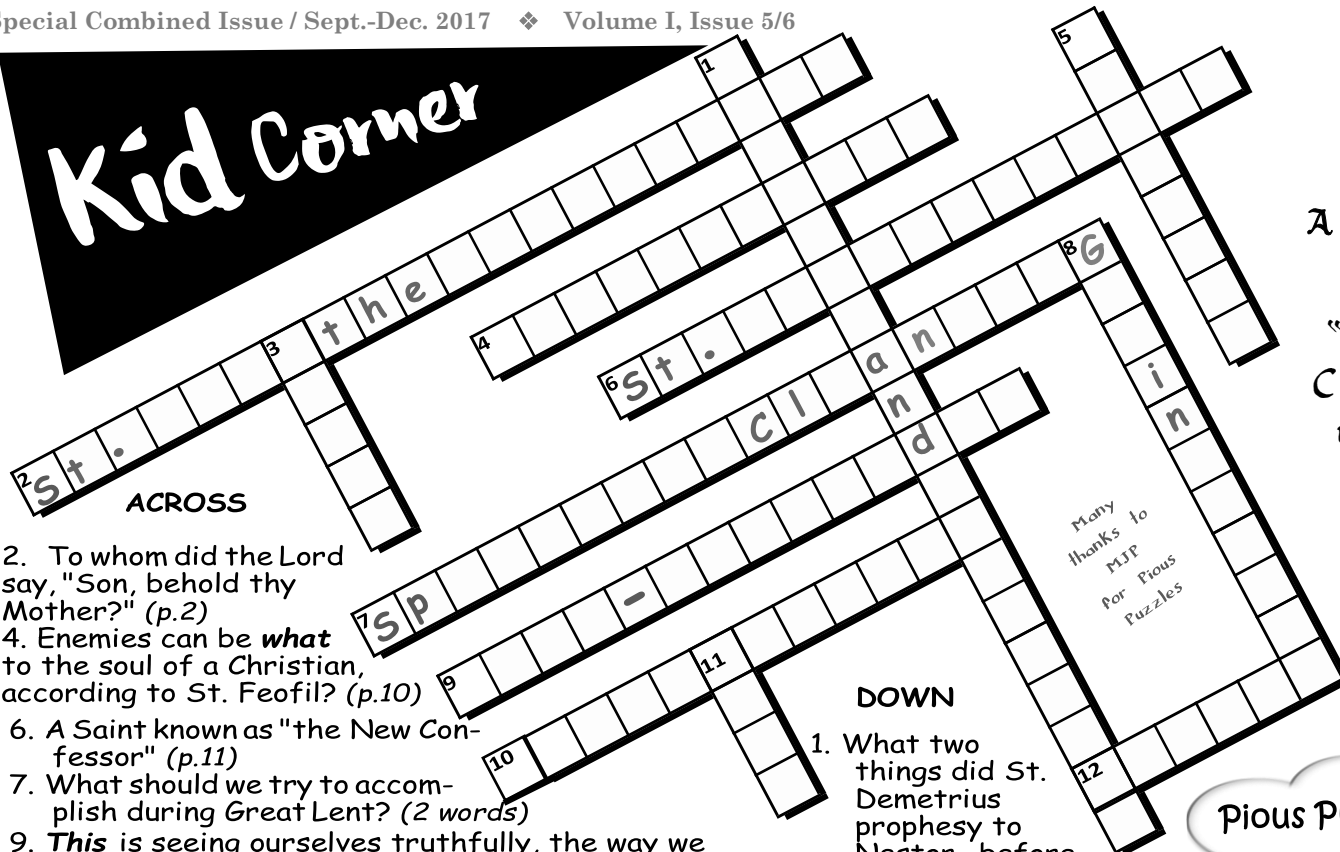


# Kid Corner



**A POWERFUL  
weapon:**

**"O Cross of  
Christ, save  
us by Thy  
Power!"**



**ACROSS**

**DOWN**

2. To whom did the Lord say, "Son, behold thy Mother?" (p.2)
4. Enemies can be **what** to the soul of a Christian, according to St. Feofil? (p.10)
6. A Saint known as "the New Confessor" (p.11)
7. What should we try to accomplish during Great Lent? (2 words)
9. **This** is seeing ourselves truthfully, the way we really are, as full of sins and passions, which is the "foundation, root, and beginning of all goodness..." according to St. Isaac the Syrian (p.2)
10. Where was Saint Demetrius born? (p.1)
12. Whose sins should we be most concerned about at alltimes? (p.3, two words)

1. What two things did St. Demetrius prophesy to Nestor, before he fought Lyaiois the giant? (p.16)
3. If we feel distracted during Liturgy, when is it OK to just stay at home and pray? (p.3)
5. What is one of the most important virtues we should try to acquire?
8. When we give alms in the name of God, who receives them? (3 words, p.19)
11. Mankind's sinfulness is like a daily reenactment of the fall of **whom**? (p.7)

**Pious Puzzles**

When you **CAN** choose your family:

**YIKES! An UNDESIRABLE Family Tree**

Depression has a daughter: her name is laziness. And laziness has a son: his name is boredom. Evict them...By being active!

"Boredom is the grandson of depression, and laziness is the daughter. To send her away, labor actively - do not be lazy in prayer, then boredom will pass, and zeal will come. And if you add to this patience and humility, then you will escape much evil."

-St. Ambrose of Optina

## Humble Head-Scratchers

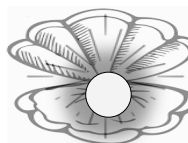
☒ Man's way = hopeless end. God's way = endless hope.

☒ Do we say 'Our Father' in the morning, then spend the rest of the day acting like orphans??

☒ **Scottish Proverb:** "The devil's boots don't creak..."  
Be vigilant!

## QUESTIONS

1. Why does St. Feofil refer to "enemies" as our "benefactors?" (p.10)



2. (a) What does His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, mean when he makes the analogy: this life is to eternity, as a grain of sand is to a vast ocean, saying that "even this cannot compare the two..."? (p.7) and

(b) How does this relate to what St. John of San Francisco says, on the **bottom of the front cover**?

3. Why do you think that St. Isaac the Syrian says that a person who can see his own sinfulness is greater than a person who can see the Angels? Is it rare for us to truly see the faults hiding in our hearts? Why? (p.15)



**Think about your Faith**



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



# Youth Conference 2017: Reverence at Church

## Highlights of the Presentation by His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius of America

His Eminence, Metropolitan Demetrius, addressed an audience of adults of all ages, sharing a powerful talk about the awesome reality of what takes place in Church each Sunday, and why the reverence of all Orthodox Christians before the grandeur of this Mystery is appropriate. The Metropolitan began by defining Christianity not as a religion, but as God's revelation to mankind, and the Orthodox Church as "the inheritor of this magnificent and incomparable legacy." As such, the Church is "quite strict about Her teachings. And thus it should be, because man, in his fallen state, wishes to reshape God in his own fallen image, as opposed to being transformed once again into the image and likeness of God."

His Eminence went on to explain that the Divine revelation of Orthodox theology is twofold: The first and most significant is the revelation of Jesus Christ, in the Church, through the Gospel, as explained by the Holy Fathers. The second is an offspring of the first: the revelation of God in the heart. That is, that the heart of the baptized Orthodox Christian believes those things which have been spoken to us by the Lord, in and through His Holy Church, as articulated by the mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Fathers. Despota explained that the Holy Church is "not just a congregation of believers," but the very body of Christ in which all the believers are "members in particular," as the Holy Apostle Paul calls us. This correct understanding of what the Church is should inspire reverence in our souls.

The race of mankind is divided between the "old man," representing Adam after the fall, and the "New Man," our Lord Jesus Christ, Whom we put on at Holy Baptism. The Metropolitan connected our sinfulness to the fall of Adam when he said, "We see the fall of Adam reenacting itself almost daily in our lives when we are fooled into believing that the delights of this world are greater than the delights of paradise; we don't quite grasp that they are fleeting. We don't have a profound understanding of reality. In other words, while we know that we will die one day, yet we still persist in sin." He compared one grain of sand to this temporary life, and a vast ocean to the next life, the eternal one, saying that even this "cannot compare the two."

Despota explained that the Church is terrestrial and celestial; this



means that faithful from all the ages are members of the Church, as the Body of Christ, and that it has other members which are not of this world; he quoted an ancient Cherubic Hymn, echoing the words of the Prophet Abbacum: "Let all mortal flesh be silent, and stand with fear and trembling, and take no thought for any earthly thing; for the King of kings and Lord of lords cometh forth to be slaughtered and given as food for the faithful; before Him go all the choirs of Angels, with all authority and power; the many-eyed Cherubim and the six-winged Seraphim, covering their faces, and crying out the hymn: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia." His Eminence exhorted us to nurture attentiveness: "We must understand and hear what is happening. For this to happen, we must prepare ourselves beforehand. We must know where we are going when we go to Church, and even pray to be deemed worthy to enter the Church of God worthily."

His Eminence described the powerful words of several of the Holy Prayers that we hear in Church, in order to shed light on the magnitude of what actually takes place in God's House. "If we think that we simply go to Church to light a candle and socialize with our friends, we have missed the mark... How many of us have the understanding that we are actually going to visit God, in the House of the Lord, when we go to Church? How can we not stand in fear and trembling knowing that we are in the presence of God? If, when we visit a high official, or a leader of any nation, we would stand with respect, how much more should we do so when we visit the Lord? Unless we visit the Lord, He will not visit us!"

