



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

November-December 2017

“Let Us, the Faithful, Celebrate a Spiritual Feast”

By Elder Paisios the Athonite (1994)

Our Lord Jesus Christ, with His great love and joy which fill the souls of the faithful during His holy feast days, exalts us spiritually and truly resurrects us. All we need to do is participate in these feasts and celebrate them with a spiritual appetite; for once we taste the heavenly wine to which the Saints will treat us, we will become drunk in spirit.

To live through Christ's feasts in a spiritual way, we must keep our minds focused on the holy days themselves and not on the work that we have to do to prepare for them. We should think about the events of each holy day (Christmas, Theophany, Pascha and so on) and say the Jesus Prayer glorifying God in our heart. This way we will celebrate with reverence every feast day of the Church. For most people, who live in the world, Christmas is the time to eat pork, Pascha to eat lamb and the Carnival at the beginning of Lent, the time to throw confetti. But for the true monks, every week is Holy Week. Every Wednesday, Thursday and Friday they experience Holy and Great Wednesday, Holy and Great Thursday, and Holy and Great Friday, that is, the days of the Passion of Christ, and every Sunday is for them Pascha, the Day of the Resurrection. Why must we wait until Holy Week to remember the Passion of Christ? Why should we be like people who live in the world? Can't we realize what Christ is risen means, without eating lamb? You see, Christ said, Therefore be ye also ready, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of Man cometh. [2] He did not say, “Get ready right now!” From the moment Christ said, “Be ready!” we must all, but especially monks and nuns, be constantly vigilant and ready.

We must study and live through these divine events all the time. When someone studies the events of each feast day, he will be naturally moved to pray with particular reverence. Then, during liturgical services, our mind will be absorbed by the events we are celebrating and we will follow with great reverence the chanting of hymns. When our mind thinks divine thoughts, we get to live through these holy events, and in this manner we are transformed. We think of a Saint

for whom we have a special devotion, or of the Saint whose feast day we are celebrating, and our mind rises higher toward Heaven. And when we keep the Saints in mind, they keep us in mind too, and they come to our assistance. This is how we can start a friendship with them one that will last forever. And so, even though we may live alone, we will actually share our lives with everybody: with the Saints, the Angels, the whole world. Imagine, being alone, and feeling their company! This is the living presence of the Saints who are God's children and will reach out to help us, their poor brothers and sisters.

Our Saints have shed blood, sweat and tears for the love of Christ. We should always celebrate them with reverence, and they will be there to help us. Every time we hear their Synaxarion “On this same day, we commemorate Saint ...,” we must rise to our feet, like soldiers standing at attention when the names of their fallen comrades who died heroically are being read. “On this day of the month soldier so and so ... fell in action heroically defending the country in such and such a front.”

If we want to really feel the significance of a feast day, we must abstain from all work. On Holy and Great Friday, for instance, the only thing we should be doing is praying. For people who live in the world, Holy Week is full of chores and obligations. On Holy and Great Friday, they will exchange good wishes “Happy Easter! May you live a long life! May your son find a good bride!” This is so wrong! On Holy and Great Friday, I will lock myself in my Kalyvi. Silence will be of great help to the soul during feast days. It's very much like the time that follows the reception of the Great Schema, when a monk or nun will spend a whole week in silence to allow divine Grace to fill the soul and to appreciate what has actually taken place. In silence, we get the opportunity to rest a little, to study and pray. When a good thought crosses our mind, when we examine ourselves, or say the Jesus Prayer, we will really come to feel something of the divine event celebrated on that day.

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. HILARION of Eastern America & New York. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly under the direction of the Rev. Michael Crowley. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15th of the month prior to publication to Father Michael at frmichael@stxenia.org. Thank you.

Rector:

V. Rev. Michael Crowley
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Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment.

Parish Council

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Roberto Gonzalez	(978) 692-1229
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Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday, please contact someone directly to switch. If you are not on this list and would like to help, please add your name on the hard copy posted in the church hall and you will be added for the next round. If you have any questions, contact Judy Engalichev -- dujy-kot@comcast.net.

Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare, anything is appreciated. **Note: If you are preparing anything containing nuts or other allergens, please put a small label to that effect in front of your dish. Nut allergies are especially fatal to small children.**

A note about Trapeza etiquette: Standing, even for short periods of time, is often extremely difficult for older people and expectant mothers. It would be an act of Christian charity to allow them to collect their meal first and to be seated. It should go without saying that this courtesy should also be extended to visiting clergy.

November

5	Olena Fedina, Irina Dokukina, Lena Rodzianko
12	Alexandra Gonzalez, Anna Kekis, Marina Pavlova
19	Engalichev, Lynch, Schidlovsky
26	Chaplin Family, Meghan Nettleton

December

*3	Matushka Helena, Marianne Dimatteo, Tanya Nikshych
*10	Pekar Family, Ailena Kazlouski, Anna Radovic
*17	Raisa, Natalie Avram and Anna Mukhanov
*24	Pot Luck
*31	Pot Luck



~ ~ COAT DRIVE ~ ~

The Sisterhood is collecting new and very gently used coats for children in Methuen.

Deadline is **Sunday, November 19th**

Please bring your donations to the Parish Hall. Any questions - nataliepishen

Sisterhood News

Thank you:

~ To all who helped with the Feast Day preparations, production and clean up. It was a beautiful day and a wonderful celebration for our Parish!

~ ~ NATIVITY FOOD DRIVE ~ ~

Please consider donating non-perishable food items for local families in need.

Deadline is **Sunday, December 17th**

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Athanasia Tamvlakis, Peter Danas, Dimitry Emelianoff, and Masha Harris.

Also, please be sure to inform the Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Congratulations

~ to the Kirichok Family on the marriage of their daughter, Tatiana, to Maxim Schuller in October.

St. John of Damascus Church School News

Preparations for the 2018 Yolka will begin the Sunday after Thanksgiving, November 26th. Help is needed with costumes. Please contact Alexandra Gonzalez if you can help. alex8665@yahoo.com

Regular Sunday School classes began October 1st. Please contact Matushka Nancy for more information or go to: <https://www.stxenia.org/churchschool.html>

Choir News

If you have a private service - wedding, baptism, funeral, etc. - and would like to have choir singers, please contact Laryssa directly at stxeniachoir@gmail.com.

If you are interested in singing in the choir, please see Laryssa Doohovskoy.

Parish News

~ The Annual Parish Meeting will take place Sunday November 5th after Trapeza.

~ On October 28-29, Fr. Michael, Matushka and several of our Parish high school students, together with some family members, traveled to Novo Diveevo for Vigil and Synod for Liturgy. During their visit, they toured the Convent at Novo Diveevo, learned of the history there and at Synod of the Prince Vladimir Youth Association. <http://youthpv.org/>



St Herman Youth Conference

~ Registration Opens ~

The St. Herman Conference has been hosting youth during the feast of St. Herman of Alaska for over 35 years. Each year, a different parish sponsors the conference wherein a large number of youth gather for lectures, workshops and beautiful services for a few days of retreat.

This year, the women's monastery of Novo Diveevo in Nanuet, NY has agreed to host the St. Herman Conference. The parish of the Protection of the Mother of God in Nyack, NY has graciously offered their facilities for events and meals. The theme of the conference will be the 100-year commemoration of the beginnings of the terrible persecutions of the Orthodox Church in the former Soviet Union. This commemoration brings to mind the tragedy of the last century but also allows for a renewed strength and preparedness for young people facing monstrous events in our troubled world.

Registration information may be found at:
<http://sthermanconference.com/registration.html>

The Holy Martyr Uaros and Seven Teachers of Christians, (*Commemorated Nov 1/Oct 19*) lived in Egypt during the period of several persecutions against Christians (late III to early IV Century). Uaros was a military commander and secretly a Christian. He gave assistance to many of the persecuted and imprisoned Christians, visiting the prison by night he brought food to the prisoners, he dressed up wounds, and gave encouragement.

One time he conversed the whole night through with seven Christian teachers condemned to death, who before had been beaten and held in starvation. In the morning, when they led the condemned to execution, Uaros marched together with them. The judge, seeing the particularly strong faith of Uaros, gave orders to subject him to fierce beatings, during the time of which the holy martyr died. The Christian teachers were then beheaded. This occurred in the year 307.

