

SOBORNOST

St. Thomas the Apostle Orthodox Church

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American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese

*ECUMENICAL PATRIARCHATE
OF CONSTANTINOPLE*

SERVICES

**Wednesday in Lent: Liturgy of
Presanctified Gifts 7:00 PM**

Friday: Moleben to the Cross 6:00 AM

Saturday: Confession 5:00 PM

Great Vespers 5:30 PM

Sunday: Matins (Orthros) 8:45 AM

Children's Sunday School 9:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM.

**March 18, 2018 – 4th Sunday of Lent | St. John Climacus
St. Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem**

St. John Climacus, whom we remember today, writes in *The Ladder*: “When our soul leaves this world we shall not be blamed for not having worked miracles, or for not having been theologians, or not having been rapt in divine visions. But we shall certainly have to give an account to God of why we have not unceasingly mourned.” Metropolitan Anthony Bloom (*subsequent quotes are also his – ed.*) writes:

What is there in sin which should cause us such broken-heartedness that all our life should be not darkened, but inspired, by this pain in our hearts? We tend to define sin as breaking of the moral law, or acting in a way which is contrary to our duty or to what is right, but there is something more fundamental in sin, which should indeed cause us sadness and more than sadness: a deep pain.

Indeed, a pain that should cause us to weep!



Sin is disloyalty, sin is unfaithfulness, sin is a failure to love; it is unfaithfulness, disloyalty and lack of love towards God because it means that whatever He says matters little to us, although when He spoke to us, He spoke with all His human love and all His divine love; and indeed, to show us how much we matter to Him, how deeply He values us, He gave all of His life...

Christ gave even to the point of death to save us, so that we might come to believe in His great love for us! “Greater love than this, has no man, than to lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:3).

And what do we do in the face of this love, this incredible love that caused Our Savior to become incarnate for us and to walk among us and even to suffer and die for us? We turn away from Him, from His love; sometimes this turning away is just a disinterest in Christ, *a boredom with Christ!* And this turning away, “means by implication that His life and death are too little for us, too little for us to respond to by love, to respond by faithfulness and loyalty.”

This disinterest in Christ, this boredom with Christ, results in our breaking of a multitude of commandments and our alienation from our brothers and sisters, it results in our ultimate separation from God and mankind. Our Savior says, “if you love Me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).

These concrete sins which we commit all the time, this coldness to one another, this indifference, the ease with which we judge and condemn our brothers, the way in which we turn away from the needs of others, the way in which we care nothing for the love which is offered us: all this results from the indifference and coldness of our hearts [towards God]... We should be, with regard to God, in the condition of one who is in love.

The one who loves is always thinking of his beloved and is “aware that his heart is filled with a love that fills him to the brim, that is joy, that is peace and serenity, and strength, and courage, and a love that allows us to look around and see everyone in a new light, that allows us to see the image of God shining [in our brothers and sisters] and each person we meet.”

St. John Climacus and many other monastic saints had such great love for God that they went to great lengths to focus all their life and their energy on this love, to spend every minute of every day cultivating this love through prayer and silence. They lived in caves and atop pillars, they went out into the desert and the wilderness, all this out of their intense love for God so that they could be alone with God and speak with God and delight in His presence.

And when their disciples found these great lovers of God, they were in awe of their peace and spiritual beauty, they clung to them like a drowning man clings to a life

preserver. Looking into the faces of these holy monastics, they saw the face of God and experienced His great love and mercy.

If we ask ourselves how far we are from God, and cannot measure the distance between us because our experience of being close to Him is so small, then let us ask ourselves, “[How close am I to my brothers], how far am I from the people who surround me? How little love, how little loyalty, how little gift of self, how little rejoicing in my neighbor there is in me! How much there is of judgment, of indifference, of coldness, of forgetfulness!”

Until we draw close to God and try to love Him and serve Him and be with Him then we will be separated from those around us, we will be unable to love them. Our world will be centered only around ourselves. “This is why St. John Climacus calls us to give absolute centrality to the way in which we relate to God, because everything else will depend upon it.”

Loving God and being with God is not something *extra* in our lives, it is not one of many options in a consumer society, God is absolutely essential for our lives, essential for us to be truly loving and caring human beings. “God is like the key of harmony that allows a tune to be read and sung.”