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# Reverence and the Fear of God in the World

*Fr. Christos Patitsas engaged an audience of adults of all ages with his wise and eye-opening talk at the 2017 Youth Conference*

Fr. Christos is the Presbyter of Sts. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church in Pennsylvania. He is also a practicing Medical Doctor with a specialization in Ophthalmology.



Father Christos Patitsas delivered the presentation to the adult group, preceded by the singing of his Presbytera Katina. She sang her ballad about

the life of St. Pelagia, the repentant harlot, whose feast was celebrated that day. "Ours is a God of great mercy as this story will tell. And of this harlot's conversion, so now listen well. She captivated the city with her pearls and her gold, and her life was an ocean of sin." In hearing the sermon of St. Nonnus about the Judgment Seat of Christ, she was brought to her senses by the fear of God and came to repentance. St. Nonnus, on his part, observed her dedication to pleasing men and perceived his own lack of dedication to pleasing God. Such is how a humble soul responds to the sins of others. He condemns himself and has patience with the shortcomings of other people. In our talk today about the fear of God, we must never approach the shortcomings of our fellow men with self-righteousness, but out of love for our brothers and sisters. Seeing our own sins, we must warn them of the temporal and eternal consequences of their path away from God, always being on guard that we ourselves don't fall into the same traps. Father Christos suggested that we approach the social issues that he was about to discuss in that same spirit.

A *New York Times* article entitled, "As Overdose Deaths Pile Up, a Medical Examiner Quits the Morgue" was brought forward. In a city called Concord, New Hampshire, the physician in charge of the morgue is so distressed by the deluge of heroin/fentanyl overdose deaths, that he has decided to leave the practice of medicine to become a minister in order to help prevent drug addiction. In 2016, the United States suffered 64,000 drug overdose deaths. This is more Americans than died in the entire Vietnam War from 1963 to 1975 (about 58,220). "This is the wrong time to be abusing any kind of drug, including marijuana," Fr. Christos continued. "The Lord warns that drunkards will not inherit the kingdom of heaven. What sets us apart from animals is our ability to reason. Having a clear mind with which to make moral decisions is critical."

Father Christos told the

audience that he takes care of prisoners. Many of them are people just like those attending the conference, except that while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, they committed an evil crime for which they were incarcerated. Buying illegal drugs contributes to the system which brings about the deaths of so many of our citizens. "We must not allow ourselves to become a slave to any drug or any passion," Fr. Christos said. "We must decide who we want to serve, the Lord or the devil. If, through fear of God, we choose God, we will be blessed in this life and in the life to come. If we choose the devil, we will



suffer terrible consequences now and forever."

Father Christos asked for a show of hands, "How many of you are from Canada?" Numerous hands went up, including that of the Archbishop. "You should know that, as of January 1st, 2017, physician assisted suicide is legal in Canada," Father Christos pointed out. "It is really not suicide, but murder of people with their consent. Governments use terms like this to confuse us and make us feel less guilty about carrying out the wishes of those who want to die. They are killing people afflicted with cancer, multiple sclerosis and

*"...false love has produced more loss of life, more widows, and more orphans in the past 50 years, than all of America's wars combined, since the Revolutionary War!"*

Parkinson's disease. The twelve apostles asked their persecutors, "Should we obey God or men?" (Acts 5:29). If we fear God, then we put the authority of His Law above that of flawed, unethical human laws. One nurse in Canada did so. She refused to par-

ticipate in killing a patient and so was fired. Health care workers will be under increasing pressure to cooperate with the new law. They must resist. Under Adolf Hitler, the Nazi regime in Germany, before the war began, systematically exterminated the mentally retarded, the insane, the terminally ill, and the disabled. The Nazis considered these human beings 'useless eaters' who burdened society. Christ accepts the weak of this world. In Him, no one is useless. No one is without value. Even the sickest among us can pray and intercede for us all. Perhaps the prayers of such as these are what holds up the whole world. Each human life in Christ has meaning and purpose. By our suffering we either are cleansed of our sins, for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, or we earn crowns in heaven by our long suffering and patience in adversity. In Christ, we must never lose hope. He has defeated death forever and consoles us in our affliction."

Fr. Christos, who is a doctor, pointed out that there is an epidemic of sexually transmitted disease sweeping across America. "Last year there were 20 million new cases," he continued. "Half of these are in young people between ages 15 and 24! Chlamydia is one of these diseases. It is the leading cause of acquired sterility in women. It causes pelvic inflammatory disease and leads to life threatening ectopic pregnancies. Human papilloma virus affects millions and contributes to the incidence of cervical cancer in women. AIDS/HIV has caused the deaths of 35 million people world wide since erupting in the early 1980s. There is a way to prevent all of this. All of these diseases would be eliminated if men and women protect their virginity until marriage and remain faithful to each other for life, through the fear of God, the same God Who promises fornicators, sodomites, and adulterers eternal fire. Don't let Hollywood deceive you. It tries to glamorize sin and hides its emotional, physical, and spiritual consequences. Through current scandals in the news, we are learning what kind of men are producing these movies. Hundreds of women are coming forward with tales of being sexually harassed and abused by them. From evil trees come evil fruit, our Savior warned. How can we expect to gain anything good from watching the fruits of their wicked imagination?"

Next, statistics about abortion were shared. "Since *Roe vs Wade* when the United States Supreme court made abortion the law of the land, 53 million abortions have been performed in the United States. In the 1960s, protesters against the Vietnam War carried placards with the words,

*Cont'd on page 15*







# Preparing for Marriage



By Fr. Nicodemos, based on his captivating talk at the 2017 Youth Conference

Fr. Nicodemos is the Presbyter of St. Seraphim of Sarov Orthodox Church in Richmond, Virginia. He has been an Orthodox Priest for over 25 years. He is also a Psychology Professor and has been a leader in the fields of education, health and family counseling for decades in his community.



**"If a man and a woman marry in order to be companions on the journey to heaven, then their union will bring great joy to themselves and others."**

*-St. John Chrysostom*

In our Country, we have the highest level of financial resources and one of the very highest levels of formal education. However, in spite of these wonderful blessings, we are the least successful country in the world at marrying and remaining married. One has to wonder why this would be so?

Why are we so bad at making a commitment to a long-term relationship and making it succeed? In this article, we're going to look at the possibility that people in American culture marry for the wrong reason: romantic love.

In the media and in Hollywood the idea of romantic love is held up as the ideal. Romantic love can be defined as a type of love that is based on intense feelings and infatuation. When these feelings become the goal of making and maintaining a relationship, it is often doomed to fail. With this view of marriage, that it has romantic love as its goal, two people enter into it wanting desperately to maintain an emotional "feel good" relationship that is not sustainable.

What happens when two people begin to focus on romantic love as the goal? One of the first things that happens is that they begin to wear what our grandmothers used to call "rose colored glasses." When someone wears rose colored glasses, they try desperately to see only the good and exciting things about the other person, and they oftentimes fail to see obvious flaws. How often have we noticed our friends getting into a relationship that we can clearly see is not good for them, but they, walking around in a state of bliss, think it's utterly wonderful?

When two people are courting (that's the old word for dating), they have many things to think about and discuss in regard to the future. It is absolutely necessary to investigate multiple issues together, in order to,

first, see if they should get married at all, and secondly, to discover what sort of issues they will need to continually revisit and work on after they are married. So, while Hollywood has us cheering for the couple that has some kind of romantic chemistry (even though they have never even worked out a single problem together), we are left fantasizing about the same possibility for ourselves. Wouldn't we like to be the ones in that romantic scene where everything is assumed to work out for the best, forever? Unfortunately, this is a mere fantasy and leads many people

partner is ready to end the deal. This is not so in our Orthodox marriages. We see all of the ups and downs of marriage as part of our spiritual struggle...a struggle that is meant to bring us closer to God. For us, there is nothing in our marriage and family life that is outside of our spiritual work, and therefore, it becomes holy. As St. John Chrysostom reminds us, "Marriage is more than human. It is a miniature kingdom, which is a little house of the Lord."



Perhaps the most dangerous thing about the romantic love ideal is that maintaining it leads us to fail to discuss some of the most important issues related to marriage. When we're "head over heels" in love with someone, we frequently don't want to bring up difficult issues because we don't want anything to disrupt those magic moments of infatuation. Therefore, in romantic love, so

down a road of unnecessary emotional pain and trauma.

If the romantic love ideal is not going to work, then what does? We all know that being in love is fun. Any one who has been in love has enjoyed it. We can spend hours with the other person, doing things that we don't even like, and we still enjoy it. But there have been many writers and poets who speak of this romantic love as a type of insanity which causes us to do many things that we would ordinarily never do. And then when this infatuation begins to cool, our partners are wondering why we are not willing to do all the things we used to do.

Unfortunately, many marriages in our American culture seem more like a business arrangement in which the two partners are seeking a deal that is meant to bring pleasure. They often are wanting the relationship to have profits in a worldly way of thinking. The marriage is not for something higher, and therefore when the losses column becomes longer than the profits column, in the romantic pleasure tally, then the marriage

many of the items that one would ordinarily believe are important to discuss regarding various situations in our life are left undealt with.

