

ST BASIL THE GREAT ORTHODOX CHURCH

205 Highland Avenue
Des Peres, MO 63122

A parish of the
Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America
Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

CLERGY

Archpriest Sergii Alekseev, Parish Rector
Archpriest Martin Swanson, Dean
Protopriest Radomir Chkautovich
Priest Thomas Nichols
Deacon Ephraim Galloway

APRIL 2022



SPECIAL COLLECTION REMINDER

A general reminder that there will be a special collection basket available during the veneration of the Cross following the Divine Liturgy to gather monetary donations on Palm Sunday. All funds gathered will be sent to support the monastic communities residing in the Holy Land.

There are also continuing collections after Divine Liturgies during Great Lent to aid those suffering in the Ukraine. All funds are sent directly to Metropolitan Onuphry to be distributed and used where they are needed.

What you give in these collections should not replace your support of our own parish, but it is to be something extra which you give for these worthy causes.

Let us all remember our Lenten calling to fast, pray, and to give alms.

- **Memorial Saturday**
 - Fri. April 1 Matins 6 P.M.
 - Sat. April 2 Panihida 9 A.M.
- **Fourth Sunday of Lent — Ven. John of the Ladder**
 - Sat. April 2 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. April 3 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Mon. April 4 Matins with the Great Canon 6 P.M.**
- **Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos**
 - Wed. April 6 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Thurs. April 7 Vespertal Liturgy 8 A.M.
- **Saturday of the Akathist**
 - Fri. April 8 Matins with Akathist reading 6 P.M.
 - Sat. April 9 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Fifth Sunday of Lent — Ven. Mary of Egypt**
 - Sat. April 9 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. April 10 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Divine Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts**
 - Wed. April 13 8 A.M.
- **Lazarus Saturday**
 - Fri. April 15 Matins 6 P.M.
 - Sat. April 16 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M.
- **Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem**
 - Sat. April 16 Vigil 5 P.M.
 - Sun. April 17 Divine Liturgy 10 A.M.
- **Holy Wednesday, April 20 Holy Unction 6 P.M.**
- **Holy Thursday, April 21 Vespertal Liturgy 8 A.M.**
 - Matins with Twelve Passion Gospels 6 P.M.
- **Holy Friday, April 22**
 - Royal Hours 9 A.M.
 - Vespers 4 P.M.
 - Matins 6 P.M.
- **Holy Saturday, April 23**
 - Vespertal Liturgy 9 A.M.
 - Midnight Office 11:30 P.M.
 - Procession and Matins followed by the Divine Liturgy at Midnight
- **Sun. April 24 Pascha of the Lord Vespers 2 P.M.**
- **Bright Monday**
 - April 25 Divine Liturgy 9 A.M. at House Springs
- **Bright Friday – Holy Virgin Martyr Irene of Aquileia**
 - Thurs. April 28 Vigil 6 P.M.
 - Fri. April 29 Divine Liturgy 8 A.M.

PARISH DIRECTORY COMING SOON

St. Basil's will be publishing a new parish-wide directory which will contain contact information for all of the families and individuals associated with the church. In order to assemble the directory, each household wishing to be included should submit the following information:

- Household member given names
- Household member saints names (if applicable)
- Feast day that they would like to celebrate as their names day (if there are multiple days in the calendar for the saint)
- Email addresses
- Phone numbers
- Physical and/or mailing address (if they differ)

Entries can be emailed to stbasilstnewsletter@gmail.com or submitted on paper (pre-printed forms will be provided) which can be dropped into the donation box at the entry of the church. If handwriting the information, please make sure the entries are legible for accuracy.

FOCUS DINNER PLANS

The Sisterhood of St. Macrina and the Brotherhood of St. Alexander Nevsky are coming together to help serve dinner at FOCUS on Sunday April 10th.

Cooking and serving plans are being taken care of by the sisterhood and brotherhood. However, all are welcome to participate in the event and anyone interested in helping should contact Fr. Sergii in order to be included in the plans.

FOCUS stands for the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve and the St. Louis chapter is active in the way of providing free meals on Sundays which are open to all. Please consider helping this worthy cause to help those who need it.

