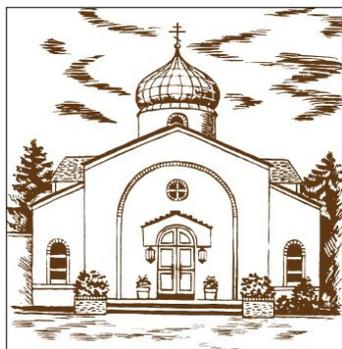


Holy Virgin Protection Russian
Orthodox Cathedral
<http://holyvirginprotection.org>

CHRIST IS RISEN! TRULY HE IS RISEN! PARISH BULLETIN



MAY 2020

Archpriest Andre Papkov
847-299-2585

Archpriest Tarasiy Maksimtsev
773-850-8131

Archpriest Valery Vovkovsky
847-297-4523

Priest Leontiy Nadzions
847-971-2469

1800 Lee Street
Des Plaines, Illinois 60018

Russian Orthodox Church Abroad

<http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws>

Diocese of Chicago and Mid-America

<http://www.chicagodioocese.org>

Clergy of the Protection of the Holy Virgin Cathedral

Archbishop Peter

Archpriest Andre Papkov

847-299-2585

Archpriest Tarasiy Maksimtsev

773-850-8131

Archpriest Valery Vovkovsky

847-297-4523

Priest Leontiy Nadzions

847-971-2469

Protodeacon Alexander Kichakov

Deacon Nicholai Lochmatow

Schedule of Services

Divine Liturgy

Sundays and major holy days - 9 a.m.

Weekdays - 8 a.m.

All Night Vigil

Saturdays and Sunday evenings - 6 p.m.

Weekdays - 6:30 p.m.

Akathist to the Protection of the Theotokos

Wednesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. unless All Night Vigil is scheduled

Parish School on Saturdays

For information contact Natalie Gill - 312-203-6677

or Nadejda Evminenko - 224-616-0111

Parish Bookstore

Open after Liturgy on Sunday and major Holy Days.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Christ is risen from the dead,
trampling down death by death,
and upon those in the tombs
bestowing life!

Though Thou did descend into the grave, O
Immortal One,
yet did Thou destroy the power of hell,
and did rise again as a conqueror,
O Christ our Lord, saying to the
myrrh-bearing women, rejoice!
And giving peace to Thine Apostles, and
offering Resurrection to the fallen.

TRULY HE IS RISEN!

The clergy of Holy Virgin Protection
Cathedral greet our dear parishioners
and worshippers with the Bright Feast of
Christ's Resurrection, and wish you
peaceful hearts and spiritual joy.

Paschal Message of Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia to the Archpastors, Pastors, Deacons, Monastics and All the Faithful Children of the Russian Orthodox Church

Your Graces the archpastors, venerable fathers, all-honourable monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

By the grace of the All-Generous God, we have been vouchsafed to come to the radiant Paschal night and once again rejoice in the glorious Resurrection of Christ. From the depths of my heart I greet all of you, my beloved, with this great holiday and “feast of feasts.”

Almost two thousand years separate us from the event we recall today. And yet, every year with unchanging spiritual awe the Church celebrates the Resurrection of the Lord, tirelessly bearing witness to the exceptional nature of what occurred in the burial chamber by the walls of ancient Jerusalem.

The whole earthly path of the Son of God – from His miraculous Incarnation to His Passion and terrible death on the cross – is the fulfillment of the Maker’s promise, once given to our forefathers. God promised to send into the world the One who “bears our infirmities and carries our diseases” (Is. 53:4) and who will “save his people from their sins” (Mt. 1:21). Many times the Lord affirmed this promise through His prophets. He remained true to this vow even when the chosen people rejected the covenant and violated the Creator’s will.

It is, then, in the Resurrection of Christ that God’s love is revealed in its fullness, for death has finally been vanquished – the last boundary separating the human person from the true Fount of life. And although death continues to exist in the physical sense and takes away our human bodies, it no longer has the power to destroy our souls, that is to say, to deny us life everlasting in communion with the Maker. Death has been defeated and its sting has been removed (cf. 1 Cor. 15:55). The Lord has made “captivity itself a captive” (Eph. 4:8) and cast down Hades. “Nothing will be impossible with God” (Lk. 1:37), for truly “he is risen, as he said” (Mt. 28:6)!

In the current year the peoples of the earth have been enduring extraordinary ordeals. A baneful epidemic has spread throughout the whole world and has come to our lands too. The authorities have introduced restrictions in order to avert a further rapid spread of the epidemic. In some countries of the Moscow Patriarchate’s pastoral responsibility public worship, including the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, has been suspended. However, we Orthodox Christians are not to be despondent or to despair in these difficult circumstances; even more so we should not surrender to panic. We are called upon to preserve our inner peace and recall the words of the Saviour spoken on the eve of his redemptive Passion: “In the world you face sorrow. But take courage; I have conquered the world!” (Jn. 16:33).

Pascha has become for all of humanity the transition from enslavement to sin to the freedom of the kingdom of heaven, “the freedom of the glory of the

children of God” (Rm. 8:21). It is only thanks to the Saviour’s Resurrection that we obtain the true freedom of which the all-praised Apostle Paul speaks, calling upon us to “stand fast... in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us” (Gal 5.1). How many times have we read or heard these words? And now we have to think hard on whether we live today as though Christ’s Resurrection never happened. Are we not in danger of exchanging the riches of eternity for never-ending worldly concerns in once more being held captive to the vanity of this world, in surrendering to transient fears and forgetting the incorrupt spiritual treasures and true calling of the Christian to “serve the Lord in holiness and righteousness before him” (Lk. 1:75)?