Let us also turn to God in repentance as St. John Climacus saw it: not an empty moaning about our past, not a useless self-pity that we have not accomplished what we desired with our life, but instead let us cry to God, “*Come, Lord Jesus, and convert my hardened heart and help me to love you above all else, help me to be truly the human being that You created—made in Your image and likeness. Help me Lord to so love you that I will turn away from all those things that keep me from You that I may then be united to You and then finally to be able to love all those around me as You love them.* Amen. (adapted from *holycross-hermitage.com*)

Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem

Saint Cyril, Archbishop of Jerusalem, was born in Jerusalem in the year 315 and was raised in strict Christian piety. Upon reaching the age of maturity, he became a monk, and in the year 346 he became a presbyter. In the year 350, upon the death of Archbishop Maximus, he succeeded him on the episcopal throne of Jerusalem.

As Patriarch of Jerusalem, Saint Cyril zealously fought against the heresies of Arius and Macedonius. In so doing, he aroused the animosity of the Arian bishops, who sought to have him deposed and banished from Jerusalem. There was a miraculous portent in 351 at Jerusalem: at the third hour of the day on the Feast of Pentecost, the Holy Cross appeared in the heavens, shining with a radiant light. It stretched from Golgotha above the Mount of Olives. Saint Cyril reported this

portent to the Arian emperor Constantius (351-363), hoping to convert him to Orthodoxy.

The heretic Acacius, deposed by the Council of Sardica, was formerly the Metropolitan of Caesarea, and he collaborated with the emperor to have Saint Cyril removed. An intense famine struck Jerusalem, and Saint Cyril expended all his wealth in charity. But since the famine did not abate, the saint pawned church utensils, and used the money to buy wheat for the starving. The saint's enemies spread a scandalous rumor that they had seen a woman in the city dancing around in clerical garb. Taking advantage of this rumor, the heretics forcibly expelled the saint.

The saint found shelter with Bishop Silvanus in Tarsus. After this, a local Council was held at Seleucia, at which there were about 150 bishops, and among them Saint Cyril. The heretical Metropolitan Acacius did not want to allow him to take a seat, but the Council would not consent to this. Acacius stormed out of the Council, and before the emperor and the Arian patriarch Eudoxius, he denounced both the Council and Saint Cyril. The emperor had the saint imprisoned.

When the emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363) ascended the throne he repealed all the anti-Orthodox decrees of Constantius, seemingly out of piety. Saint Cyril returned to his own flock. But after a certain while, when Julian had become secure upon the throne, he openly apostasized and renounced Christ. He permitted the Jews to start rebuilding the Temple of Jerusalem that had been destroyed by the Romans, and he even provided them part of the funds for the building from the state treasury.

Saint Cyril predicted that the words of the Savior about the destruction of the Temple down to its very stones (Luke. 21:6) would undoubtedly transpire, and the blasphemous intent of Julian would come to naught. Soon there was such a powerful earthquake, that even the solidly set foundation of the ancient Temple of Solomon shifted in its place, and what had been rebuilt fell down and shattered into dust. When the Jews resumed construction, a fire came down from the heavens and destroyed the tools of the workmen. Great terror seized everyone. On the following night, the Sign of the Cross appeared on the clothing of the Jews, which they could not remove by any means.

After this heavenly confirmation of Saint Cyril's prediction, they banished him again, and the bishop's throne was occupied by Saint Cyriacus. But Saint Cyriacus soon suffered a martyr's death (October 28).

After the emperor Julian perished in 363, Saint Cyril returned to his See, but during the reign of the emperor Valens (364-378) he was exiled for a third time. It was only under the holy emperor Saint Theodosius the Great (379-395) that he

finally returned to his archpastoral activity. In 381 Saint Cyril participated in the Second Ecumenical Council, which condemned the heresy of Macedonius and affirmed the Nicea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith (Creed).

Saint Cyril's works include twenty-three Instructions (Eighteen are Catechetical, intended for those preparing for Baptism, and five are for the newly-baptized) and two discourses on Gospel themes: "On the Paralytic," and "Concerning the Transformation of Water into Wine at Cana."

At the heart of the Catechetical Instructions is a detailed explanation of the Symbol of Faith. The saint suggests that a Christian should inscribe the Symbol of Faith upon "the tablets of the heart."

"The articles of the Faith," Saint Cyril teaches, "were not written through human cleverness, but they contain everything that is most important in all the Scriptures, in a single teaching of faith. Just as the mustard seed contains all its plethora of branches within its small kernel, so also does the Faith in its several declarations combine all the pious teachings of the Old and the New Testaments."