Blessed Cleopatra (*Commemorated Nov 1/Oct 19*) came from the village of Edra near Mount Tabor in Palestine. She was a contemporary of the holy Martyr Uaros and beheld his voluntary suffering. After the execution, blessed Cleopatra transferred the body of the holy martyr to her own country and buried him with reverence. Cleopatra had but a single and beloved son, John, who had attained the honourable rank of officer. To the great sorrow of his mother, John suddenly died. Cleopatra with tears of grief turned to the

relics of the holy Martyr Uaros, beseeching him for the resuscitation of her son.

When Uaros and her son appeared to Cleopatra in a dream, radiant in bright attire with crowns upon their heads, -- she perceived, that the Lord had received her son into the heavenly host, and was comforted. After this blessed Cleopatra started to live by a church, built by her over the relics of the holy Martyr Uaros and her son John, and she strove to acquire the grace of God by good deeds. She distributed her property to the poor and spent her time in prayer and fasting. After seven years of righteous life the blessed saint reposed (c. 327).

Sainted Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonika, (*Commemorated Nov 27/Nov 14*) was born in the year 1296 in Asia Minor. During the time of a Turkish incursion the family fled to Constantinople and found refuge at the court of Andronikos II Paleologos (1282-1328). The father of Saint Gregory became a prominent dignitary under the emperor, but he soon died, and Andronikos himself took part in the raising and education of the orphaned boy. Endowed with fine abilities and great diligence, Gregory without difficulty mastered all the subjects which then comprised the full course of medieval higher education. The emperor hoped that the youth would devote himself to government work. But Gregory, just barely age 20, withdrew to Holy Mount Athos in the year 1316 (per other sources, 1318) and became a novice in the Batopedeia monastery under the guidance of the monastic-elder, the Monk Nikodemos of Batopedeia (Comm. 11 July), and there he accepted tonsure and began on the path of asceticism. A year later, the holy Evangelist John the Theologian appeared to him in a vision and promised him his spiritual protection. Gregory's mother and sisters likewise became monastics.

After the demise of the monastic-elder Nikodemos, the Monk Gregory spent 8 years of prayerful effort under the guidance of the monastic-elder Niphophoros, and after the death of this latter elder Gregory transferred to the Laura-monastery of the Monk Athanasias. Here he served in the refectory, and then became a church singer. But after three years, striving for a greater degree of spiritual perfection, he re-settled in the small hermit-life monastery of Glossia. The head of this monastery began to teach the youth the manner of concentrated spiritual prayer -- the mental activity, which by degrees gradually was appropriated and cultivated by monastics, beginning with the great wilderness ascetics of the IV Century -- Euagrios (Lat. Evagrius), Pontikos and the Monk Makarios of Egypt (Comm. 19 January). Later on, in the XI Century in

the works of Simeon the New Theologian (Comm. 12 March), those praying in outward manner received detailed elucidation on adapting the mental doing, and it was implemented by the Athos ascetics. An experienced useage of mental activity, requiring solitude and quiet, received the name “Hesychiasm” (from the Greek “hesukhia” meaning calm, silence), and those practising it were called “hesychiasts”. During the time of his stay at Glossia the future hierarch Gregory became fully embued with the spirit of hesychiasm and adapted it as fundamental to his life. In the year 1326, because of the threat of Turkish invasions, he together with the brethren retreated back to Soluneia (Thessalonika), where he was then ordained to the dignity of priest.

Saint Gregory combined his priestly duties with the life of an hermit: five days of the week he spent in silence and prayer, and only on Saturday and Sunday did the pastor emerge to his people -- he celebrated Divine-services and preached sermons. For those present in church, his teaching often evoked both tenderness and tears. Sometimes he visited theological gatherings of the city's educated youth, headed by the future patriarch, Isidor. Having returned from being a certain while at Constantinople, he found near Soluneia the locale of Bereia, a place suitable for solitary life. Soon he gathered here a small community of hermit-monks and guided it over the course of 5 years. In 1331 the saint withdrew to Athos and lived in solitude at the skete-monastery of Saint Savva, near the Laura-monastery of the Monk Athanasias. In 1333 he was appointed hegumen of the Esthygmena monastery in the northern part of the Holy Mountain. In 1336 the saint returned to the skete-monastery of Saint Savva, where he concerned himself with theological works, continuing on with it until the end of his life.