And yet, “pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father” (Jm. 1:27) is this: to treat each other with love and patience, to help and support one another in tribulations, following the example of the Good Shepherd shown to us in the Gospel. No outward restrictions should ever tear apart our unity and take away from us the true spiritual freedom which we have obtained through coming to know our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Who has conquered death and granted to us the chance to “be called the children of God; for that is what we are” (1 Jn. 3:1).

All the faithful children of the Church are of “one heart and one soul” (Acts 4:32), for apart we are but members, while together we are the Body of Christ and nothing in all creation “shall be able to separate us from the love of God” (Rm. 8:39). Therefore, let those who today are unable for objective reasons to come to church and pray know that they are in other people’s thoughts and prayers. Faith grants to us the strength to live and overcome with God’s help all sorts of infirmities and tribulations, including that which has become a part of our lives through the spread of the dangerous virus.

I ardently call upon all of you, my beloved, to strengthen your common prayer to the Lord so that we may, in spite of all hardships, remain partakers of the grace-filled liturgical life of the Church, so that the holy sacrament of Eucharist may be celebrated and the faithful may with boldness draw near to the Fount of Life which are the Holy Mysteries of Christ, and so that the sick may receive healing and the healthy be protected from the dangerous infection.

We believe that the Risen Saviour will never forsake us and that He will send down upon us the resolve and courage to stand steadfastly in faith and to make our salvific journey through our earthly life to life everlasting.

I wholeheartedly congratulate all of you, my beloved brothers and sisters, on the bright feast of the Holy Pascha and call upon you to always be the image of the Saviour’s true disciples in setting a good example to people around you and in proclaiming the mighty acts of the One “who has called you out of darkness into his marvellous light” (1 Pt. 2:9), so that all the days of our life we may through our deeds testify to the unsurpassed power and truth of the Paschal greeting:

TRULY CHRIST IS RISEN!

+KIRILL

PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

Paschal Epistle of His Eminence Hilarion, Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad

Eminent Brother Archpastors, Reverend Fathers, Dear Brothers and Sisters:

CHRIST IS RISEN!

With the joy of God's Kingdom, as we are "divinely glad, for Christ is risen" (from the Paschal Canon), I offer my Paschal greeting to all: both to those who have successfully completed the reclusion of their quarantine, celebrating now in the churches and communing of Christ's Holy Mysteries; and also to those who yet abide in the desert of solitude and various restrictions, dedicating the better portion of their time to private prayer, spiritually beneficial reading, and interaction with loved ones. May the former and the latter both, in the words of St John Chrysostom, "honor the day," receiving in their hearts the riches of God's goodness!

As I began to compose my greeting and sought pre-Paschal inspiration in the works of the ever-memorable Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky), who reposed 55 years ago, I opened a compendium of his writings and found the following words: "In the silence of the desert, your Paschal joy can be fuller, brighter, and more complete than ours, for it is not stolen away by the brilliant tumult with which we fill the Feast, rather than spending it in quiet and thoughtful contemplation of the great Paschal mystery and in serene and imperturbable peace."

These instructive words of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anastassy, remind us that, on the holy Paschal night, everyone is called to become an animate temple, in the depths of which he can and must feel the joy and triumph of the heavens, which glorify Christ the Giver of Life.

More than once, Metropolitan Anastassy himself, as well as many of his contemporaries, greeted Pascha in the difficult conditions of life in those days. In general, the lot given to the founders of the Russian Church Abroad was one of many trials: the events of the revolution and civil war, the beginning of godless persecutions, two world wars and their aftermath, the migration of the Russian exiles, and in foreign lands bearing the witness of the martyrs of the Russian Church, of the sufferings of Her confessors, and of the pious paths trodden by Holy Russia.

In the years of World War II, the portion of the Mother Church in the diaspora was headquartered within the confines of the hospitable Serbian Orthodox Church, which at that time was being harassed by Nazi Germany. The latter harassed our ecclesiastical hierarchy, as well, though in truth to a much lesser degree. The departed Serbian Patriarch Gabriel V would later say of this, that "Metropolitan Anastassy comported himself with great wisdom and tact during the German occupation, [though he] was always loyal to the Serbs, as a result of which he was distrusted by the Germans, and several times subjected to humiliating searches" (from an interview given by His Holiness to Polish and English journalists in 1945). In the post-war years, Vladyka Anastassy took care for the

salvation of his spiritual children, whom the Western Allies were handing over to bloody reprisals by the godless authorities. In some camps, the clergy were able to avert the handover of Russian people, while in others, they stood, crosses in hand, between their flock and the tanks pointed toward the crowd. By the beginning of the 1950's, thanks to the activity and persistent petitions of Metropolitan Anastassy and his assistants, most of the Russian emigres were able to leave Europe and settle overseas in countries that opened their doors in compassion.

Soon they were also joined by the formidable emigre community from the Far East, among whom was the flock of the Holy Hierarch John (Maximovitch). After so many trials, His Beatitude, Metropolitan Anastassy, now fatigued by old age, came to America and began “to gather stones together” (Ecclesiastes 3:5), working to increase the pastoral nourishment of the Russian Diaspora and grow its church life.

Dear fathers, brothers, and sisters! On this Pascha, meditating on the difficulties of our days and on the approaching momentous dates of the 725th anniversary of the Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God “of the Sign” and the 100th anniversary of the service of the Russian Church Abroad, let us recall the deep faith, the greatness of heart, the height of fulfilling their duties, the wisdom, patience, and courage of our forebears, and let us contemplate the personalities of these spiritual giants!

Lighting our candles today, let us light our hearts from the lamp of their burning faith.

From my whole heart, I wish for you all to spent these all-joyous days in good health and cheerful disposition, perceiving the victorious power of God and the illumination of the Light of His Resurrection on the Third Day, so that in the future, when it seems to us that “Hades doth reign,” we might remember that its reign over us is “not forever,” as we read in the canon of Great Saturday, and that we might find in that the strength to overcome any trials in this life! Amen.

With Paschal joy in the Risen Christ and asking your holy prayers,

+HILARION

Metropolitan of Eastern America and New York
First Hierarch of the Russian Church Outside of Russia.
Pascha of the Lord, 2020 AD

Celebrating Pascha Together, Apart

In the Grateful Dead's signature song, Truckin', they sing, "What a long, strange trip it's been." We can reiterate that exact same sentiment regarding how strange this year's Great Lent has been because of the COVID-19 virus. Thus, our solemn journey through the Great Fast and Holy Week has been over-ridden by world-wide hysteria, governmental lockdowns, social distancing, behavioral changes, fear, and uncertainty. Churches locked, services cancelled, our hierarchy asking us to voluntarily stay away from our parishes and each other; and everyone washing their hands more often than Pontius Pilate. No pussy-willows, no flowers, no bells, no processions, no veneration of icons or the Plaschnitsa. No blessing of baskets, no family gatherings, and most importantly, no chances to attend those much-beloved Presanctified liturgies or receive the sacraments of Confession and Communion; all of which are so integral to ones Lenten experience and return to God.

This pandemic has made this entire Lenten season extremely difficult for everyone: emotionally, physically, and spiritually. So, what does that say about our upcoming Pascha? How does it affect our Paschal celebrations?

This year's Pascha comes to us, not in its grand, majestic, usual fashion with beautiful, joy-filled services resounding with triumphal music and uproarious paschal greetings but...still, it will come – radiant and victorious. As Dr. Seuss wrote in his classic moral tale, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, even without all the lights, trees, wreaths, decorations, packages with ribbons and bows, nothing could stop the celebration of Christmas from coming; for the perplexed Grinch wondered aloud to himself: "IT CAME! Somehow or other, it came just the same!"

Thus, it was in that moment of hearing the joyous voices of the people in Whoville who gladly came together to sing, celebrate, and exult, that the Grinch realized that Christmas was so much more than just the mere accoutrements of bulbs, bows, lights, and toys. Such decorative aesthetics simply added flavor to the main element and underlying theme of the feast, but it is NOT the sum-total of the feast by any means. So, we too, must be able to look beyond the fact that this year's Paschal celebration doesn't allow for all its' festal elements we've enjoyed in the past and/or be accustomed to.

Rather, like Elijah experiencing God atop Mount Horeb, this year's Pascha comes to us in a meek, humbled, quiet, semi-audible "still, small voice" (1st Kings 9:12) proclaiming an ever-resounding eternal and universal truth; with each of us standing together, apart, and singing "Christ is Risen!"

It doesn't matter if our Paschal celebrations are utterly stripped bare of all its earthly pomp and we are not allowed to gather together to process, sing, and participate as a congregation due to circumstances that are beyond our control, but can still celebrate and enjoy a "Pascha of the heart," just the same. The type of Pascha that the Early Christians celebrated as they huddled in hiding during the Roman persecution. The same type of Pascha that the Christians in the Middle East celebrated during the brutal Muslim persecutions of the 9th and 14th centuries. The same type of Pascha that the Greeks celebrated under Ottoman-Turkish rule. And the same type of Pascha that the Russians and other Slavic countries celebrated as they were actively being persecuted, arrested, and executed during those seventy years of Soviet Communist oppression.

In the prison camps and gulags of Russia, there are marvelous stories of Christians who, amidst arduous forced labor, cruel treatment, and with no creature comforts such as heat, warm clothing, or food, still joyfully celebrated Pascha by singing the Paschal Canon by heart and greeting one another in genuine Christian love; hence a true Pascha of the heart!

We might be forced to stay away from church, from services, and from our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, but a celebration of the heart exceeds all manner of barrier, time, and space. So, this present experience of an absence of the Church Body to celebrate, nonetheless reminds us of the never-absent presence of our Lord's Resurrected Body!

Therefore, this year's Paschal Feast will be manifested in spirit instead of celebration; in context rather than content; in doctrinal truth without decorative trait; as the eternal archetype without exterior aesthetic; in somber respite instead of rollicking spree....but still, it comes and we will celebrate it joyously together, apart.

Very Rev. Fr. John Memorich

<https://www.stmichaelscleveland.org/>

A Russian Orthodox bishop describes his first-hand experience with COVID-19.