ON HUMILITY DOROTHEOS OF GAZA DISCOURSES AND SAYINGS

Consider well, brothers, how great is the power of humility. Consider how great is the spiritual energy behind saying, "Pardon me". Why is the devil called not only "enemy", but also "adversary"? He is called "enemy" because he is a hater of men, one who hates what is good, a traitor; an "adversary", because he always puts obstacles in the way of good. If someone wants to pray he puts obstacles in the way through evil suspicions, shameful thoughts, and spiritual avarice or procrastination. If a man wants to keep vigil he obstructs it with hesitations or laziness. In every single thing he is against us when we desire to do good. This is why he is called the enemy and the adversary and why, by lowliness, all his attacks and devices are brought to nothing. Lowliness is really a great thing, for every kind of good is advanced by lowliness, and by working at it we cut short our journey, as it says, "See my humility and my toil, and take



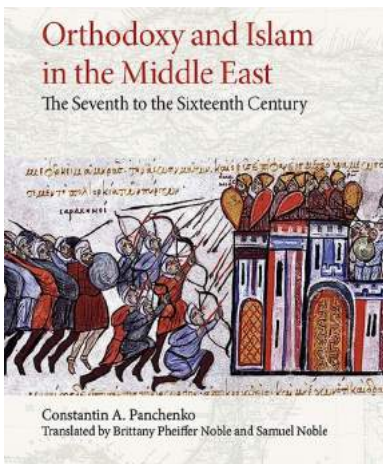
away all my sins," and "I was humiliated, and the Lord saved me"! For humility alone can bring us into the spiritual life (as Abbot John used to say) even if slowly. Therefore, let us also be humble for a short time and we shall be saved. Even if we cannot endure much labor because we are weak, let us be set on humbling ourselves. I firmly believe that, in the mercy of God, the little thing done with humility will enable us to be found there, in the same place as the saints who have labored much and been true servants of God. Yes! We are very weak, and cannot labor very much, but can we not at least be humble? Happy indeed, brothers, is the one who has true humility. A great thing is humility; rightly was it pointed out by that holy man who had true humility and who said, "Humility does not grow angry, and does not anger anyone". Why does he say that humility does not get angry, or provoke to anger? Humility is powerful [enough] to bring down the grace of God into the soul and protects it from these two grievous passions.

For this reason he says that humility does not get angry or provoke to anger; but why am I saying that it protects from these two passions? In point of fact humility protects the soul from all the passions and also from every temptation. When Blessed Anthony saw all the snares of the devil spread out everywhere, he sighed, and asked God how anyone could ever avoid them. God answered him, "Humility. It is humility that enables you to escape them all!" And what is more astonishing, he added, "They cannot even touch you".

NEW CATECHUMENS AT ST BASIL'S



St. Basil's is happy to have received two new catechumens in March. James Loughran (left) was made a catechumen before Divine Liturgy on Sunday, March 13th and Jacob Light (right) on Sunday, March 20th. Please continue to pray for both of them as they continue their spiritual journey to the Orthodox Church.



ST. BASIL'S BOOK REVIEW BY PARISHIONER PHILIP PIERANGELO

Orthodoxy and Islam in the Middle East: The Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries
by Constantin Panchenko

Genre: History/non-fiction

Year published: 2020

Panchenko, a well-known Arabic and Islamic scholar from Russia, has written a condensed version of the events in the Middle East, beginning with the formations of Islam in the 600s and the relations it has with Christianity. This book— being a really short book at 155 pages for the full depth, minus the notes, glossary, epilogue and bibliography—goes into a basic understanding of

the times. He goes over the main events of Christianity within the Levant areas and some parts of the Middle-East in relationship with the Islamic conquerors, and how early Muslims treated their Christian subjects, their rulership and allowances of Christians within the Islamic Courts. He even mentions the influence of St. John of Damascus and his father had in the Islamic Courts. It was in these Courts where St. John of Damascus wrote about the heresy of Islam. During the rise of Iconoclasm within the Byzantine Empire, he also wrote about the defense of icons. One major event he covers, with some length, is the Crusades and the Crusader States within the area and how they imposed Roman Catholicism, feudalism and other medieval Western ways of life onto the Orthodox Christian believers in that region. Lastly, within the book he also covers monasticism especially on Mount Sinai and elsewhere, and how they saved Greek texts, translated them into Arabic and distributed them among the faithful in hopes of retaining Greek knowledge among the Levantines.