But amidst all this, in the 1330's culminated events in the life of the Eastern Church which put Saint Gregory amongst the most significant universal apologists of Orthodoxy, and brought him reknown as the teacher of hesychiasm.

In about the year 1330 the learned monk Varlaam had arrived in Constantinople from Calabria (in Italy). He was the author of tractates on logic and astronomy, a skilled and sharp-witted orator, and he received an university-chair in the capital city and began to expound on the works of Saint Dionysios the Areopagite (Comm. 3 October), whose “apophatic” (“negative”, “via negativa”, as contrast to “kataphatic” or “postive”) theology was acclaimed in equal measure in both the Eastern and the Western Churches. Soon Varlaam journeyed to Athos, where he became acquainted with the modality of spiritual life of the hesychiasts,

and on the basis of the dogma about the incomprehensibility of the essence of God, he declared the mental doing an heretical error. Journeying from Athos to Soluneia (Thessalonika), and from there to Constantinople and later again to Soluneia, Varlaam entered into disputes with the monks and attempted to demonstrate the created creatureliness of the light of Tabor (i.e. at the Transfiguration); in this he reduced to the point of a joke the sayings of the monks about the modes of prayer and about the spiritual light.

Saint Gregory, at the request of the Athonite monks, countered at first with spoken admonitions. But seeing the futility of such efforts, he put in writing his theological argument. Thus appeared the “Triades in Defense of the Holy Hesychiasts” (1338). Towards the year 1340 the Athonite ascetics with the assist of the saint compiled a general reply to the attacks of Varlaam -- the so-called “Svyatogorsk tomos”. At the Constantinople Council of 1341 in the church of Saint Sophia there occurred a debate of Saint Gregory Palamas with Varlaam, centering upon the nature of the light on Mount Tabor. On 27 May 1341 the Council accepted the position of Saint Gregory Palamas -- that God, inapproachable in His Essence, reveals Himself in energies, which are directed towards the world and are able to be perceived, like the Tabor light, but which are neither material nor created. The teachings of Varlaam were condemned as heresy, and he himself, anathemised, withdrew to Calabria.

But the dispute between the Palamites and the Varlaamites was far from finished. To these latter belonged a student of Varlaam, the Bulgarian monk Akyndinos, and also the patriarch John XIV Kalekos (1341-1347); to them inclined also the emperor Andronikos III Paleologos (1328-1341). Akyndinos came out with a series of tracts, in which he declared Saint Gregory and the Athonite monks guilty of church disorders. The saint in turn wrote a detailed refutation of Akyndinos' conjectures. The patriarch thereupon excommunicated the saint from the Church (1344) and had him locked up in prison, which lasted for three years. In 1347, when John XIV was succeeded on the patriarchal throne by Isidor (1347-1349), Saint Gregory Palamas was set free and elevated to the dignity of archbishop of Soluneia (Thessalonika). In 1351 the Blakhernae Council solemnly witnessed to the Orthodoxy of his teachings. But the people of Soluneia did not immediately accept Saint Gregory, and he was compelled to live in various places. In one of his travels to Constantinople the Byzantine galley-ship fell into the hands of the Turks. They offered to sell Saint Gregory in various cities as a captive during the course

of a year, but he then also incessantly continued to preach the Christian faith.

Only but three years before his death did he return to Solunea. On the eve of his repose, Saint John Chrysostom appeared to him in a vision. With the words "To Heaven! To Heaven!", -- Saint Gregory Palamas reposed peacefully to God on 14 November 1359. In 1368 he was canonised at a Constantinople Council under Patriarch Philotheos (1354-1355, 1362-1376), who compiled the Life and Services to the saint.