Bishop Pitirim (Tvorogov) of Zvenigorod, the rector of the Moscow Theological Academy, contracted a coronavirus infection in church, despite strict adherence to hygiene standards by all faculty and staff at the Academy. We offer Vladyka's story from his blog on Facebook about the spread of infection within the walls of the Holy Trinity-St, Sergius Lavra and the Academy.

April

17th

Rumors have begun to spread about me. To stop the dissemination of false information, I inform you that my sister and I have a mild form of coronavirus, and today we have reached a turning point in the course of our illness: our sense of smell has returned. What can be said about this infection, based on personal experience? It is very insidious, and one can never guess whether it will spare you or kill you. The hardest thing is the psychological stress of the uncertainty.

It is very easy to get infected. I got infected in church during services. Although we at the Academy have been strictly observing standards of hygiene, I was infected by airborne droplets. This is an answer to all those who hold that you cannot get infected inside the church walls. You can, and how! At the first slight signs of the disease, which I would not have paid attention to at any other time, I took a test that turned out to be positive. And although the Academy was already in quarantine, I went into the strictest self-isolation.

From [Holy] Tuesday, my sister and I have been reading the Lenten services by ourselves, according to the online texts published on the patriarchal website. It made us recalled the days of our youth! And now here we were again, performing services behind closed doors. Many thanks to those who came up with the idea of posting complete services online! Most importantly: take care of yourselves and others; do not leave your houses. There are many more people infected than officially acknowledged. Over time, almost everyone will become sick with this virus, but most important is that it not happen at the same time. And may God grant that everyone be fortunate enough to have it in mild form. Wishing everyone good health! And silence on Great and Holy Saturday!

April

23

In anticipation of leaving my quarantine soon, I have trimmed my beard considerably in order to commune those who are ill. I myself have almost recovered, and go out for five-minute walks in deserted places to breathe some fresh air.

April

24

We can already begin to draw the initial conclusions from the “corona-horror” that has befallen us. The most important conclusion concerns the role of the hierarchy in crisis situations. In times of cataclysm, the Lord admonishes people through Powers and Principalities. No priests, no elders or eldresses, even if they be grace-filled, clairvoyant, etc., can fully know what to do right in times of social disaster and turmoil. The correct actions are determined by His Holiness the Patriarch, followed by the bishops. Secular authorities may also receive guidance from God about what needs to be done in a particular critical situation. But when people stop listening to spiritual and secular authorities, even if guided by the best of intentions, they open the road to hell. This very punishment came about due to an ingrained habit we’ve developed of scorning the authorities. And it won’t abate if we continue to criticize our leaders, even for honest mistakes they might inevitably make in such dire circumstances.

One needs to have understanding, patience and humility. And most importantly — repentance. We, friends, have lately become rather presumptuous, forgetting

about the Living God, and replacing Him with frequent Communion, pleasant holidays and fasts, all manner of ceremonies, cross-processions and pilgrimages. All those things, of course, are wonderful, but what is the goal? The goal is our salvation. So the Lord has turned us towards that one goal for which we should strive.

April

25

The second lesson from the pandemic is the most important. I was very heavily criticized for calling upon people not to come to church during the epidemic. People even demanded “ironclad evidence” that I caught the infection specifically in church and not somewhere else.

At this moment, the course of my illness is accurately known, so let’s try to trace its genesis. Throughout Great Lent, I served at all the Liturgies, as is customary. During the last weeks of the Fast, Hierodeacon Innocent and the newly-tonsured monk Micah, being the most zealous ones, served with me. Innocent fell ill first, followed by me, then Micah.

The very first at the Academy to contract the coronavirus was a graduate student who sang in the Lavra Choir. Most of the students who became infected were members of the choirs, where the conditions were ideal for the spread of infection.

Priests put themselves at great risk and continued to do so while hearing Confessions. Those who became ill were those who took the greatest risks, who were not avoiding contact with their parishioners; they humbly opened themselves up to the risk of infection in the faint hope that sick parishioners remain at home. But that hope did not materialize.

On the morning of Great Monday, the gates of the Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra were closed. Outside was an agitated crowd, demanding that the Lavra be opened. The protesters were behaving very aggressively, even to the point of swearing. In response, Vladyka Paramon [Abbot of the Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Monastery] opened the Lavra for all of Holy Week and Pascha.

The pestilence struck on Great and Holy Friday. The finest of the clergy got sick, some quite seriously. Vladyka Paramon fell ill, I fell ill, the elders of the Lavra and one of our elders at the Academy all fell ill. On Holy Friday, as is fitting, we were all “nailed to the cross.” While down below, as one might have expected, the crowd was demanding a miracle. But no miracle occurred.

We are being reproached for abandoning the people. This is not true. We responded in the only way we could — by getting sick ourselves, so that people, seeing our torment, would take pity on those who were still healthy, would take pity on their bishops, priests, and choristers.

Lying in intensive care, dying of pain and suffocation (today I saw these some of these seriously ill patients, groaning from pain and suffocating), we silently implore our parishioners: take pity on us, those who are still alive and still healthy. Take pity on the doctors: they are dying at their posts, not sparing themselves. May you take pity on them!

Who will guide you spiritually, who will commune you and minister to your illnesses, who will delight you with wonderful church singing, if some of us die, and others become invalids with lungs damaged by fibrosis?! I had but a mild form, but today’s CT scan showed that I have partial pulmonary fibrosis. And what will happen to those who have serious cases? We, the clergy and church workers, are the ones getting sick most often: take pity on us! After all, the words of the Lord are addressed to everyone: “I want mercy, not sacrifice!”