**"Marriage is more than human. It is a miniature kingdom, which is a little house of the Lord."**

*-St. John Chrysostom*

One of the ways to focus on some of these issues is to jump ahead and look at some of the most frequently reported marital problems that come up in couples counseling.

For us Orthodox Christians, our Faith must be our primary consideration, always keeping our love for our Savior and eternity in our focus. If we marry outside the Faith, we're choosing to have our wedding in some place other than an Orthodox Church.

We have to discuss,

Cont'd on p.13





# Monastic tactics

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

## Freedom from ANGER

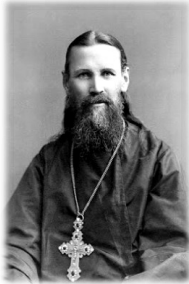
"If the Holy Spirit is peace of soul, as He is said to be, and as He is in reality, and if anger is disturbance of heart, as it actually is and as it is said to be, *then nothing so prevents His presence in us as anger.*"

+ St. John Climacus



"A man who is wrathful with us is a sick man; we must apply a plaster to his heart – love; we must treat him kindly, speak to him gently, lovingly. And if there is not deeply-rooted malice against us within him, but only a temporary fit of anger, you will see how his heart, or his malice, will melt away through your kindness and love – how good will conquer evil. A Christian must always be kind, gracious, and wise in order to conquer evil by good."

+ St. John of Kronstadt



"Love your enemies, for they are your benefactors..."

+ St. Feofil, the Fool for Christ

Αγάπα τους εχθρούς σου, γιατί είναι ευεργέτες σου...

+ Αγ. Θεόφιλος, ο δια Χριστόν σαλός

### From the Gerontikon:

A certain devout Christian was handed over to martyrdom by his maidservant. As they were leading him to his death, he saw the maidservant who had turned him in, and at once he took off the gold ring that he wore and gave it to her. "Thank you," he told her, "For being the occasion of such blessings for me."

### From Abba Mark:

"He who is wronged by someone, and does not seek redress from the one who wronged him, truly believes in Christ in this instance; and receiving a hundredfold in this present life, such a one will inherit eternal life in the world to come."

A fanatical man never attains to peace of mind and one who is a stranger to peace is also a stranger to joy. Peace of mind both is, and is called, perfect health; but fanaticism is by nature antithetical to peace. One who is fanatical suffers from a grave sickness. O man, it is not good or beneficial for you to want to help others, yet to expose yourself to great danger. Fanaticism is nor a form of wisdom, but a disease if the soul. If you want to heal the ailing, know that such need compassion and care, and not reproof. For Scripture says: "Ye that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak..." (Romans 15:1); and again, the same Apostle counsels us not to correct in anger one who has fallen, but "in a spirit of meekness." (Galatians 6:1)

+ Abba Issac

## Self-Knowledge: A Sermon by Fr. Theologos cont'd from p.2

start coming to light, then we get humbled either by things that oppress the body or by things that oppress the soul, as St. Isaac tells us. And when this happens, we should not get despondent, but rather rejoice, as the Holy Fathers teach, because this is enlightenment, this is light, this is truth. In other words, it is light to see what truly lies within the depths of our hearts, having to face it and be humbled by it, and thereby having a chance to beseech God for forgiveness and deliverance. Darkness, on the other hand, is not being able to

see what truly lies within our hearts, and thereby maintaining a false and deluded opinion of our-

selves. In truth, this is darkness and pride.

St. Gregory Palamas prayed everyday with the following words: "O Lord enlighten my darkness." So, when our Saviour grants us this gift, this enlightenment, to see what evil and wickedness lies within the recesses of our hearts, it should not make us despair, but bring us to the depths of humility through self condemnation and a broken heart; "A heart that is broken and humbled, God will not despise," says the Prophet David. Again, we will let the Holy Fathers of the Church be our guide as to how to pray with contrition and a broken spirit. In the Prayers for Preparation for Holy Communion, St. Basil the Great says in his first prayer: "Wherefore, though I am unworthy of both Heaven and earth, and even

of this transient life, since I have wholly subjected myself to sin and am a slave to pleasures and have defaced thine image..." St. John Chrysostom, with even greater intensity, says in his first prayer: "Even as Thou didst not reject the woman, who was a harlot and a sinner like me, when she approached and touched Thee, so also be compassionate with me the sinner, as I approach and touch Thee. And as Thou didst not abhor her defiled and polluted mouth which kissed Thee, neither do Thou abhor my mouth, yet more defiled and polluted than hers, nor my lips which are loathsome, impure, and unholy, nor my tongue, yet more unclean." St. Symeon the New Theologian, in the same

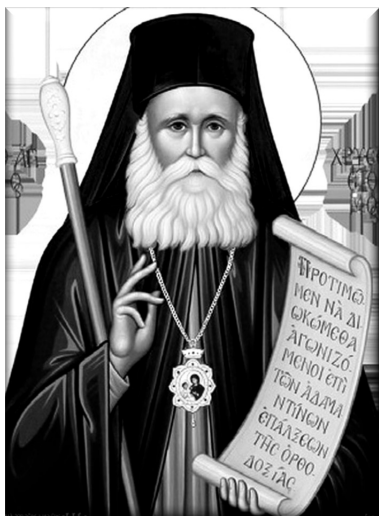
Cont'd on p.15





# St. Chrysostomos the New Confessor / Ο Άγιος Χρυσόστομος ο Νέος Ομολογητής

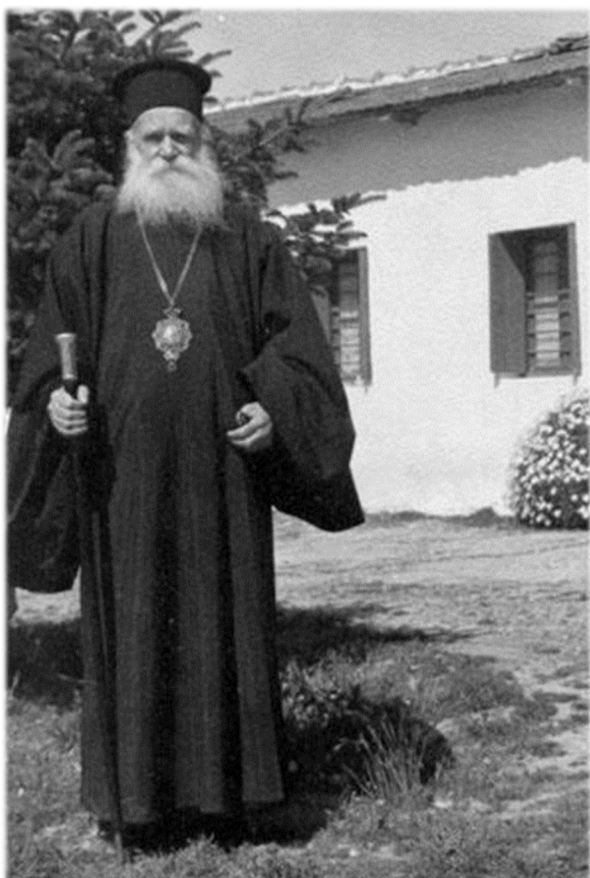
The following article appeared in *The Voice of Orthodoxy*, October of 1960, after the Saint's exhumation, when the air was filled with the fragrance of his relics, as witnessed by a large crowd of faithful who were in attendance and experienced the miracle. (*The Voice of Orthodoxy*, vol. 348-349/10-10-1960, p.13)



We expected it. Therefore, we were not surprised. He sacrificed his whole life for the Church... His private life was holy. He was meek, guileless, forgiving everyone. His heart was flooded with love. He lived Orthodoxy as love. For this love, he struggled and suffered harsh persecutions, exiles, sorrows, scorning, humiliations, harassments, and slanders by internal and external enemies of the Church. But he was victorious! His first victory was over himself; he sacrificed himself, without making compromising or retreating in any direction, not for the sake of feigned love, nor for the so-called union of Orthodoxy, a union which had been broken by the import of the new calendar innovation in worship. He struggled to the end, until the last days of his life, against his external

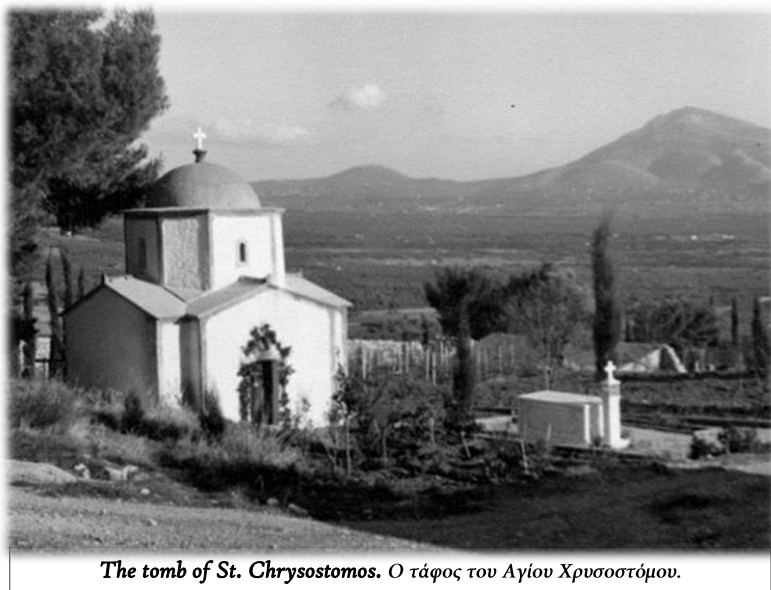
enemies, who sought his annihilation, and against his internal enemies, who, either motivated by fanaticism or by material interests, never co-suffered in his struggles. But the Lord, Whose agony and isolation the New Confessor experienced, that is, the isolation Gesthemane, blessed him and found him worthy of His Kingdom, and glorified him in the world, and He will glorify him more. Proof of this is the fragrance of his relics. This fragrance was perceived by over 100 people, during his exhumation, among whom were Abbot of the Monastery, Fr. Parthenios, as well as the venerable Abbess Euthemia, persons of impeccable credibility in all things.  
By Stavros Karamitsos