Saint Cyril, a great ascetic and a champion of Orthodoxy, died in the year 386. *(from oca.org)*

Today's Epistle Lesson – St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews 6:13-20

Brethren, when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, "Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you." And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation *is* for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed *it* by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it *is* impossible for God to lie, we have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before *us*. This *hope* we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the *Presence* behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, *even* Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

Today's Gospel Lesson – Saint Mark 9:17-31

At that time, one of the crowd said, "Teacher, I brought You my son, who has a mute spirit. And wherever it seizes him, it throws him down; he foams at the mouth, gnashes his teeth, and becomes rigid. So I spoke to Your disciples, that they should cast it out, but they could not." He answered him and said, "O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him to Me." Then they brought him to Him. And when he saw Him,

immediately the spirit convulsed him, and he fell on the ground and wallowed, foaming at the mouth. So He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. And often he has thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him. But if You can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus said to him, "If you can believe, all things *are* possible to him who believes." Immediately the father of the child cried out and said with tears, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!" When Jesus saw that the people came running together, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it: "Deaf and dumb spirit, I command you, come out of him and enter him no more!" Then *the spirit* cried out, convulsed him greatly, and came out of him. And he became as one dead, so that many said, "He is dead." But Jesus took him by the hand and lifted him up, and he arose. And when He had come into the house, His disciples asked Him privately, "Why could we not cast it out?" So He said to them, "This kind can come out by nothing but prayer and fasting." Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know *it*. For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."

A Word From the Holy Fathers

Whoever keeps careful guard over himself, as is fitting during these holy days, will be rewarded with blessings, even if it happens that, being a man, he has sinned either through weakness or carelessness. You see, God gave us these holy days so that by diligence in abstinence, in the spirit of humility and repentance, a man may be cleansed of the sins of the whole year and the soul relieved of its burden. Purified he goes forward to the holy day of the Resurrection, and being made a new man through the change of heart induced by the fast, he can take his part in the Holy Mysteries and remain in spiritual joy and happiness, feasting with God the whole 50 days. Paschal time, as has been said, is the resurrection of the soul and the sign of this is that we do not kneel in church during the whole season up to Pentecost.

Everyone who wants to purify himself of the sins of the whole year during these days must first of all restrain himself from the pleasure of eating. For the pleasure of eating, as the Fathers say, caused all man's evil. Likewise he must take care not to break the fast without great necessity or to look for pleasurable things to eat, or weigh himself down by eating and drinking until he is full.

There are two kinds of gluttony. There is the kind which concerns taste: a man does not want to eat a lot but he wants it to be appetizing. It follows that such a

person eats the food that pleases him and is defeated by the pleasure of it. He keeps the food in his mouth, rolling it round and round, and has not the heart to swallow it because he enjoys the taste. This is called fastidiousness. Another man is concerned about satisfying himself. He doesn't ask for fancy food nor does he care especially about whether the taste is nice or not, he only wants to eat and fill his stomach. This is gluttony.... These must be guarded against and abandoned seriously by the man who desires to be cleansed of his sins. They accord not with the needs of the body, but with its vicious inclinations, and if they are tolerated, they lead a man into sin. As is the case with legitimate marital union and fornication, the practice is the same but the object is different. In the one case, there is copulation in order to raise a family, in the other to merely satisfy a desire for pleasure. The same is true with feeding: in one case it is a question of the body's needs and in the other of eating for pleasure. The intention is what makes it a sin. A man eats to satisfy a need when he lays down how much he will take each day and, if what he has determined on overloads him, takes a little less, or if he is not overloaded and his body is weakened, adds a little. And so he estimates exactly his need, and he bases his conclusion not on pleasure but on preserving the strength of his body. And what he takes he receives with prayer, deeming himself unworthy of that comfort and he is not on the look out to see if others, as is likely, because of special need or necessity are given special attention, lest he himself hankers for that comfort or think it a trivial thing for the soul to be at rest.

We ought, even if we take food out of necessity, to consider ourselves unworthy of any kind of special relief or even of monastic life itself – and not take food purely for pleasure, and in this way food will not bring our condemnation. Enough about sobriety in eating. We must not only keep a sharp watch over our diet, but keep away from all other kinds of sin so that as our stomach keeps fast, so also may our tongue as we abstain from calumny, from deceit, from idle talk, from railing and anger and all other vices which arise from the tongue.

So also let our eyes keep fast. No looking for trivialities, no letting the eyes wander freely, no impudent lying in wait for people to talk to. The same with the hands and feet, to prevent them from doing anything evil. Fasting in this way, as St. Basil says, is an acceptable fast and, leaving behind all the evil to which our senses are inclined, we may come to the holy day of the Resurrection, renewed and clean and worthy to share in the holy mysteries.

– Dorotheus of Gaza



God's plan... your plan

Will it ever make sense?



Keynote Speakers:
His Grace Bishop Gregory of Nyssa
and Steven Christoforou



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THE LONELINESS OF CHRIST & OUR LONELINESS

by Bishop Hilarion Alfeyev

During the last days of His earthly life Jesus Christ was left alone to face those who hated Him, endure sufferings and death. He drank to the bottom the cup of suffering that was prepared for Him and underwent the most horrible thing that a person could experience: a profound loneliness and feeling of being abandoned by God.

He was alone in Gethsemane, for His disciples were fast asleep. He was alone at the court of the high priests, alone during His interrogation by Herod, alone at the tribunal of Pilate, for His disciples had fled. He was alone when He went to Golgotha, and a passer-by, and not His beloved disciple, helped Him to carry His cross. He was alone on the cross and died alone, having been abandoned by all.

While on the cross Jesus cried to His Father: "My God, My God! Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" (Mt. 27:46). The pain of all mankind and every person was contained in this cry, the pain of everybody who feels alone and abandoned by God. It is painful to be abandoned by one's friends and close ones, but there is

something still more horrible – when it seems that God has left you, when an insurmountable wall has been raised between you and God and He neither hears, nor sees, nor notices you.

If you suffer from loneliness, remember how lonely the Savior was during the last days of His life.

If your close ones or those under your care have turned away from you, if you have been slandered undeservedly, if people call you a heretic and destroyer of traditions, if they bear false witness against you and say that you deserve to die, remember that the Lord Himself underwent all these.

If he who lived with you under one roof, communed from the same chalice, ate your bread, he whom you trusted with all your love, with whom you shared your thoughts and feelings, from whom you hid nothing and for whom you spared nothing, if this person betrayed you, turned away from you, “raised his heel to smite you” and spat on you, remember that Jesus also underwent this.

If your cross weights upon you so heavily that you are not able to carry it, and if those close to you do not want to help you carry it, be thankful, perhaps, to the passer-by who will help you carry it for at least part of the way.

If the feeling of being totally abandoned by God has overwhelmed you and it seems that there is no God, that He has turned away from you or does not hear you, do not despair, for Christ also underwent these horrible and bitter experiences.

If people condemn you and blaspheme, smite you in the face and spit on you, nail you to the cross and give you bile instead of water, pray for them, for “they know not what they are doing.”

In fear and trembling, bowing before the holy tomb of Jesus in silence and reverence, let us thank the Lord for He was alone so that we might not be alone, He was abandoned so that we might not be abandoned, He suffered insults and mockery, slander and humiliation, suffering and death, so that in the midst of any suffering we might feel that we are not alone, that the Savior Himself “is with us unto the end of the ages.”

Rest of St Nikolai of Zhicha

Saint Nikolai of Zhicha, “the Serbian Chrysostom,” was born in Lelich in western Serbia on January 4, 1881 (December 23, 1880 O.S.). His parents were Dragomir and Katherine Velimirovich, who lived on a farm where they raised a large family.

His pious mother was a major influence on his spiritual development, teaching him by word and especially by example. As a small child, Nikolai often walked three miles to the Chelije Monastery with his mother to attend services there.

Sickly as a child, Nikolai was not physically strong as an adult. He failed his physical requirements when he applied to the military academy, but his excellent academic qualifications allowed him to enter the Saint Sava Seminary in Belgrade, even before he finished preparatory school.

After graduating from the seminary in 1905, he earned doctoral degrees from the University of Berne in 1908, and from King's College, Oxford in 1909. When he returned home, he fell ill with dysentery. Vowing to serve God for the rest of his life if he recovered, he was tonsured at the Rakovica Monastery on December 20, 1909 and was also ordained to the holy priesthood.

In 1910 he went to study in Russia to prepare himself for a teaching position at the seminary in Belgrade. At the Theological Academy in Saint Petersburg, the Provost asked him why he had come. He replied, "I wanted to be a shepherd. As a child, I tended my father's sheep. Now that I am a man, I wish to tend the rational flock of my heavenly Father. I believe that is the way that has been shown to me." The Provost smiled, pleased by this response, then showed the young man to his quarters.