Blessed John and his parents: Blessed Stefan and Blessed Angelina (XV Century): (*Commemorated Dec 23/Dec 10*) The life of the Serbian ruler Stefan Brankovich and his family was filled with instability and misfortune. After Serbia was seized in 1457 by the Turks, the then Serbian ruler's middle son, Stefan, distinguished by meek disposition and fine knowledge of

Holy Scripture, set out to the capital of Turkey after his sister, who had been given to sultan Murat in marriage. But learning however, that the Turks with fanatic cruelty had burned the Mileshevska monastery, Blessed Stefan rose up in defense of Serbia from oppression. When he married Angelina, the daughter of the prince of Albania, the Turks threatened Blessed Stefan and his family with punishment. With his wife and three children he was forced to hide first in Albania, and then in Italy, where later he died.

Blessed Angelina transferred the undecayed remains of her spouse to Kupinovo. At the end of the XV Century a son of Righteous Stefan and Angelina, Blessed John, became ruler of Serbia. The undecayed relics of Righteous John and his parents were afterwards glorified by many miracles.



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
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NOVEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Oct 29 (Oct 16) 21st Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Oct 30 (Oct 17)	Oct 31 (Oct 18) 2:00-7:00 St. John of Kronstadt Family Fall Festival	1 (Oct 19) Fast: wine & oil	2 (Oct 20)	3 (Oct 21) Fast	4 (Oct 22) Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos 5:30 All-Night Vigil
5 (Oct 23) 22nd Sunday after Pentecost, Tone 5 St. James, Brother of the Lord 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Noon Parish Annual Meeting	6 (Oct 24)	7 (Oct 25)	8 (Oct 26) Fast: wine & oil	9 (Oct 27)	10 (Oct 28) Fast: wine & oil	11 (Oct 29) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
12 (Oct 30) 23rd Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	13 (Oct 31)	14 (Nov 1)	15 (Nov 2) Fast	16 (Nov 3)	17 (Nov 4) Fast	18 (Nov 5) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
19 (Nov 6) 24th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	20 (Nov 7)	21 (Nov 8) Synaxis of the Archangel Michael	22 (Nov 9) Fast: wine & oil	23 (Nov 10) American Thanksgiving	24 (Nov 11) Fast	25 (Nov 12) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
26 (Nov 13) 25th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	27 (Nov 14)	28 (Nov 15) Nativity Fast Begins Fast	29 (Nov 16) Fast: wine & oil	30 (Nov 17) Fast: wine & oil	Dec 1 (Nov 18) Fast	Dec 2 (Nov 19) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil



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DECEMBER 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Nov 26 (Nov 13) 25th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Nov 27 (Nov 14)	Nov 28 (Nov 15) Nativity Fast Begins Fast	Nov 29 (Nov 16) Fast: wine & oil	Nov 30 (Nov 17) Fast: wine & oil	1 (Nov 18) Fast	2 (Nov 19) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
3 (Nov 20) 26th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 Vespers & Litya of Feast Fast: fish, wine & oil	4 (Nov 21) ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:00 Matins & Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	5 (Nov 22) Fast: wine & oil	6 (Nov 23) Fast	7 (Nov 24) Fast: wine & oil	8 (Nov 25) Fast	9 (Nov 26) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
10 (Nov 27) 27th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	11 (Nov 28) Fast	12 (Nov 29) Fast: wine & oil	13 (Nov 30) Fast: wine & oil	14 (Dec 1) Fast: wine & oil	15 (Dec 2) Fast	16 (Dec 3) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
17 (Dec 4) 28th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	18 (Dec 5) Fast: wine & oil	19 (Dec 6) St. Nicholas Fast: fish, wine, & oil	20 (Dec 7) Fast: wine & oil	21 (Dec 8) Fast: wine & oil	22 (Dec 9) Fast	23 (Dec 10) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
24 (Dec 11) 29th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	25 (Dec 12) Western Christmas Fast	26 (Dec 13) Fast: wine & oil	27 (Dec 14) Fast	28 (Dec 15) Fast: wine & oil	29 (Dec 16) Fast	30 (Dec 17) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
31 (Dec 18) 30th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 5 Sunday before Nativity 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	Jan 1 (Dec 19) Fast	Jan 2 (Dec 20) Fast	Jan 3 (Dec 21) Fast	Jan 4 (Dec 22) Fast	Jan 5 (Dec 23) Fast	Jan 6 (Dec 24) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil