

## **Parish Prayer List (Living)**

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Susan Mary
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Lawrence	Emil	Seraphim	Evdokia
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Brian	Carolyn	Monk Nicholas
Ashley & Ben	Kathy Tanner	Anthony	Pauline
Olga	Marina	Salvatore	Josephine
Nicholas (Nadja's brother)			

## **Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)**

Josephine Urban (+12/15)

Frances Dreyer (+2/1)

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## **Words from the Fathers**

How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God! Life in immortality, splendor in righteousness, truth in boldness, faith in confidence, continence in holiness: and all these things are submitted to our understanding. What, then, are the things which are being prepared for those who wait for Him? The Creator and Father of the ages, the All-holy One, Himself knows their greatness and beauty. Let us then strive to be found among the number of those that wait, that we may receive a share of the promised gifts.

*St. Clement of Rome, Letter to the Corinthians 35.1-4  
late 1st century*

An Athonite hermit once was asked, "What should we do when we are praised and complemented?" With humility and self-knowledge he replied: "I will give you an example. When I carve on a piece of wood the face of a saint, after I have finished it I think it is good. After a while I look at it again and discover that some things were not done completely. If I use a magnifying glass, I see that it is not such marvelous craftsmanship after all. The same thing can be done with one's hands. We think they are clean. But if we examine them again under a magnifying glass, we see some dirt and germs there. So we should examine ourselves closely and then we will realize that we are nothing in spite of many praises."

*from An Athonite Gerontikon*

The person who listens to Christ fills himself with light; and if he imitates Christ, he reclaims himself.

*St. Thalassios the Libyan, early 7th century*

“He who gives himself to desires and sensual pleasures and lives according to the world’s way will quickly be caught in the nets of sin. And sin, when once committed, is like fire put to straw, a stone rolling downhill, or a torrent eating away its banks. Such pleasures then bring complete perdition to him who embraces them.”

*St. Theodoros the Sanctified*

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*What to expect at a house blessing*

1. Houses are traditionally blessed with “Theophany water” each year. A house can be blessed at any time, but the usual season for yearly blessings is from Theophany until the beginning of the Lenten Triodion, which begins four Sundays before Great Lent begins. This is not a hard and fast rule, but a good rule of thumb.

2. Some people place great importance on “Theophany water”. This is just water that has been blessed with the Great Blessing of the Waters service on Theophany. Another name for this water is simply “Holy Water”. We can bless water any time of the year that there is a need for it. In Moscow, for example, there is a huge vat of holy water that the faithful partake of regularly. On regular basis, the vat is refilled with water when it becomes empty, and this new water is blessed. The water blessed in, for instance, August is no more and no less “holy” than the water blessed on Theophany.

3. Water is blessed using the “Great Blessing of the Waters” service two distinct times during Theophany: after Vespers on the Eve of Theophany and after the Divine Liturgy on

Theophany. The blessings are identical, and the water is identical.

4. In many places, it is traditional to bless water in lakes or rivers. In Russia, clergy often go to such a place, and bless the cold water after a hole has been cut in the ice. Many people will take a dip in the water after it is blessed.

5. When a home is blessed, the priest brings everything needed for the blessing:

- Holy water
- A “krupilla” (brush for flinging the holy water)
- Bowl for the water
- Candles

Many pious homes supply a bowl, candles and the family Theophany icon.

The family should provide the priest with a list of all family members, living and deceased.

The bowl and icon should be placed on a clean table with a cloth on it, preferably near the family icon corner. It is good for candles to be lit. The house should be clean, with all radios and televisions off.

The priest will bless all rooms of the house except the bathrooms. In homes with children, it is always good for the little ones to carry a candle or a small cross and “lead” the priest throughout the house. An elder member of the house may also do this.

6. The basic order for a simple home blessing is as follows.

- The bowl of water, icon and lit candles are placed on a clean table. *If* there is a censer, it may be lit.
- The priest begins the service with a blessing and the Trisagion prayers (“O heavenly King” through the “Our

Father”.) It is always preferable that the eldest of another member of the family say the Trisagion prayers.

- After this the entire home is blessed, with the family walking with the priest holding candles and the Theophany icon while the Theophany Troparion is sung over and over:

**Tone 1:** *At Your Baptism in the Jordan, O Lord,/ the worship of the Trinity was revealed; /for the Father’s voice bore witness to You, / calling You His beloved Son. / And the Spirit in the form of a dove / confirmed the truth of these words. / O Christ God, Who has appeared // and enlightened the world, glory to You.*

It is a very good idea for the family to sing this troparion, and know it by heart. Otherwise, if the priest has many houses to bless, his voice will get tired!

- Upon finishing blessing the house, the family gathers again at the table, and a short litany is said for the welfare of the family. The priest should have been provided a list of all family members, including those who are ill.
- After this a short prayer, and the service is ended.
- It is entirely appropriate the deceased loved ones of the family be commemorated from a list provided to the priest.

7. When a priest visits, it is never required that the family gives him money. The scripture tells us “Freely you have received, freely give”. It is a pious custom among some to give the priest a donation at this time, but this should never be thought of as a requirement. The priest comes to the home because he wants God’s blessing to be upon it, and to know those in his flock better and to be available to them.