Bishop Pitirim (Tvorogov)

April 26, 2020

Translated from <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/130546.html>

<https://www.facebook.com/>

Nursing in the Eastern Roman ('Byzantine') Empire

Byzantine care constitutes a unique example not only for the medieval period but also for the whole of human history and civilization. The Byzantine period is specifically of interest for its approach to social welfare and organized care for the sick, the elderly, mothers, and children. There were innumerable hostels, Xenones (hospitals), nursing homes, leper homes, maternity hospitals, and infant and children's centers that not only cared for the sick and the suffering but also taught medicine and health care.

Nursing care was administered mostly by nuns and monks as a form of prayer and as an expression of love and worship of God. On this basis, nursing developed into a calling and a sacred service. Nursing was practiced as a form of contemplation; nurses were expected to see God in the person of the patient.

Selected writings from the 8th and 12th century A.D. show the philosophy of patient care in Byzantine period. A passage from the writings of Theodore Stoudites describes nursing in this perspective. Theodore Stoudites, born in 759, in Constantinople, which included a hospital, dedicated the following iambus, "To the Nurse":

"It is a sacred thing to bear the load of the sick. Since you are honored with this sacred privilege, my son, do struggle warmly and eagerly in the accomplishment of your duty. Early in the morning, first, visit and care for your bedridden patients, heat them mainly by your words, later serve them their appropriate diet in good manner and kind talking. Don't neglect the patient, because he is a member of Christ. If you care for your patient with zest and promptitude, you will be greatly rewarded by receiving the divine light, and heaven's inheritance."

Writings by Anna Comnena are representative of the care the sick and disabled received at that time. Anna Comnena (1083-1148), daughter of the Emperor Alexius I Comnenos, was a famous historian who had "an unusual interest and gift for medical matters." Anna Comnena is considered "the first woman historian," and has been characterized as a "great historian." She gives a picture of patient care, likely using a metaphor from the Book of Job, during her father's dynasty:

"I, myself have seen an old woman, being served by a young lady, a blind man directed by a man with healthy sight, a crippled person transported by a healthy person, an armless man guided by other men, orphan babies carried in the arms of others unrelated to them, mothers, and paralytics being cared by robust people."

Professional nurses were employed beginning at the end of the 4th century AD. Men were called hypourgoi and women, hypourgisses. Nurses were also called nosokomoi, and their assistants, paranosokomoi. The term Nosokomos was also used for the administrative director of the

hospital. These were people with high social status.

In addition, Gregorios Theologos, in his sixth letter, provides a detailed description of the duties of a nurse.

The fact that nursing evolved as a form of loving care during the Byzantium is easy to explain. Philanthropy and the duty to care for the sick, the poor, and the needy were features of Christianity. Jesus Christ was referred to as “Christus Medicus” (Christ the physician, who, taking pity, heals us through his own body and blood with the medicine of life).

Byzantine hospitals and other philanthropic institutions were mostly annexed to monasteries, and they were kept up by donations from emperors and other eminent persons. Hospitals were so well organized that they can be compared with contemporary ones. Major hospitals of Byzantium included the following: Sampson’s hostelry, the Basilicas in Cappadocia, established by St. Basil, which included a number of hospitals, leper homes, poor houses, and other institutions, Pantocrator’s Monastery hostelry, and St. Irene’s hostelry. Byzantine hospitals were mainly for the poor. There were, however, some exceptions. The Emperor Justinian was hospitalized in the Samson Xenon (6th c. AD), and the Emperor Alexios in the Xenon of Magana (12th c. AD).

In Byzantine hospitals, patients were cared for with humanity. The Typikon of the Xenon of Theotokou of the Evergetidos in Constantinople (7th c AD) notes:

“We must care about the food, the drinking and the other needs of the patients...the doctors should visit the patients every day and look after them wholeheartedly”.

In the Typikon of Theotokou Eleousas in Stroubitsa of Skopia (11th c AD), the following words are found:

“You should console the needy and treat the patients at your best. You should behave to all with kindness. You should also treat the invalid at your best. You should not make fun of the feeble-minded. And kick out the fear from your soul.”

(Source: “The meaning of the nursing in Byzantium”, by Kourkouta L. et al.)

<https://novoscriptorium.com/2019/11/23/nursing-in-the-easter-roman-byzantine-empire/>

Metropolitan Hilarion Gives Advice on What to Do in Self-Isolation

Metropolitan Hilarion, Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, answered questions from viewers of the program “Church and the World” on April 25, 2020.

Question: I’ve been living in self-isolation for two weeks already. I can’t go outside, can’t visit anyone, I’m dying of boredom. What would you advise?

Metropolitan Hilarion: First of all, I would like to advise you, and not only you, but many of those who are watching us and who are now facing the same problems, to learn how to live an inner life. Unfortunately, we are very dependent on external circumstances. Very often people connect their whole lives with various circumstances: they are busy with work or study, or both, then they entertain themselves, and thus time passes, and living seems not boring for them. But when a person suddenly finds himself in four walls, he begins to ask himself what he should do.

In fact, one’s happiness, as Jesus Christ tells us, does not depend on one’s wealth, material goods, or external circumstances. It, first of all, depends on one’s inner world. If you learn how to create your inner world in such a way that you will never be bored, it will be the best thing you can learn in the current situation.