Το παρακάτω άρθρο δημοσιεύτηκε στη *Φωνή της Ορθοδοξίας* τον Οκτώβριο του 1960, μετά από την εκταφή του Αγίου, όταν ευωδίασαν τα λείψανα του Αγίου μπροστά σε πλήθος πιστών που παρευρέθηκαν και βίωσαν το θαύμα. («Η Φωνή της Ορθοδοξίας», αρ.φ. 348-349/10.10.1960, σελ. 13)



St. Chrysostomos pictured here one month before his blessed repose, in August of 1955.

Ο Άγιος Χρυσόστομος ένα μήνα προ της μακαρίας Κοιμήσεώς του, τόν Αύγουστο του 1955.



The tomb of St. Chrysostomos. Ο τάφος του Αγίου Χρυσοστόμου.

Τὸ ἀνεμέναμεν. Καὶ οὕτω δὲν μᾶς ἐξέπληξεν. Ὁλόκληρον τὴν ζωὴν του ἐθυσίασεν εἰς τὸν βωμὸν τῆς Ἐκκλησίας... Ἡ ἰδιωτικὴ ζωὴ του ἦτο ἁγία. Πρᾶος, ἀνεξίκακος, συγχωρῶν τοὺς πάντας. Ἡ καρδιά του ἦτο πλημμυρισμένη ἀπὸ ἀγάπην. Τὴν Ὀρθοδοξίαν τὴν ἔζησεν ὡς ἀγάπην.

Διὰ τὴν ἀγάπην δὲ αὐτὴν ἠγωνίσθη καὶ υπέστη σκληροὺς διωγμοὺς, ἐξορίας, ὀνειδισμοὺς, ταπεινώσεις, ὕβρεις, συκοφαντίας, ἀπὸ ἐσωτερικοὺς καὶ ἐξωτερικοὺς ἐχθροὺς τῆς Ἐκκλησίας. Ἐνίκησε! Πρώτη νίκη. Ἐνίκησε τὸν ἑαυτὸν του καὶ ἐθυσίασθη, χωρὶς νὰ κάμῃ συμβιβασμοὺς καὶ ὑποχωρήσεις πρὸς οὐδεμίαν κατεύθυνσιν, χάριν τῆς ἀγάπης, τῆς ἐνότητος τῆς Ὀρθοδοξίας, ἡ ὁποία ἐνόητος διεσπάρθη διὰ τῆς εἰσαγωγῆς τοῦ νέου ἡμερολογίου ἐν τῇ Λατρείᾳ. Ἠγωνίσθη μέχρις ἐσχάτων, μέ-

χρι τέλους τῆς ζωῆς του, ἐναντίον τῶν ἐξωτερικῶν ἐχθρῶν του, οἱ ὅποιοι ἐζήτουν τὸν ἐξαφανισμόν του, καὶ τῶν ἐσωτερικῶν, οἱ ὅποιοι εἴτε ἀπὸ φανατισμόν, εἴτε ἀπὸ ὕλικά συμφέροντα κινούμενοι, οὐδέποτε ἔζησαν τὴν ἀγωνίαν του. Ὁ Κύριος ὁμως, τοῦ ὁποίου τὴν ἀγωνίαν καὶ μόνωσιν ἔζησε, τὴν μόνωσιν τῆς Γεθσημανῆς, τὸν ἠύλογησε, τὸν ἡξίωσε τῆς Βασιλείας Του, καὶ ἐν κόσμῳ τὸν ἐδόξασε καὶ ἔτι περισσότερο θὰ τὸν δοξάσῃ.

Ἀπόδειξις, ἡ εὐωδία τῶν λειψάνων του. Τὴν εὐωδίαν αὐτὴν τὴν ἡσθάνθησαν κατὰ τὴν ἐκταφήν του ὑπὲρ τὰ 100 ἄτομα, μεταξὺ δὲ τούτων ἦτο καὶ ὁ Καθηγούμενος τῆς Μονῆς πατὴρ Παρθένιος καὶ ἡ ὁσία Ἡγουμένη Εὐθυμία, πρόσωπα κατὰ πάντα ἀξιόπιστα.

-Σταῦρος Καραμήτσος





## St. Mark of Ephesus Orthodox Cathedral, *cont'd from p. 5*



### St. Mark of Ephesus Orthodox Cathedral PROPOSED NEW ENTRANCE PROJECT

340 CLAPBOARDTREE STREET WESTWOOD, MA NEW MAIN ENTRANCE CONCEPTUAL RENDERING 14 SEPTEMBER 2017

church in 1975. Whenever the evil one sees something good and pure, he tries to ruin it. In 1979, another fire broke out in the church used by the Parish of Saint Mark. The world might view this as tragic or horrible, but the parishioners of Saint Mark saw this as another opportunity to strengthen their prayer and church life.

For the next 30 years, the Orthodox community of Saint Mark grew. Led by its former presiding priest, Father Christos Constantinou, together with Deacon Frs. Demetrios Houlares and John Mihopoulos, the parish of Saint Mark became an epitome of an Orthodox community. The parish established the Saint Philothei Philoptochos, a church school, a Greek School, a byzantine choir, youth groups, and many other ministries that showed the love that every member of the parish had for Christ and His

Church. Even when, four years ago, the Parish had to move from its prior home of almost 40 years, the members of Saint Mark never wavered. Just like the other times when they had to overcome the tribulation of their home being burned down, St. Mark's faithful kept their faith in Christ and His Church first. They trusted God, and He rewarded them with their current home, a beautiful property in the quiet town of Westwood, with plenty of land and two structures—one for a church and the other for offices and classrooms.

After 45 years, with some of the founding members having gone to their rest, a new generation of families has taken upon itself the task of continuing to help build, grow, and sustain the Orthodox Faith inherited from our ancestors. Once again, the parishioners have the task of rebuilding the church edifice, not because of a fire, as in the past, but this time to fulfilling the blessed dream of having a traditional

Orthodox structure to worship in. The countless blessings and miracles over the years have proven that the efforts of the parishioners of Saint Mark of Ephesus are God-pleasing—and so it is with their dream and task of renovating the current structure into an Orthodox Church edifice.

Once again, there is another sign that our Lord blesses our witness and that this labor is God's will and pleasing to Him. A few months ago, Father George was invited to meet with a family from the town of Westwood. This family expressed their joy that the Parish of Saint Mark moved into the community. They were so happy to hear of the Parish's dream of building an Orthodox structure that they wished to help out with the raising of funds.

They have offered to match, up to one million dollars, every donation given for the sole purpose of renovating the current building! Truly, these kind and generous neighbors were sent from God, and we ask that His blessing and grace come upon that family. This gift from above is a testimony to the Orthodox Confession of Faith, and to the love, charity, hard work, and brotherhood in Christ of Saint Mark's faithful. Something that might have seemed impossible 45 years ago is now possible because of God.

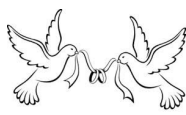
With this donation, which could amount to two million dollars, the dream of the parishioners of Saint Mark now seems attainable. The current parishioners are grateful for the precious gift they have inherited. It is now their turn to build and offer something to their children and children's children—a traditional Orthodox Church that they can worship in and the residents of the town of Westwood not only can admire but also be moved by, to come to the Truth, all for the Glory and Majesty of our God. If you wish to donate to the St. Mark Church Renovation Project, you may call Fr George at 781-326-2380. The Cathedral is also fundraising on the website for the blessed cause:

[StMarkofEphesus.org](http://StMarkofEphesus.org)

Remember, every donation will be matched by an anonymous family from Westwood. St. Mark of Ephesus Orthodox Cathedral, 340 Clapboardtree Street, Westwood, MA 02090







# Preparing for Marriage Cont'd from p. 9



and get permission from our spouse, to have our future children baptized. And we have to consider what impact a heterodox or unbelieving parent could have on the faith of our future children, and on their eternal souls. It is wearing dangerous rose-colored glasses to imagine that only the Orthodox parent will shape our children's spiritual identity. Even events such as deaths in the family and funeral arrangements can lead to intense disagreements. Many such problems occur because the couple feared discussing serious issues, such as their Faith, during their time of dating, which focused only on their romantic love.