After completing his studies, he returned to Belgrade and taught philosophy, logic, history, and foreign languages at the seminary. He spoke seven languages, and this ability proved very useful to him throughout his life. Saint Nikolai was renowned for his sermons, which never lasted more than twenty minutes, and focused on just three main points. He taught people the theology of the Church in a language they could understand, and inspired them to repentance.

At the start of World War I, Archimandrite Nikolai was sent to England on a diplomatic mission to seek help in the struggle of the Serbs against Austria. His doctorate from Oxford gained him an invitation to speak at Westminster Abbey. He remained in England for three short months, but Saint Nikolai left a lasting impression on those who heard him. His writings "The Lord's Commandments," and "Meditations on the Lord's Prayer" impressed many in the Church of England.

Archimandrite Nikolai left England and went to America, where he proved to be a good ambassador for his nation and his Church. The future saint returned to Serbia in 1919, where he was consecrated as Bishop of Zhicha, and was later transferred to Ochrid. The new hierarch assisted those who were suffering from the ravages of war by establishing orphanages and helping the poor. Bishop Nikolai took over as leader of Bogomljcki Pokret, a popular movement for spiritual revival which encouraged people to pray and read the Bible. Under the bishop's direction, it also

contributed to a renewal of monasticism. Monasteries were restored and reopened, and this in turn revitalized the spiritual life of the Serbian people.

In 1921, Bishop Nikolai was invited to visit America again and spent two years as a missionary bishop. He gave more than a hundred talks in less than six months, raising funds for his orphanages. Over the next twenty years, he lectured in various churches and universities.



When Germany invaded Yugoslavia on April 6, 1941, Bishop Nikolai, a fearless critic of the Nazis, was arrested and confined in Ljubostir Vojlovici Monastery. In 1944, he and Patriarch Gavrilo were sent to the death camp at Dachau. There he witnessed many atrocities and was tortured himself. When American troops liberated the prisoners in May 1945, the patriarch returned to Yugoslavia, but Bishop Nikolai went to England.

The Communist leader Tito was just coming to power in Yugoslavia, where he persecuted the Church and crushed those who opposed him. Therefore, Bishop Nikolai believed he could serve the Serbian people more effectively by remaining abroad. He went to America in 1946, following a hectic schedule in spite of his

health problems which were exacerbated by his time in Dachau. He taught for three years at Saint Sava's Seminary in Libertyville, IL before he settled at Saint Tikhon's Monastery in South Canaan, PA in 1951.

He taught at Saint Tikhon's and also served as the seminary's Dean and Rector. He was also a guest lecturer at Saint Vladimir's Seminary in NY, and at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY.

On Saturday March 17, 1956 Bishop Nikolai served his last Liturgy. After the service he went to the trapeza and gave a short talk. As he was leaving, he bowed low and said, "Forgive me, brothers." This was something unusual which he had not done before.

On March 18, 1956 Saint Nikolai fell asleep in the Lord Whom he had served throughout his life. He was found in his room kneeling in an attitude of prayer. Though he was buried at Saint Sava's Monastery in Libertyville, IL, he had always

expressed a desire to be buried in his homeland. In April of 1991 his relics were transferred to the Chetinje Monastery in Lelich. There he was buried next to his friend and disciple Father Justin Popovich (+ 1979).

English readers are familiar with Saint Nikolai's PROLOGUE FROM OCHRID, THE LIFE OF ST SAVA, A TREASURY OF SERBIAN SPIRITUALITY, and other writings which are of great benefit for the whole Church. He thought of his writings as silent sermons addressed to people who would never hear him preach. In his life and writings, the grace of the Holy Spirit shone forth for all to see, but in his humility he considered himself the least of men.

Though he was a native of Serbia, Saint Nikolai has a universal significance for Orthodox Christians in all countries. He was like a candle set upon a candlestick giving light to all (MT 5:15). A spiritual guide and teacher with a magnetic personality, he attracted many people to himself. He also loved them, seeing the image of God in each person he met. He had a special love for children, who hastened to receive his blessing whenever they saw him in the street.