Most of the book is well written and at times follows a concise historical line, including multiple figures, events and time frames. However, since it is a condensed historical book, at 155 pages for the full text, it's hard to span all the major events from 600 AD to 1600 AD. There are times within the book where Panchenko jumps around from event to event within the same chapter, spanning several events within history, thus creating a mild confusion of events to the reader (I know I for sure got confused multiple times during my reading!). In addition to the confusing historical jumpiness, he also tends to throw terms out into the text without a definition for future memory, but that's a minor problem.

Do I recommend this book? Well, yes, definitely. The book itself is newly published one, so copies shouldn't be hard to find.



MARY MAGDALENE AND THE RED EGG

Mary Magdalene was one of the myrrh-bearing women and "equal to the apostles". She was born in the town of Magdala along the shore of Lake Gennesaret and was from the tribe of Issachar. She was tormented by seven evil spirits from which the Lord freed her and made her whole. She was a faithful follower and servant of the Lord during His earthly life. Mary Magdalene stood beneath the Cross on Golgotha and grieved bitterly and mourned with the All-Holy Birth-giver of God. After the death of the Lord she visited His sepulchre three times. When the Lord resurrected, she saw Him on two occasions: once alone and again with the other myrrh-bearing women. She traveled to Rome and appeared before Emperor Tiberias

Caesar and, presenting him with a red colored egg, greeted him with the words: "Christ is Risen!" At the same time, she accused Pilate before Caesar for his unjust condemnation of the Savior. Caesar accepted her accusation and transferred Pilate from Jerusalem to Gaul where, this unjust judge, in disfavor with the emperor, died of a dread disease. After that, Mary Magdalene returned from Rome to Ephesus to St. John the Theologian whom she assisted in the work of preaching the Gospel. With great love toward the resurrected Lord, and with great zeal, she proclaimed the Holy Gospel to the world as a true apostle of Christ. She died peacefully in Ephesus and, according to tradition, was buried in the same cave in which seven youths were miraculously put to sleep for hundreds of years and, after that, were brought to life and then died (August 4). The relics of St. Mary Magdalene were later transferred to Constantinople. There is a Russian Orthodox convent dedicated to St. Mary Magdalene near the Garden of Gethsemane.

More on the Egg:

According to tradition, everyone visiting the emperor was supposed to bring him a gift. Rich and influential people, of course, brought expensive gifts whereas the poor offered whatever they could afford. Mary Magdalene took an egg to the Emperor's palace. After greeting the emperor with "Christ is Risen", Tiberius Caesar naturally could not believe what he heard and responded to her: "How could anyone ever rise from the dead? It is as impossible as that white egg to turn red." While Tiberius was speaking these words, the egg in the hand of Mary Magdalene began changing color until it finally became bright red.

Mary Magdalene then went on to explain to Tiberius Caesar that the now-red egg symbolized the resurrection from a sealed chamber just like the egg is sealed and intact.

MAN OF GOD REVIEW

BY PARISHIONER PHILIP PIERANGELO

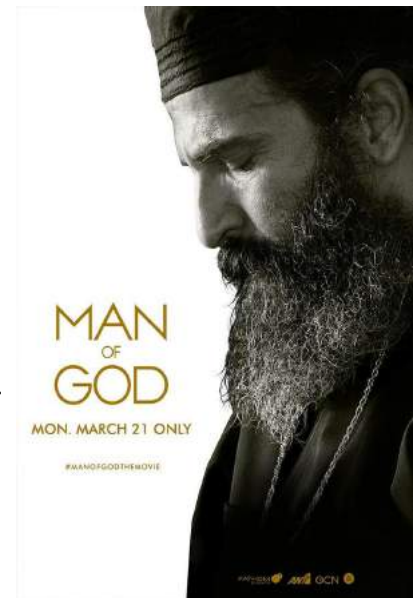
Man of God details the life of Elder Saint Nektarios of Aegina from his time in Alexandria all the way to Aegina. In the film, St. Nektarios shows what his real-life counterpart does: gives money to the poor, gives blessings to the laity, and delivers homilies... all while being bishop of Pantapolis. In the film, we learn of his supposed elevation to Patriarch, but a twist happens, and while I won't go into detail, that twist ended up saving his spiritual life and forcing him into poverty and exile away from Egypt and back to Greece. We learn of his friend Minas in Egypt, who represents Doubt within the Faithful that we all experience.