Another marital problem that comes up, perhaps most often, in couple's counseling is finances. What happens when two people join themselves together in a life-long relationship when they have never discussed their financial skills and status? What happens when a young couple discovers that one person is very frugal while the other person goes through their money before the end of the week? How do they save for a good house in a safe neighborhood when one person is trying desperately to save and the other person allows money to "burn a hole in their pocket?" What happens when one member of the couple suddenly realizes that their partner has brought with them thousands of dollars in credit card debt? It's easy to see how important it is to discuss these topics, but it's also easy to see how they might have been avoided because the young couple wanted to dwell on only the exciting and positive.

Another issue is children. First of all, what do each of the members of the couple think about when they think of a family? If one thinks of a small family because that's what they knew growing up and the other person thinks of a large family because that's what they knew growing up, then the couple may have very different ideas about what their new home will be like. Another part of raising children is discussing how they will be disciplined. Will there be family rules that everyone goes by, or will every new situation need to have another discussion? If the couple is not together on this, there can be a lot of disagreement and argument, allowing the children to be able to manipulate their parents to their own detriment.

A fourth issue is in-laws. If we marry into a family that strongly disapproves of us, we're asking for years of unhappy holidays and family visits. It is very hard to feel that we're constantly receiving negative looks and negative comments whenever we go to visit our spouse's family. This is one of those issues that feels trivial when you're in a state of romantic love, but does not seem trivial, at all, later.

The fifth issue is the area of intimacy and sexuality. In a culture that focuses on romantic love, sexual excitement becomes one of the most important goals. Frequently, young people will live together before marriage, engaging in sexual activity, thinking that somehow this new, exciting thing will last forever. The reality is that it doesn't, and a recent study showed that people who live together before marriage have a higher rate of divorce than those who lived apart until after their wedding day. Intimacy can



courting will be set in stone. Many successful couples continue to discuss differences for years into their thriving marriages. However, those key discussions during courting allow deal-breaker issues to come to light, and bring into focus the complexities of married life, which are dulled by the romantic love ideal.

In times past, and even still today in other cultures, people have arranged marriages. We Americans generally consider this to be unthinkable. We don't want someone telling us who would be a good mate for us. However, we should consider that the cultures that have arranged marriages have a much lower rate of divorce. Let us consider a unique idea, an idea in which we arrange our own marriage, taking into consideration all of the issues above and the issues that matchmakers would routinely consider. What would happen if we would look at the difficult issues before marriage and did some work on them providing us with two pieces of information. One important piece of information would be,

**...A unique idea: arrange your own marriage?**

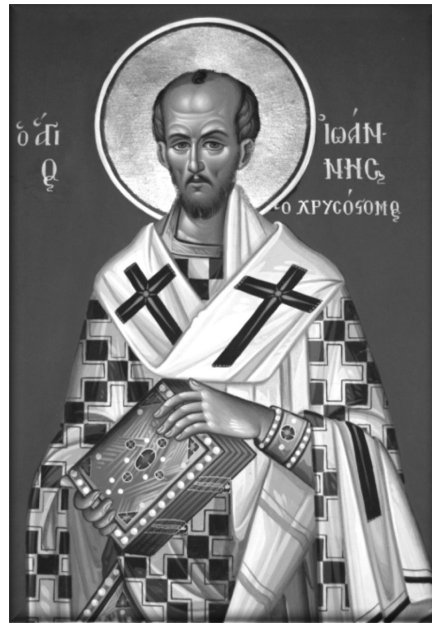
"Is this person *really* a good match for me?" And secondly, if the person is such, are we going into our marriages with our eyes wide open, ready to work every day to make our relationship a successful one?

Successful marriages always involve commitment and perseverance, hard work and sacrifice. All marriages have ups and downs, but Orthodox Christians should enter marriage with the view that divorce is *not* an option, as our Savior commanded, "...what God has joined together, let not man separate." Mark 10:9.

Perhaps one of the most difficult things to consider is that there may be times when we think we love someone but gradually realize that we are only experiencing romantic love.

We realize that this person may not be a suitable husband or wife for us. It is possible to believe that we love someone, but also realize that they are not good for us as a life-long companion. We need to be willing to tell ourselves the truth.

Finally, it is important for us, as we move towards marriage, to include our Church, our spiritual father, our parents, and other wise and trusted members of our Church community. Premarital counseling with the priest is highly recommended. Through these meetings with the spiritual father, the future husband and wife can be gently nudged to look at the difficult issues that may lie ahead. Couples can learn early in their relationship to deal with disagreements in a spiritual way. And when we learn to deal with our problems in a spiritual way, we not only have the possibility of having a life-long, loving relationship, but also a path for entrance into the Kingdom of Heaven.



**"When a man and a woman are united in marriage, they no longer seem like something earthly, but rather like the image of God Himself."**

**-St. John Chrysostom**

be a real consolation for a married couple, in a difficult world, but it takes patience, communication, and much consideration of each other. The Church teaches us, by way of fasting, that even within marriage, there are times when we are apart by mutual consent to strengthen ourselves spiritually.

It's easy to see how there could be a lot of heartache after marriage when the above topics have not been discussed at length. Trust and communication are paramount, and exist in all five of the above topics. Many couples struggle with communicating and telling each other the truth. These issues need to be discussed in a spiritual setting before the marriage ever takes place. This does not mean that all differences will be resolved, nor that all decisions made while

# Αυτογνωσία: Κήρυγμα του π. Θεολόγου

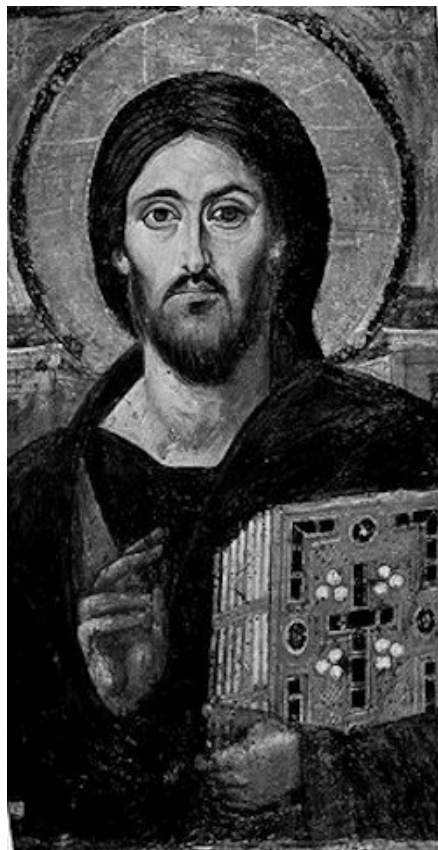
Συνεχίζεται από την σελ.4

έμνυσα και ακάθαρτά μου χεῖλη και βέβηλα, και την ακαθαρτοτέραν μου γλώσσαν». Ο Αγ. Συμεών ο Νέος Θεολόγος στην προσευχή του για την Θεία Μετάληψη λέει, «Από ρυπαρών χειλέων, από βδελυράς καρδιάς, εκ ψυχής ερρυπωμένης» και «ήμαρτον υπέρ την Πόρνην», και «Οίδα, Σώτερ, ότι άλλος, ως εγώ, ουκ έπταισέ Σοι, ουδέ έπραξε τας πράξεις, ας εγώ κατειργασάμην». Και τελικά, ο Απόστολος Παύλος είπε, όσον αφορά αμαρτωλούς, «ων πρώτος εμί εγώ». Εμείς, τότε, τι μπορούμε να πούμε; Μπορεί να φαίνονται λίγο βαριά αυτά που λένε οι Άγιοι Πατέρες και να αναρωτηθεί κανείς εάν τα έγραφαν έτσι τόσο σκληρά για να μας φοβερίσουν ή για κάποιον άλλο λόγο. Θυμάμαι μια φορά, σε μία εξομολόγηση, όσον αφορά την προσευχή του Αγ. Συμεών του Νέου Θεολόγου, στο σημείο που γράφει, «ήμαρτον υπέρ την Πόρνην», μια απλή ψυχή με ρώτησε, «Αμ, αυτό πρέπει να το παίρνουμε κυριολεκτικά για τον εαυτόν μας; Γιατί, δεν καταλαβαίνω πώς μπορώ να το κάνω αυτό!» Άθελά μου, γέλασα λιγάκι γιατί δεν είχα ξανακούσει τέτοια ερώτηση, αλλά του είπα πως οι Άγιοι Πατέρες τα έγραφαν αυτά γιατί είχαν την αυτογνωσία. Τα έγραφαν με πάσαν ειλικρίνεια για τον εαυτόν τους, έστω κι αν ήταν αγνοί, γιατί είχαν βυθιστεί, διά της αυτογνωσίας, εις τα βάθη της ταπεινώσεως. Για μας, τουλάχιστον πρέπει να μας ταπεινώνουν αυτές οι προσευχές, βλέποντας την μεγάλη ταπεινώση των Αγίων Πατέρων, και την μεγάλη μας αδιαφορία προς την αμαρτωλότητά μας. Δι' αυτό είναι τόσο ωφέλιμο για την ψυχή μας να διαβάζουμε την Θεία Μετάληψη πριν πάμε να Κοινωνήσουμε, όπως μας λέγει πάντοτε ο Γέροντάς μας, γιατί μας ταπεινώνουν, και γιατί είναι προσευχές που μας φέρνουν σε συντριβή και μετάνοια.