What do we, Christians, have? First, we have prayer. Even now, when many of us are unable to go to a church, no one can prevent us from making our own apartment and our own heart a church. Devote your time to pray to God. Moreover, it is possible to pray to God in different ways. It is not necessary to just read the prayers that are printed in the prayer book. You can just sit and talk with God. You are bored, you are alone, you have no one to communicate with: turn to God. Speak with Him, tell Him everything that bothers you, that has hurt you, everything that worries you. And then try to hear the answer. Maybe you won’t hear it right away, maybe the answer will come through some circumstances in your life. But if you turn to God, He will certainly respond.

In addition, there are many things that you can occupy yourself with in self-isolation: reading, watching interesting movies, getting acquainted with those literary works that you have not had time to get to know yet. Learn to engage yourself in this period of self-isolation. This art will help you throughout your entire life.

Question: What books should one read, what movies should one

watch during the period of self-isolation?

Metropolitan Hilarion: I would certainly advise everyone to read the Bible. Moreover, the Bible is a large book, it consists of two parts: the Old Testament and the New Testament. If you have never read the Bible and it is the first time you hold it in your hands, do not try to read it from the beginning to end. Actually, I would even advise you to not read the Bible from the beginning, but open it right at the part called the New Testament, and start reading it from the Gospel of Matthew. Read it, then the Gospel of Mark, then Luke, then John. After these four Gospels, you will already have an idea of who Jesus Christ is, when He lived, what He taught, and most importantly, you can understand why Jesus Christ is still relevant, that is, what you can apply from His teachings in your own life.

You ask what movies you can watch? Again, there are so many interesting movies. I would like to share with you my impressions of one film that I watched last year, I would highly recommend it. It's called Breakthrough, it's an American movie of 2019. It is based on a true story, and the story was this: several children fell through the ice. One boy spent more than 15 minutes in icy water, and when he was pulled out, he was unconscious. Doctors said that the boy will not return to life, and even if he returns, he will not return to consciousness. But his mother was a deeply religious woman, she said, "I will pray, I will do everything so that he returns to life." Throughout the film, she shows how she prayed, how she cared for her son, how she did not allow talking about how he would not survive in his presence, although he was in a coma. In the end, this boy returned to life contrary to the prognosis of all the doctors.

This is a very touching story, the film was shot in a touching way. And the most interesting thing in this film is that it absolutely truly reproduces the story that happened only a few years ago in one American town. I think such films show what faith can do, even in our difficult conditions. And now, when some of us are under the threat of the virus, when our loved ones are in a difficult situation, prayer is the most important thing we can help them with.

I would like to finish today's program with the words of Jesus Christ, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."(Lk. 11,9).

I wish you all the best. Take care of yourself and your loved ones, and God bless you all!

<http://www.pravmir.com/metropolitan-hilarion-gives-advice-on-what-to-do-in-self-isolation/>



IN HIS OWN WORDS: ST. JOHN OF KRONSTADT ON PRAYER AND WARMTH OF HEART

There is nothing impossible unto those who believe; lively and unshaken faith can accomplish great miracles in the twinkling of an eye. Besides, even without our sincere and firm faith, miracles are accomplished, such as the miracles of the sacraments; for God's Mystery is always accomplished, even though we were incredulous or unbelieving at the time of its celebration. "Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" (Rom. 3:3). Our wickedness shall not overpower the unspeakable goodness and mercy of God; our dullness shall not overpower God's, nor our infirmity God's omnipotence.

Oh, what great happiness and bliss, what exaltation it is to address oneself to the Eternal Father. Always, without fail, value this joy which has been accorded to you by God's infinite grace and do not forget it during your prayers; God, the angels and God's holy men listen to you.

Do not be despondent when fighting against the incorporeal enemy, but even in the midst of your afflictions and oppression praise the Lord, Who has found you worthy to suffer for Him, by struggling against the subtlety of the serpent, and to be wounded for Him at every hour; for had you not lived piously, and endeavored to become united to God, the enemy would not have attacked and tormented you.

Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it; where there is no struggle, there is no virtue. Our faith, trust, and love are proved and revealed in adversities, that is, in difficult and grievous outward and inward circumstances, during sickness, sorrow, and privations.

Prayer for others is very beneficial to the man himself who prays; it purifies the heart, strengthens faith and hope in God, and arouses love for God and our neighbor.

During prayer there sometimes occur moments of deadly darkness and spiritual anguish arising from unbelief of the heart (for unbelief is darkness). Do not let your heart fail you at such moments, but remember that if the Divine light has been cut off from you, it always shines in all its splendour and greatness in God Himself, in God's Church, in heaven and on earth, and in the material world in which "His eternal power also and divinity" are visible. Do not think that truth has failed, because truth is God Himself, and everything that exists has its foundation and reason in Him. Only your own weak, sinful and darkened heart can fail in the truth, for it cannot always bear the strength of the light of truth, and is not always capable of containing its purity, but only if it is being, or has been, purified from its sins, as the first cause of spiritual darkness. The proof of this you may find in yourself. When the light of faith or God's truth dwells in your heart, only then is it tranquil, firm, strong, and liv-

ing; but when this is cut off, then your heart becomes uneasy, weak as a reed shaken by the wind, and lifeless. Do not pay any attention to this darkness of Satan. Drive it away from your heart by making the sign of the life-giving Cross!