In Greece, we see St. Nektarios go through various jobs, trials and tribulations: from being a humble teacher/preacher in a remote fishing village in Greece to being a high-school principal for a short period. Here we meet Kostas (played by Alexander Petrov), one of St. Nektarios's host at the school. In the film, he constantly begs and complains to St. Nektarios that it should have been the saint to be elevated to Patriarch; and as we learn, St. Nektarios tells him that it wasn't meant to be the Will of God. Kostas reminds us of our Ambitious Pride- the Pride that wants higher ambition, for the sake of higher ambition. It is here that he learns that his writings become popular, so he publishes them to spread the Good News all around.

Lastly, we learn of six women who want to become nuns, in the film—just as in real life— Nektarios takes the 6 women under his wing and guides them to Aegina, a deserted Greek Island, and it was here that he retired from the worldly life and into asceticism and monasticism. He established Holy Trinity Monastery on the island in 1908 and remained there for the rest of his earthly life. At the monastery, we see his miracles, him working around the monastery, and him hearing confessions. We also learn of a little girl, of unknown origin, who remains very innocent within the monastery. She ends up praying very innocently while the monastery gets ransacked by government officials (I won't spoil most of the movie, because it is that good of a film). She represents Innocent Faith.

In the film, we learn of his miracles, especially his first posthumous one: a paralyzed man (in the film, played by Mickey Rourke) being healed by one of his shirts. This is an important feature in the film and both in his life: it shows the Wondrous Miracles of this new Saint.

If you ever get the chance to see the film, go see it!



Ask Your Priest

Q: What do Orthodox Christians believe happens after death? What is the purpose or meaning of koliva?

A: Orthodox Christians believe that after death each person experiences what is called the Particular Judgement. At this Judgement, which occurs on the fortieth day after a person's repose, Christ passes judgement on the deceased, and they thereafter, according to His judgement, inherit a state of blessedness or of torment. In neither of these states does a person experience complete blessedness or torment. Perfect blessedness or torment is reserved for the age following the General Resurrection, after which each person stands before Christ to experience the Dread or Final Judgement.

The Church teaches that those undergoing torment before the Dread Judgement can have their sufferings alleviated, or even altogether removed, through the prayers of the saints and the faithful, through good works done on their behalf, and through commemorations made at the Divine Liturgy. This is why it is so important to remember the dead. The faithful can quite literally, through the mercy and Grace of God called down in the above ways, alter a person's eternal state.

Koliva is most simply cooked wheat mixed with honey. In the 4th century, the Great Martyr Theodore Tyro gave this recipe to Archbishop Eudoxius of Constantinople in a dream after Julian the Apostate, a pagan emperor, had all of the Lenten food in the market places sprinkled with the blood of animals offered to idols during the first week of Great Lent. In commemoration of this event, koliva is made for Theodore Saturday (the first Saturday of Great Lent), and can be brought for services in which the dead are commemorated, such as Panihidas.

-Priest Thomas Nichols

MARCH ACTIVITY ANSWER

O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of
idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle
talking give me not.

(Prostration)

But rather a spirit of chastity,
humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow
upon me Thy servant.

(Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my
failings and not condemn my brother; for
blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

(Prostration)

O God, cleanse me a sinner.

(12 times, each time with a bow from the waist)

Parish Prayer List

Archimandrite Seraphim — Health

Jackie (Xenia) Peck — Health

Photini Mills — Health

Ian Johnstone — Health



Add to your prayer list

Keep our parishioners, and those who ask us to pray for them in your prayers this month. Contact Fr. Sergii to have yourself or your loved ones added to the parish prayer list. Let one of the Fathers know if you, a member of your family, or a friend is ill or hospitalized so that appropriate prayers and visits can be arranged. Please note: Hospitals do not notify clergy of patients, even if you list yourself as a parish member.