Η αυτομεμψία καί ή αυτοκατηγορήση είναι η οδός που μας οδηγεί στην χαρά και στην ειρήνη της ψυχής μας. Στ' αλήθεια, δεν υπάρχει άλλη οδός που γίνεται να βαδίσουμε για να βρούμε ανάπαυση για τις ψυχές μας. Ο Αβάς Δωρόθεος ρωτά, «Δεν είναι θαυμαστό ότι ακούμε απ' τους Αγίους Πατέρες ότι δεν υπάρχει άλλη οδός παρά απ' αυτήν; Και βλέπουμε ότι κανένας ποτέ δεν έχει βαδίσει άλλη οδό παρά αυτήν, και βρήκε ανάπαυση. Ελπίζουμε να αποκτήσουμε ειρήνη για την ψυχή μας και νομίζουμε ότι βαδίζουμε στην σωστή οδό, αλλά ποτέ δεν ερχόμαστε στο σημείο να κατηγορούμε τον εαυτόν μας. Στ' αλήθεια, εάν κανείς ήταν τέλειος σε χίλιες αρετές και δεν έπαρνε αυτόν τον δρόμο, δεν

έτσι θα έχανε όλους τους κόπους του. Τι χαρά, τί ψυχική ειρήνη έχει αυτός που κατηγορεί τον εαυτόν του! Όπως λέει ο Αβάς Ποιμήν, «όπου κι αν πάει, κί' ότι κι αν πάθει, καμμία ατιμία, ή κανένα άλλο κακό, το δέχεται σαν να του άξιζε, και ποτέ δεν θα ταλαιπωρούνταν. Μπορεί να υπάρχει μια πιο ελεύθερη κατάσταση από αυτή;»

Ο Αγ. Ισαάκ ο Σύρος, λέει για την Αυτογνωσία, «Όποιος αισθάνθηκε τις αμαρτίες του είναι ανώτερος από εκείνον που εγείρει τους νεκρούς με τη προσευχή του. Όποιος στενάζει για την ψυχή του για μία ώρα, είναι ανώτερος απ' αυτόν που ευεργετεί όλον τον κόσμο. Όποιος αξιώθηκε να δει τον εαυτόν του, είναι ανώτερος από εκείνον που αξιώθηκε να δει τους Αγγέλους. Σ' αυτόν που



γνωρίζει τον εαυτόν του, του χαρίζεται η γνώσις πάντων των πραγμάτων. Γιατί η αυτογνωσία του εαυτού μας είναι ή πλήρης γνώσις των πάντων».

Σε περίπτωση που βλέπουμε τους εαυτούς μας σαν δίκαιους και καλούς, ή σε καλή πνευματική κατάσταση, ας αναγνωρίσουμε τους εαυτούς μας ως πλανεμένους, όπως μας λέει ο Αγ. Ιωάννης ο Θεολόγος, και τότε πρέπει να προσευχηθούμε σαν τους Αγίους Πατέρες, να μας χαρίσει ο Θεός να γνωρίσουμε την αληθινή μας πνευματική κατάσταση, κι όχι μια διεστραμμένη γνώμη για τους εαυτούς μας.

Τώρα που είπαμε τόσα πολλά για την αμαρτωλότητα και την αθλιότητα μας, μας δίνει ο Αγ. Ιωάννης ο Θεολόγος μια καλή ελπίδα και παρηγοριά, γιατί λέει στην ίδια του επιστολή που αναφέραμε στην αρχή, «εάν ομολογούμεντας αμαρτίας μας, πιστός εστί και δίκαιος, ίνα αφή ημίν τας αμαρτίας και καθαρίσει ημάς από πάσης αδικίας». Ο Άγιος Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος λέει, «να είσαι πρώτος να πεις τις αμαρτίες σου και θα δικαιολογηθείς». Ας τρέξουμε λοιπόν στην ιερά εξομολόγηση με προθυμία, χωρίς ντροπή και φόβο, για να εξομολογηθούμε ειλικρινά και καθαρά έμπροσθεν του πνευματικού μας, χωρίς το καταπέτασμα του εγωισμού και της δικαιολογίας, αλλά με αυτομεμψία, αυτοκατάκριση και ταπείνωση, και ο Πανάγαθος Θεός μας είναι πιστός και δίκαιος να μας συγχωρέσει τις αμαρτίες μας και να μας καθαρίσει από πάσης αδικίας, όπως είπε ο ηγαπημένος του Χριστού μας ο Αγ. Ιωάννης.

Ο Αγ. Ιωάννης ο Χρυσόστομος συνεχίζει «Να ντρέπεσαι όταν αμαρτάνεις, μην ντρέπεσαι όταν μετανοείς! Το να μετανοούμε θα πει να έχουμε αλλαγή καρδιάς και νοός. Η μετάνοια δεν είναι απλά να αισθάνεσαι συντριβή, αλλά είναι μια πνευματική ανάπτυξη απ' την πονηρία και τον θάνατο στην επιστροφή στον Θεό και την ζωή. Η αμαρτία είναι η πληγή, και η μετάνοια είναι το φάρμακο. Η αμαρτία ακολουθείται από ντροπή, η μετάνοια ακολουθείται από παρηγορία (παρηγορία θα πει να ζητούμε από τον Θεό έλεος που δεν μας αξίζει). Ο Σατανάς έχει αλλάξει αυτή την τάξη, και έχει δώσει την παρηγορία στην αμαρτία και την ντροπή στην μετάνοια». Ας καθαρίσουμε λοιπόν την ψυχή μας δια της αυτοκατηγορίας, αυτοκατάκρισης, της μετανοίας καί της εξομολογήσεως, δια να έρθει ο Χριστός μας να κατοικήσει μέσα στις καρδιές μας, ειδικά δια μέσου της Θείας Ευχαριστίας. Ο Άγιος Γρηγόριος ο Μέγας λέει, «Για σκέψου, αδελφέ, πόσο μεγάλο αξίωμα είναι αυτό, το να έχουμε τον Κύριον να έρθει και να κατοικήσει μέσα στην καρδιά μας. Εάν σου έρθει κάποτε κανένας πλούσιος και αξιοπρεπής φίλος για να εισέλθει εις τον οίκον σου, θα έτρεχες να καθαρίσεις όλο τον οίκο σου, για να μην έχει τίποτα που μπορεί να σκανδαλίσει αυτόν που έρχεται. Καθάρισε λοιπόν, τον ρύπον των πονηρών έργων σου απ' τον οίκον της ψυχής σου, εις προετοιμασία για τον ερχομό του Θεού». Είθε ο Χριστός να μας αξιώσει όλους, δια της άφατου ευσπλαχνίας και Φιλανθρωπίας Του, Αμήν!

Ο π. Θεολόγος είναι Ιερομόναχος στην Ιερά Μονή Αγίου Ιωάννη του Σαν Φρανσίσκο, στην Νέα Υόρκη



# Self-Knowledge: A Sermon by Fr. Theologos *cont'd from p.10*

spirit, says in his prayer before Communion: *"From lips tainted and defiled, from a heart unclean and loathsome, from a tongue befouled and filthy, from a soul bestained and soiled..."* and a little further down, *"Saviour, well I know that no one hath sinned as have I against Thee, nor hath wrought the deeds which I have..."* Finally, the Apostle Paul said, in regards to sinners, *"Of whom I am chief."* When we hear all this self-condemnation, it may seem quite harsh or a little extreme, and one may wonder if the Holy Fathers were just writing these prayers with a bit of exaggeration in order to scare us, or for some other reason. But they were not. They wrote these prayers precisely because they had the gift of self-knowledge. This is the reason that they were sanctified and became the great Saints that they are.

Once, a very simple soul asked me a question during confession, concerning the Communion prayer of St. John the Theologian, specifically, the part where he says, *"I have sinned more than the harlot..."* He asked, "Um, are we supposed to take that literally? Because I don't understand how to do that." I laughed a little when I heard this, because I had never heard a question like that before. I told him that St. Symeon, being pure, actually truly meant it because he had the gift of self knowledge and thereby had sunk into the depths of humility. For us, we should be humbled by these prayers, seeing the Holy Fathers' great humility, and our indifference to our sinfulness. This is why it is so spiritually profitable, as Geronda always tells us over and over, to read the

prayers before Holy Communion, because they are prayers of repentance which they humble us.

As we said earlier, self condemnation is one of the prerequisites to receiving the gift of self knowledge. Abba Dorotheos says: *"It is not to be wondered at, that we hear from the Holy Fathers that there is no other way but this, (self accusation or self condemnation) and we see that no one at any time went by another way and found rest. We hope to achieve peace of soul and suppose that we are on the right path, yet we never come to the point of accusing ourselves. Truly, if a man were to be perfect in a thousand virtues but not take this path, he would never stop troubling others or being troubled by them and he would thus waste all his labours. What*

*a more carefree state than this?"*

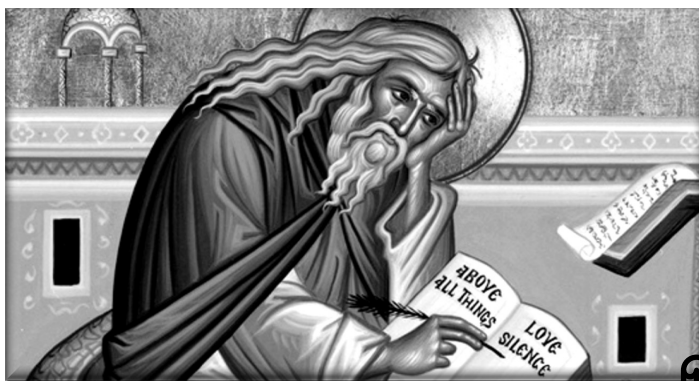
St. Isaac the Syrian, in singing the praises of self knowledge, teaches, *"He who senses his sins, is greater than he who raises the dead by his prayer. He who groans one hour for his soul, is greater than he who benefits the whole world. He who is made worthy to see himself, is greater than he who is made worthy to see Angels. To him who knows himself, is given the knowledge of all things. For the knowledge of ourselves is the fullness of knowledge of all things"*.

In the event that we see ourselves as righteous and just, or in good spiritual condition, let us rather recognize ourselves as deceived, the truth not being in us, as St. John the Theologian tells us. Then we have to beseech God, like the Saints did, to grant us to see our true spiritual state and not our imagined or supposed self-righteousness.

Now, in saying all this about our great sinfulness and wretchedness before God, St. John the Theologian, also gives us good hope, for he says in that same passage in his first Epistle, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."* Therefore, let us all run with great eagerness to confession, without fear and shame, to confess cleanly and purely to our spiritual father, without

the veil of self love and justification, but with self-accusation, self-condemnation and humility. He, our Saviour, *"is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"* as the beloved disciple of our Lord wrote.

*Cont'd on p16*



**St. Isaac the Syrian:** *He who senses his sins, is greater than he who raises the dead by his prayer... He who is made worthy to see himself, is greater than he who is made worthy to see Angels."*

*joy, what peace of soul has the man who accuses or blames himself! As Abba Poemen says, wherever he goes, no matter what happens to him, some dishonour, or any kind of trouble, he is predisposed to accept it as his deserts, and he would never be put to confusion. Could there be*

## Reverence and the Fear of God in the World

*On the Talk by Fr. Christos Patitsas, 2017 Youth Conference, cont'd from p. 8*

'Make Love, Not War.' We live in the first half century in American history, in which more people have been killed by so called 'love' than wars. Add the number who have died from AIDS ( 675,000 in the USA) to the number who have died from abortion (53 million), to the innumerable who have died from suicides, many as the consequence of divorce, out of wedlock pregnancy, and broken hearts after flings with people only in love with themselves, and you realize that this is *false* love.

Half of American marriages end in divorce. Consequently, a child grows up without a father in the home. A high percentage of American children are born out of wedlock (about 40%). Many never know their father. If his name is mentioned, it is often with anger. We

decry the tragedy of war, and well we should, but *false* love has produced more loss of life, more widows, and more orphans in the past 50 years, than all of America's wars combined (American war deaths since the American Revolution = 1,354,664!)

In the question and answer section, A question about transgenders came up. Our Orthodox faith teaches us to accept ourselves as God has fashioned us. If we are biologically and physically male then we are male, if female then we are female. Men who do not feel macho or who prefer cooking to hunting are still men. Women who prefer cars over dolls are still women. A man can never be as feminine as an actual woman no matter how he plays the role. A woman can never be as

masculine as an actual man. Self acceptance is critical. Counseling, not surgery to reassign gender, is what the Church recommends. Many who have had sexual reassignment surgery are having regrets and are undergoing more surgery to return to what they were.

"If we combine fear of God with love of our neighbor," Fr. Christos concluded, "We would promise ourselves, right now, to keep ourselves pure. Let me tell you a little secret. When you make such a promise to God, then you will suddenly become much more serious about who you choose to be with, and you will become much more mature about making a commitment to marry the one you love, because you won't be able to bear being apart from that person!"

# Saint Demetrius, the Glorious Great-Martyr and Myrrh-Streamer

*Cont'd from cover*

our God with all his heart and soul, and as governor, instructed his people in the Christian faith and piety. He was a shining example of meekness, wisdom, justice, and courage to those in his city. The Saint was greatly loved and honored by the people of Thessalonica.

During this time, however, the Roman Empire did not permit allegiance to any religion except to that of their false idols. It was a time when thousands of martyrs endured every torture, affliction and death for the love of Christ and St. Demetrius was prepared to join them. It came to pass that Maximian, a co-ruler with Diocletian, summoned the officials of Thessalonica, including St. Demetrius, to offer sacrifices to the pagan gods of the Roman Empire. It was then that he defied the emperor, and contested for the true Faith, which was so deeply rooted in his

heart. He was immediately thrown into prison where the faithful continued to visit him and receive his holy instruction and blessing. Among these faithful was a young man named Nestor, who, full of vigor and zeal, was eager to fight a giant man called Lyaïos, who slayed many

Christians for the entertainment of the impious emperor Maximian. Lyaïos boasted of invincible strength and was greatly prized by Maximian, who enjoyed watching his brutality towards the Christians. Nestor, with unshakable faith in Christ, went to receive St. Demetrius's blessing before contesting against the giant in

*In this way, Demetrius was stripped to run the martyr's race, he who had been full of indescribable graces since childhood, wise and righteous in every respect, a Saint, Apostle and virgin, completely pure and without exaggeration, Christ's beloved disciple, child, best and closest friend. In fact, he was all these at once, because he attained to all the thoughts, words and deeds which are dear to God.*

*-St. Gregory Palamas*

A group of soldiers entered the prison where St. Demetrius was held captive and charged at him with spears. When St. Demetrius saw them approaching, he held up his arm, allowing the soldiers to pierce his side in imitation of the Lord, Who was pierced in the side by the centurion. Thus, he received his imperishable crown at the age of 36.

The Roman soldiers went on to throw his precious remains into a well; however, the faithful retrieved the body of

their beloved leader, teacher, and intercessor before God, and reverently buried him. In the centuries that followed, the tomb of St. Demetrius would gush forth fragrant myrrh unto the healing of the faithful, giving him the title Myrrh-Streamer.



*"...He who had been full of indescribable graces since childhood, wise and righteous in every respect, a Saint, Apostle and virgin, completely pure and without exaggeration, Christ's beloved disciple, child, best and closest friend. In fact, he was all these at once, because he attained to all the thoughts, words and deeds which are dear to God."*

*-St. Gregory Palamas, describing St. Demetrius*

the arena. St. Demetrius then prophesied to young Nestor that he would both defeat the enemy of Christ and gain the crown of martyrdom. Nestor then went on to slay Lyaïos, to the great shock and horror of Maximian, who after learning of St. Demetrius's blessing and prophecy, commanded them both to be killed.

## Self-Knowledge: A Sermon by Fr. Theologos *cont'd from p.15*

St. John Chrysostom says, "Be ashamed when you sin, don't be ashamed when you repent! To repent means to have a change of heart and mind. It is not simply a feeling of sorrow, but a spiritual growth away from evil and death and a turning to God and life. Sin is the wound, repentance is the medicine. Sin is followed by shame, repentance is followed by boldness (boldness means to beg God for undeserved mercy). Satan has overturned this order and given boldness to sin and shame to repentance."

Again, St. John Chrysostom teaches us, "Be the first to admit your sins and you will be justified." For this reason, the Prophet David wrote, "I said: I will confess my sins before the Lord, and Thou forgavest the ungodliness of my heart."

Let us therefore cleanse our souls by means of self condemnation and repentance, that Christ may abide in our hearts, especially through the Holy and Life giving Mysteries; St. Gregory the great says: "Reflect, dearly beloved, how great a dignity this is: to have the Lord come and abide in our heart. Should

some rich and powerful friend enter your home, you would make haste to clean the whole house, lest there be anything to displease the eye of the one who is coming. Cleanse therefore the stains of evil-doing from the house of your soul, in preparation for the coming of God." May our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, deem us all worthy of this by His ineffable great mercy and love for mankind, Amen!

*Fr. Theologos is a Priestmonk at the Sacred Monastery of St. John of San Francisco in New York.*



Στις 26 Οκτωβρίου, οι Χριστιανοί σε όλο τον κόσμο γιορτάζουν την Εορτή του Μεγαλομάρτυρα Αγίου Δημητρίου του Μυροβλύτη. Ο Άγιος Δημήτριος γεννήθηκε στη Θεσσαλονίκη από ευγενείς γονείς που τον ανέθρεψαν με φόβο Θεού και με κάθε αρετή. Καθώς μεγάλωνε ο Άγιος, αυξανόταν και σε πνευματικό ανάστημα, αναπτύσσοντας μια πολύτιμη ωριμότητα του σώματος και της ψυχής. Σε νεαρή κιόλας ηλικία διορίστηκε διοικητής της Θεσσαλονίκης και ολόκληρης της Θεσσαλίας, κάτω από τον Ρωμαίο Αυτοκράτορα, Διοκλητιανό. Ο Άγιος Δημήτριος αγάπησε Χριστό τον Θεό του με όλη του την καρδιά και την ψυχή, και ως κυβερνήτης, καθοδήγησε τον λαό του στη Χριστιανική πίστη και ευσέβεια. Ήταν ένα λαμπρό παράδειγμα ταπεινοφροσύνης, σοφίας, δικαιοσύνης και θάρρους στους κατοίκους της πόλης του. Ο Άγιος αγαπήθηκε και τιμήθηκε πολύ από τους Θεσσαλονικείς.