He was a man of compunctionate prayer, and possessed the gift of tears which purify the soul (Saint John Climacus, LADDER, Step 7). He was a true pastor to his flock protecting them from spiritual wolves, and guiding them on the path to salvation. He has left behind many soul-profiting writings which proclaim the truth of Christ to modern man. In them he exhorts people to love God, and to live a life of virtue and holiness. May we also be found worthy of the Kingdom of Heaven through the prayers of Saint Nikolai, and by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory forever. Amen. (*from oca.org*)

From the Catechetical Lectures of St. Cyril

1.1 Disciples of the New Testament and partakers of the mysteries of Christ, as yet by calling only, but ere long by grace also, make of yourself a new heart and a new spirit, that there may be gladness among the inhabitants of heaven: for if over one sinner that repents there is joy, according to the Gospel, how much more shall the salvation of so many souls move the inhabitants of heaven to gladness? As you have entered upon a good and most glorious path, run with reverence the race of godliness. For the Only-begotten Son of God is present here most ready to redeem you, saying, Come to Me all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. You who are clothed with the rough garment of your offenses, who are held with the cords of your own sins, hear the voice of the Prophet saying, Wash, make yourselves clean, put away your iniquities from before My eyes: that the choir of Angels may chant over you, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. You who have just lighted the torches of faith, guard them

carefully in your hands unquenched; that He, who erewhile on this all-holy Golgotha opened Paradise to the robber on account of his faith, may grant to you to sing the bridal song.

2.5 He who shed His precious blood for us, shall Himself deliver us from sin. Let us not despair of ourselves, brethren; let us not abandon ourselves to a hopeless condition. For it is a fearful thing not to believe in a hope of repentance. For he who looks not for salvation spares not to add evil to evil: but to him who hopes for cure, it is henceforth easy to be careful over himself. The robber who has no hope of pardon grows desperate; but, if he hopes for forgiveness, often comes to repentance. Does not the serpent cast off its skin? Shall we not likewise cast off our sin? Thorny ground also, if cultivated well, is turned into fruitful; and is salvation to us irrecoverable? Not at all; rather, our nature admits of salvation, but the will also is required.

4.2 The method of godliness consists of these two things, pious doctrines, and virtuous practice: and neither are the doctrines acceptable to God apart from good works, nor does God accept the works which are not perfected with pious doctrines. For what profit is it, to know well the doctrines concerning God, and yet to be a vile fornicator? And again, what profit is it, to be nobly temperate, and an impious blasphemer?

7.16 The first virtue of godliness in Christians is to honor their parents, to requite the troubles of those who conceived them, and with all their might to confer on them what tends to their comfort (for if we should repay them ever so much, yet we shall never be able to return their gift of life), that they also may enjoy the comfort provided by us, and may confirm us in those blessings which Jacob the supplanter shrewdly seized; and that our Father in heaven may accept our good purpose, and judge us worthy to shine amid righteous as the sun in the kingdom of our Father, to whom be the glory, with the Only-begotten our Savior Jesus Christ, and with the Holy and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, to all eternity. Amen.

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In Your Prayers – Please Remember... His All-Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch BARTHOLOMEW, His Grace Bishop GREGORY, Fr. Joseph & Family, Greek Orthodox Archbishop Paul Yazigi of Aleppo, Syriac Orthodox Archbishop Yohanna Ibrahim of Aleppo, His Grace Bishop Neofitos of Nyeri and Mt. Kenya, Fr. John & Pani Betty Jean Baranik, Fr. Vincent Saverino, Presbytera Katie Baker and family, Santiago Alzugaray, Alicia Barosio and family, Jeffrey Carey, Tatyana and Slava Chumak & family, Xenia Chilkowich, Jon Church, Ramius Connour, Curtis Cooper, Luke Cooper, Tina Crull, Mary Diane David, Ron Dominiecki, Linda A. Georgiev, Heather Himler, John Homick, Cameron Houk, Helen Janowiak, John M. Janowiak, Tucker Karl and family, Robert & Pam Karpin, Andrew Kinn, Kopan family, Brian, Helen, and Luke Mahony, Valentina Makowelski, Susan Matula, Anna Meinhold, Dn. Henry Middleton, David & Kathryn Newman, Bobby Nutter & Family, Henry & Lisa Osborne, Westin Perry & Parents, John Reece, Mary Reed, Chris & Kaitlin Rixey, Jerry Von Ronne, Anne Rosario, James, Theodore and Christina Ristas, Samson Family, Sharon Sheptak, Dawn & Faith Ulmschneider, Lydia Vita, Christine, Marshall, Nathaniel, Subdcn. Nectarios and Ia, the Syrian Christians displaced by war, Mother Virginia Marie and the Carmelite Nuns of Port Tobacco, and all those in need of our prayers. (Please advise Fr. Joseph of changes.)