When praying, keep to the rule that it is better to say five words from the depth of your heart than ten thousand words with your tongue only. When you observe that your heart is cold and prays unwillingly, stop praying and warm your heart by vividly representing to yourself either your own wickedness, your spiritual poverty, misery, and blindness, or the great benefits which God bestows every moment upon you and all mankind, especially upon Christians, and then pray slowly and fervently. If you have not time to say all the prayers, it does not matter, and you will receive incomparably greater benefit from praying fervently and not hurriedly than if you had said all your prayers hurriedly and without feeling: "I had rather speak five words with my understanding ... than ten thousand words in a tongue.

As after having unworthily communicated, so also after having prayed unworthily and coldly, our soul feels equally ill at ease. This means that God does not enter our heart, being offended at its unbelief and coldness, and allows the evil spirit to nestle in our hearts, in order to make us feel the difference between His own presence and its yoke.

Sometimes during prayer you feel a kind of estrangement from God, and despair. Do not be carried away by such a feeling; it proceeds from the Devil. Say in your heart: "I despair not of salvation, reprobate as I am; and emboldened by Thine immeasurable compassion, I come unto Thee. If there is any hope of salvation for me, if Thy loving mercy can overcome the multitude of my transgressions, be Thou my Saviour.

When praying with people, we sometimes have to pierce through with our prayer as if it were the hardest wall – human souls, hardened and petrified by earthly passions – to penetrate the Egyptian darkness, the darkness of passions and worldly attachments. This is why it is sometimes difficult to pray. The simpler the people one prays with, the easier it is.

When you are praying alone, and your spirit is dejected, and you are wearied and oppressed by your loneliness, remember then, as always, that God the Trinity looks upon you with eyes brighter than the sun; also all the angels, your own Guardian Angel, and all the Saints of God. Truly they do; for they are all one in God, and where God is, there are they also. Where the sun is, thither also are directed all its rays.

https://www.roadtoemmaus.net/back_issue_articles/RTE_56/IN_HIS_OWN_WORDS.pdf

FATHER CHARITON

I.

It was an early Pascha in 1894 — just the day after Annunciation. There was plenty of snow, a light frost, and on the riverbanks the ice was beginning to melt.

A young landowner, Balayev, who had been living for two years on his estate — fifty versts (One verst = 1.06 kilometers (0.7 miles)) from the provincial capital — had used the sledge-way to make his customary visits on the second day of Pascha. The following morning the weather changed and a south wind began to blow. The thermometer showed 15 degrees above zero C, and in two or three days the snow was gone. Balayev would have to hurry home before the ice broke, for five versts from town he had a broad river to cross, either on planks of wood laid over the ice for safety, or by ferry once the ice broke up and moved downstream. There was no bridge. But business kept Balayev in town until Monday of Thomas Week.

On the evening of St. Thomas Sunday, a rider was sent to the riverbank to get the wood ready to cross the river on foot.

The next morning, Balayev rode to the crossing. The ice on the already swollen river was cracking. Water near the banks, about twenty sazhen (One sazhen = 2.13 meters (2.33 yards)) wide, was turbulent, forming separate rivers that flowed over the flat banks onto the fields. It was impossible to cross; the ice could begin moving at any moment. There was a small eating-house on the opposite bank. Someone wearing a short coat girded with a rope at the waist came out of the eatinghouse several times. He had a bag over his shoulder and would stand for awhile looking up and down the river before returning to the little house.

Suddenly a muffled crack was heard. The river seemed to give a loud sigh and suddenly the ice rose up as if it was jumping out of the water, covering the wet banks with its solid mass. For a moment or so there was to be an indistinct struggle, and then the whole river of ice began to move with a little “whoosh.” Large pieces of ice like huge rafts calmly occupied the middle of the river. Smaller pieces fidgeted at the sides, jumping onto one another in heaps until they broke into a thousand pieces and scattered in every direction like diamonds.

The fellow came out of the eating-house again. This time, besides the bag on his shoulder he had a basket over his left arm and a staff in his hand. He stepped to the edge of the bank, looked around, ran about ten sazhen upriver, and stopped. Taking off his cap, he crossed himself several times and jumped onto a distant piece of ice... Balayev was stunned; his breath caught at the incredible sight. Making his way to the opposite shore, he rapidly jumped from one piece of ice to another, and in two or three minutes landed on a huge frozen continent floating placidly in mid-stream. Using his staff, he strode fearlessly up the ice, soon approaching the place where Balayev stood. Balayev’s heart sank at the thought that in a few moments he would see the desperate madman’s seemingly inevitable death. Grabbing a wooden plank, he ran down the bank in case his help was needed. The fearless one was about fifteen sazhen from Balayev’s side of the river, jumping over the small pieces that jostled one another for a place on the bank. A loud crack, and the wind began to blow: bright sunlight reflected off the dazzling ice. Balayev was dizzy and feverish with watching.

Suddenly, the adventurer flew from the icy chaos onto the bank like a bomb, and as if challenging someone, crossed himself rapidly and cried out: “Christ is

Risen!” Hysterical, as the strain on his tortured nerves gave way, Balayev dashed towards the boy — for it was a boy — and with tears pouring down his cheeks, seized him with both hands and began to kiss his face, exclaiming, “In Truth He is Risen.” It turned out to be a youth of fourteen, the student of an ecclesiastical school who was walking back to town after his Pascha vacation. Knowing that the ice would continue to break for several days, he had decided to cross the river just as it began moving, when the water on the banks was still covered with small ice islands.