Ωστόσο, κατά τη διάρκεια αυτής της περιόδου, η Ρωμαϊκή Αυτοκρατορία δεν επέτρεπε την λατρεία καμίας θρησκείας εκτός από εκείνη των ψευδών ειδώλων. Την εποχή αυτή, χιλιάδες μάρτυρες υπέμειναν κάθε είδους βασανιστήρια, θλίψεις και μαρτυρικό θάνατο για την αγάπη Του Ιησού, και ο Άγιος Δημήτριος ήταν διατεθειμένος να τους ακολουθήσει. Ο Μαξιμιανός, συν-ηγεμόνας του Διοκλητιανού, κάλεσε τους αξιωματούχους της Θεσσαλονίκης, συμπεριλαμβανομένου και του Αγίου Δημητρίου, να προσφέρουν θυσίες στα είδωλα της Ρωμαϊκής Αυτοκρατορίας. Τότε ήταν που ο Άγιος Δημήτριος απήφησε τον αυτοκράτορα και προχώρησε προς το μαρτύριο για την Αληθινή Πίστη, την οποία είχε τόσο βαθιά ριζωμένη στην καρδιά του.

Τον πέταξαν στη φυλακή τον Άγιο, όπου οι πιστοί συνέχισαν να τον επισκέπτονται



και να λαμβάνουν την ιερή διδαχή και ευλογία του. Μεταξύ αυτών των επισκεπτών ήταν ένας νεαρός που ονομαζόταν Νέστορας, ο οποίος, γεμάτος σθένος και ζήλο, ήθελε να πολεμήσει έναν γιγαντιαίο άνθρωπο που ονομαζόταν Λιαίος. Ο γιγαντιαίος Λιαίος είχε σκοτώσει πολλούς Χριστιανούς στην αρένα για την ψυχαγωγία του άσεβου αυτοκράτορα Μαξιμιανού. Ο Λιαίος νικούσε πάντα γιατί είχε ανυπέρβλητη δύναμη και ήταν εξαιρετικά πολύτιμος στα μάτια του Μαξιμιανού, που απολάμβανε την κτηνωδία του γίγαντα απέναντι στους Χριστιανούς. Ο Νέστορας, με αδιάφυστη πίστη στον Χριστό, πήγε να λάβει την ευλογία του Αγίου Δημητρίου πριν μπει στην αρένα να παλέψει τον γίγαντα. Ο Άγιος Δημήτριος

τότε προφήτευσε στον νεαρό Νέστορα ότι, και θα νικούσε τον εχθρό του Χριστού, και θα κέρδιζε το στεφάνι του μάρτυρα. Τότε ο Νέστορας πήγε και πάλεψε τον Λιαίο, και προς μεγάλη κατάπληξη και φρίκη του Μαξιμιανού, σκότωσε τον γίγαντα. Ο Μαξιμιανός, αφού έμαθε πως ο Άγιος Δημήτριος έδωσε την ευλογία του, και ότι προφήτευσε το τέλος του Λιαίου, διέταξε να θανατωθούν και οι δύο.

Με αυτόν τον τρόπο, ο Δημήτριος ετοιμάστηκε να τρέξει στον αγώνα του μάρτυρα, αυτός ο οποίος ήταν γεμάτος από απερίγραπτες χάρες από την παιδική του ηλικία, σοφός και δίκαιος σε κάθε τρόπο, Άγιος, Απόστολος και παρθένος, απόλυτα καθαρός και, χωρίς υπερβολή, ο αγαπημένος μαθητής Του Χριστού, σαν καλύτερος και πλησιέστερος φίλος. Στην πραγματικότητα, ήταν όλα αυτά ταυτοχρόνως, επειδή έφτασε σε όλες αυτές τις σκέψεις, τα λόγια, και τις πράξεις που είναι αγαπητά Στον Θεό.

-Άγιος Γρηγόριος Παλαμάς

Μια ομάδα στρατιωτών μπήκε στη φυλακή όπου κρατούσαν τον Άγιο Δημήτριο αιχμάλωτο, και έτρεξαν καταπάνω του με δόρατα. Όταν ο Άγιος τους είδε να πλησιάζουν, σήκωσε τα χέρια του, επιτρέποντας στους στρατιώτες να τρυπήσουν την πλευρά του, όπως η πλευρά Του Κυρίου είχε διατρυπηθεί από τον εκατόνταρχο. Έτσι, έλαβε το θάνατο στέμμα του μάρτυρα στην ηλικία των 36 ετών.

Οι Ρωμαίοι στρατιώτες πέταξαν τα πολύτιμα λείψανα του σε ένα πηγάδι. Ωστόσο όμως, οι πιστοί ξαναπήραν το σώμα του αγαπημένου ηγέτη, διδασκάλου και μεσίτη τους ενώπιον Του Θεού, και τον έθαψαν ευλαβικά. Κατά τους αιώνες που ακολούθησαν, ευδιασπτό μύρο έτρεχε από τον τάφο του Αγίου Δημητρίου, προς ευλογία και θεραπεία των πιστών, δίνοντάς του τον τίτλο του Μυροβλύτη.

## Youth Conference 2017: Another Great Success! Cont'd from cover

ing for our Lord's blessing on this event and clearly our Lord blessed us greatly. On Friday night at the church, a large group gathered for fellowship and snacks. On Saturday, activities and meals were held at an elementary school a few blocks from the church. In the morning, attendees were divided into four age groups, and clergy presented talks to each group on reverence and fear of God in church, at home, and in the world. Everyone attending the sessions spoke highly of how the theme was fleshed out and made practical to our daily lives. The younger children also enjoyed painting pumpkins, other crafts and relay races.

The weather was beautiful throughout the weekend, and many attendees enjoyed a trip to an apple orchard for apple picking, cider and fresh cider doughnuts Saturday afternoon.

Following Vespers and dinner, the young people went bowling. Adults took part in a Q&A with our Hierarchs, focusing on the topics discussed earlier in the day. On Sunday, Matins and a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy were celebrated, with two hierarchs, six priests and four deacons. Both Metropolitans gave edifying brief sermons on the Gospel lesson, the raising of the widow's son in Nain. What a great blessing for all to be to-

gether worshipping our Lord! The event concluded with a banquet at the school. Presbytera Katina Patitsas entertained us with some of her songs. Metr. Moses agreed to hold next year's Youth and Family Conference in Toronto.

Fr. Andrew Snogren, the Dormition parish priest, expressed his thanks to our hierarchs, the clergy who attended and participated, the planning committee for their great work, and to all the parishioners and guests who helped in many ways.

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*"Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine."*  
-Proverbs 3:9-10

9 Τίμα τον Κύριο από τα υπάρχοντά σου, και με τους πρώτο-καρπούς όλων των γεννημάτων σου.  
10 και θα γεμίσουν οι σιταποθήκες σου από αφθονία, και οι ληνοί σου θα ξεχειλίζουν από νέο κρασί.  
-Παροιμία Σολομώντος 3:9-10

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Nota & Dimitri Kandrevas, Michigan, USA  
Andrew Kicelev  
Rev. George Kochergin, Massachusetts, USA  
The Klisouris Family, Ontario, Canada  
The Prieto Family, Florida, USA  
The Suica Family, Arizona, USA  
In Memory of Marianthi Vasseliou, Michigan, USA  
In Memory of Hannah Walker, New Hampshire, US  
In Memory of Theano and Carl



# ❖ THE SACRED METROPOLIS NEEDS OUR SUPPORT ❖

## Η ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΗ ΧΡΕΙΑΖΕΤΑΙ ΤΗΝ ΥΠΟΣΤΗΡΙΞΗ ΜΑΣ

“In order for parishes to function well, the Metropolis must function well. Who will support the Metropolis if not Her faithful?”

« Για να λειτουργούν καλά οι ενορίες, πρέπει να λειτουργεί καλά η Μητρόπολη. Ποιος θα υποστηρίξει την Μητρόπολη αν όχι οι πιστοί Της;»



“Those alms we give in the name of God are received by God Himself. Spiritually, our alms are laid up in the treasuries of heaven, God’s treasuries, from which no one can steal them away.”

-St. John Maximovitch, the Wonderworker

«Οι ελεημοσύνες που δίνουμε στο όνομα του Θεού λαμβάνονται από τον Ίδιο τον Θεό. Πνευματικά, οι ελεημοσύνες μας κλείνονται στα θησαυροφυλάκια του ουρανού, του Θεού τα θησαυροφυλάκια, από όπου δεν είναι δυνατόν να τις κλέψει κανείς.»

-Άγιος Ιωάννης Μαξιμόβιτς, ο Θαυματουργός



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Σημείωση: Οι καταχωρίσεις επιπέδων των δωρεών εμφανίζονται με ετήσια σύνολα, για ευκολία, αλλά οι δωρεές μπορούν να γίνονται **μηνιαίες** ή **ετήσιες**.)

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All pledgers will receive *The Spiritual Watch*. Όλοι οι δωρητές θα λαβαίνουν το περιοδικό *Η Πνευματική Εγρήγορση*.

In the publication, I would like the name for my donation to appear as: Στο περιοδικό, θα ήθελα το όνομα για τη δωρεά μου να εμφανιστεί ως:



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# Youth Conference 2017

