

HERMITAGE

February 2018

The Newsletter of the Hermitage of the Holy Cross



On Lenten Struggle and Prayer for the Departed

The Great Fast is once more almost upon us, and soon once again the Gates of Repentance will be opened unto us. The Holy Fathers teach us that Lent is the tithe of the year which we offer to the Lord, as first fruits and as a sin offering to God. And as Abba Dorotheos exclaims: “Blessed, O brethren, is he who preserves himself well in these holy days as he should. For though it might happen that being human we sin out of infirmity or negligence, still God has given these holy days in order that, striving with heedfulness and humility, we take care of ourselves and repent for all of our sins, and we will be cleansed of the sins we committed during the whole year.”

All too often, however, we allow these holy days to pass us by, neglecting the great spiritual opportunity which God in His mercy has granted to us. And it is precisely an opportunity—not an outward or arbitrary obligation, not some sort of debt which we must grudgingly pay to God, but rather a gift that He has given to us for our own spiritual benefit and for the health and salvation of our own souls. The resurrection which we all seek in Pascha must begin even now, in the Lenten springtime of our souls. We must sow now in order that we might have something to reap, and not be as those foolish virgins who were turned away on the night of the marriage feast.

Thankfully, the Holy Church has given us many tools and aids for this task, and many weapons for the spiritual battle which we are about to wage. Fasting, prayer, the beautiful and compunctionate Church services, alms-

giving and spiritual reading, all of these can soften even the heart most hardened by long and habitual sin. And in the commemoration of the departed, one of the hallmarks of the Lenten season, so many of these virtues are yoked together: prayer for our departed loved ones, almsgiving on behalf of their souls, the church services offered up for their benefit and for the comfort of those who remain behind on this earth. Added to these is a great and inestimable benefit to ourselves: the continual reminder of and meditation upon death, which is a foundation of all virtue and a bulwark against every sin. Indeed, the monk Hesychios tells us that “no one who has the memory of death can ever sin.” The more we call to remembrance those who have departed from this life, the

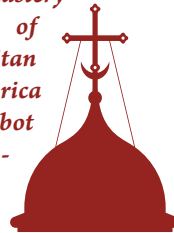
more we dedicate our time and our struggle to their benefit, even so will we more and more realize the vanity and emptiness of all the worldly trinkets and empty pleasures which occupy so much of our attention throughout the year. Our eyes will be opened to the riches of grace which we possess so abundantly in our faith, both now in this world as well as infinitely more in the age to come.

With these things in remembrance, we invite you to please submit, for prayerful commemoration, the names of Orthodox Christians who have departed this life, along with an optional offering of alms in their remembrance and on their behalf. These names will be commemorated at every Liturgy, Pannykhida, Litya, and Matins for the Departed during Great and Holy Lent. Asking mercy for ourselves and for all who can no longer ask for themselves, may we find the great mercy of divine life this Pascha, and at the General Resurrection may we all be raised unto life eternal, finding mercy at the Last Judgment. Amen.

Enclosed you will find a commemoration slip and a return envelope. Please write the names of reposed Orthodox Christians* and send the slip back to us, together with whatever offering of alms you choose to make on behalf of your loved ones.



The Hermitage of the Holy Cross is a Russian Orthodox Men's Monastery under the omophorion of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York. The Abbot and Confessor of the monastery is Archimandrite Seraphim.



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* Please submit formal Orthodox Christian names only for the Pannykhida services.

New Candidates at the Hermitage

Since last summer, three new candidates have arrived at the Hermitage to undergo a six-month period of discernment and testing. During this time candidates live the monastic life as part of the brotherhood, performing obediences, serving and chanting in church, confessing their thoughts, and pray-

ing a monastic cell rule. After six months, if they receive the blessing of the abbot to enter the monastery, they will be clothed as novices and counted as members of the brotherhood. Pray that the Lord will grant wisdom and grace to Alexis, Andrew and Benjamin during this beautiful and rich period of their lives!



The Feast of St. Panteleimon

The Hermitage of the Holy Cross invites you to celebrate the feast of the Holy Great-Martyr and Healer Panteleimon with the brotherhood and fellow pilgrims of the monastery. Saint Panteleimon is the patron and protector of the Hermitage, and in recent years his Feast has become a secondary day of pilgrimage for our friends (after our main Pilgrimage Weekend—see below). His Grace Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan, NY will preside for the feast. A Festal Vigil will be served on Wednesday evening, and on Thursday morning there will be a water blessing and Hierarchal Divine Liturgy, followed by a procession and Moleben to Saint Panteleimon.

At the Festal Moleben, and for seven days thereafter, we will commemorate names of the sick and suffering (both Orthodox and non-Orthodox) who are in need of St. Panteleimon's aid. We are including a commemoration slip and remittance envelope, with which you may submit names, together with your alms, before the August feast.



Wednesday, August 8th

6:30 p.m. Festal Vigil with Litia & Akathist

Thursday, August 9th

8:00 a.m. Water Blessing, **9:00 a.m.** Hierarchal Divine Liturgy with Moleben for the Sick & Suffering

Pilgrimage Weekend September 29th – 30th, 2018



Please see the enclosed "Pilgrim's Guide" for information on how to reach the monastery, details regarding possible accommodations, and other guidelines for visitors.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, September 29th

- 2:30 p.m. Great Procession from the monastery church to the Outdoor Chapel of the Mother of God of the Sign with the Holy Icons and Relics of the monastery, with Moleben
- 4:30 p.m. Buffet supper for pilgrims
- 6:00 p.m. Vigil with Litia

Sunday, September 30th

- 9:00 a.m. Hours & Hierarchal Liturgy at Outdoor Chapel of the Mother of God of the Sign

Banquet Following at the Hall of the Holy Spirit Orthodox Church, Huntington, WV



Our New Bakery

The new bakery is nearing completion, with all necessary equipment purchased and ready for final installation. The floor has been sealed, and the last preparations are being completed in order for the state inspection to take place. With God's help, the bakery should be certified and operational by the beginning of Great Lent. We thank everyone for their prayerful labors and contributions towards this very beneficial and necessary project, and we look forward to offering the fruits thereof to our guests at the trapeza table.



From the Farm

Activity never ceases at the monastery farm. Even in the depths of winter we are planning the spring crops and starting seed very early for the vegetables we will grow in our high tunnel greenhouse. We have also been growing seed sprouts and micro-greens indoors for use at the brotherhood trapeza.

This year the goat kids were born right around Christmas time. Alban Philo, one of our former goatherds, spent Christmas with us and shared with us the joy of new life. Fr. Seraphim Holland and his parishioner, Sergius Burns, also visited the monastery just after Nativity in order to help with the goat kidding.

Arranging the breeding schedule so that the goat kids are born in the winter is more natural for the goats and will allow us to spend more time gardening in the spring. In addition, the farm crew noted how the anticipation of new goat kids perfectly matched the anticipation of the liturgical season—the church hymns describe the Virgin Mary as the Ewe bearing the Lamb in Her womb and coming to Bethlehem to give birth.

Our eldest goat kid, Shapenote.





Winter at the Hermitage