When the boy was at last freed from Balayev’s arms, he held out the basket, shaking the water and ice slivers from his clothes. His bast shoes were also filled with silver shards, but he behaved as if nothing extraordinary had happened, only checking to see that he had not lost anything. The basket was covered with a white cloth tied with a cord. He inspected it carefully, but everything was in its proper place. He groped through his pockets and jacket with both hands and then rearranged the cord by which the bag hung on his back. Satisfied, he looked at Balayev.

“Well, friend, were you in terrible fear crossing the river? How did you dare to face such danger? The ice is so weak, it could give way any moment...”

“Why be afraid? I knew I would cross it, otherwise I wouldn’t have started,” the boy answered quite seriously.

“And why did you cry out, ‘Christ is Risen!’ when you reached the bank — this and nothing else?” asked Balayev, amazed at the boy’s remarkable calmness.

“But how else? It is Pascha. We say ‘Christ is Risen!’ for forty days until Ascension. And when one walks along the road he should sing, ‘Christ is Risen...,’ ‘Today is the chosen and holy day ...,’ ‘It is the day of Resurrection...’ There are lots of Pascha songs! One should sing everything he knows. I know them all by heart...they made us memorize them at school and I sing them in our church at home and in the villages when we go there with icons...”

“And where is your home? Where are you walking from?”

“From the Church of the Mother of God at Malaya Sizma. Seventy-five versts from here. My father is the priest.”

Relating this, the boy took off his cap with a bow and said, “Good bye! I must go...” Balayev was strangely interested in the unusual youth with his calm reasonableness and his religious feeling. He didn’t want to part with him as simply as the boy seemed ready to do. “I will take you to town, at least. It is five more versts. Take off your bag and get in. You’ll be tired if you walk the whole way and we’ll be in town quickly.”

“Thank you. I could walk there, it isn’t far now. But if I go with you I have to change my shoes.” He looked at his bast shoes.

“Well, change them and let’s go,” Balayev said. The lad sat on a plank, took off his bag, untied his leather boots and changed his footwear. Then they climbed into the tarantass and started.

“And what have you got in the basket?” Balayev asked.

“Fifty dyed Pascha eggs,” the child replied in a business-like tone — “and piroshki. This will last me for ten days. And there is underwear in the bag. We won’t get to go home till the haymaking after this — they always let us go on Kirik and Ulita.(Feast of Sts. Kyricus and Julitta (July 15): Third-century martyrs under Diocletian. Julitta was a noblewoman, and Kyricus, her three-year-old son)”

“Why do your parents allow you to walk such a long way? Anything can happen. You could have drowned, or an evil man might do you harm.”

“What could happen?” said the boy confidently. “Drown? No. God will keep me safe. And what could an evil man want of me? I can run away from him.”

“But if God doesn’t ‘keep you safe’ and you start to drown against His will for some reason...?” Balayev asked provocatively. The lad did not answer, but looked at him with such eyes that he felt painfully ashamed.

“And when you’ve finished your studies, what will you do?” Balayev asked, to cover his embarrassment.

“I’ll be a priest,” the boy said, and looked at Balayev in quite a different way, with a barely perceptible smile. “And I will remember you... When Pascha comes I will tell you in my mind, ‘Christ is Risen!’ And you, when you hear, ‘Christ is Risen!’ for the first time on Pascha day, you will at once think of me and say in your mind: ‘In Truth He is Risen, Father Chariton!’ I will already be Father Chariton then.”

The boy made a tremendous impression on Balayev. “He’s like a prophet,” he thought. “He can see what is in the future, he knows what will happen to him. He looks straight into your soul and you feel that he ties it to his own.” Balayev had such a warm feeling that he was sorry to part with him.

They arrived at the town and the boy asked him to stop the horses. “My road is there.” He waved his hand to show it. “And now, goodbye. Thank you. Christ is Risen!”

“Christ is Risen!” Balayev answered, and kissed the future Father Chariton. The child disappeared into a side-street between the houses.

II.

Forty years passed. State Councillor Balayev, who now spent his winters in St. Petersburg, fell ill while making his official visits on the first day of Pascha and returning home, took to his bed. The doctor who was sent for prescribed medicines, and warned the relatives, “Nothing fearful has happened so far, but he may have a stroke. If he is a believer, you should send for a priest.” One of the relatives spent an hour and a half looking for a priest, but the clergy had already left on the Paschal rounds of people’s homes. Meanwhile, the patient was becoming worse; although there had been no stroke, he could no longer speak. Relatives gathered at the dying man’s bed, but he only stared hopefully at the door, trying to utter something. Everyone felt the death agony had begun, but the cleric still did not come. Finally, the servant threw open the door and a thin, grey-haired priest with an epitachelion around his neck rapidly moved toward the patient exclaiming cheerfully, “Christ is Risen.” At that moment, as if a spark of electricity had run through his body, Balayev raised himself up and replied in a clear voice: “In Truth He is Risen, Father Chariton!” Another second, and the priest and landowner were clasping one another, warm tears running down their faces. from *Russky Palomnik*, no. 19, 1911

https://www.roadtoemmaus.net/back_issue_articles/RTE_12/Father_Chariton.pdf