

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Seraphim	Evdokia
Anthony	Pauline	Nadja	Jerry
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Tatiana	Travis	Jason
Susan Mary	Clint	John	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	Sophia
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	Efthalia	Denny

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Grant
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Blake
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Josephine	Travis, Jr.	Alma	Randy
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Genevieve		

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Dominick LoGalbo (+12/25)

Joseph Visconti (+1/26)

Angelina Visconti (+2/14)

Olga Specian (+2/19)

Pauline LoGalbo (+2/22)

Lorraine Solinko (+2/27)

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Thoughts from the Fathers

...elder [Cleopa of Sihastria] was...asked, ‘What is prayer and what are the steps of prayer, according to the holy fathers?’

“Prayer is the conversation of the mind with God. Prayer is the offspring of gentleness and the absence of anger. Prayer is the fruit of joy and thankfulness. Prayer is the banishment of all sorrow and despair.” These are the words of Evagrius of Pontus. The Philokalia also tells us, “Prayer is the union of man with God and works toward the strengthening of the world and the reconciliation of God and man. It is the mother of tears and also the daughter of tears.” It is, in the words of the Philokalia, “the key to the window of heaven,” and Saint Theophan the Recluse says, “Prayer is the ascent of the mind and thoughts toward God.”

“Prayer has three stages: the first is oral prayer, or prayers that are read and done by the bodily organ of the mouth; the second stage of prayer is that of the mind; and the third prayer is prayer of the heart.”

Elder Cleopa, “Counsel to Monastics”

Reflect that it is not an Angel that you receive in the holy Mysteries but the Lord of Angels and the Judge of all. Reflect also on this: with what joy the holy Forerunner leapt in his mother’s womb and bowed down to his Master; and how the shepherds, and the kings with gifts, and Simeon and Anna glorified their Master and bowed down to Him with wonder, fear and joy; how also the other saints and all monk-saints with reverence, joy and thanksgiving, shone like the sun when united in Communion with the Body and Blood of Christ, and live with Him forever. With just such a desire and great zeal, so you also hasten to the Sweetest Source of Benefactions, and thank the Lord for His unspeakable mercy, that He, the terrible and inaccessible God, does not abhor our miserableness, but unites Himself to us, out of His incalculable love for us.

Abbot Nazarius of Valaam, “Counsels On Partaking of the Divine Mysteries”

Truth and Love are wings that cannot be separated, for Truth cannot fly without Love, nor can love soar aloft without Truth; their yoke is one of amity. The eyes’ two pupils see and move together; although the nose separates them, they are not divided, for not even the slightest blink of one eye can escape the other’s attention.

Saint Ephrem the Syrian, “Hymns on Faith”

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Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord In the Temple

The Presentation of Christ In the Temple (Feast Day - February 2)

Today the Church commemorates an important event in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the God-Infant was taken to the Jerusalem Temple, the center of the nation's religious life. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty

days. At the end of this time the mother came to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb or pigeon to the Lord as a purification sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement. However, she humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Symeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he should behold the promised Messiah. By inspiration from above, St Symeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and St Joseph had brought the Infant Jesus to fulfill the Law.

The God-Receiver Symeon took the divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). St Symeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was the 84-year-old widow Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. She arrived just when St Symeon met the divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:37-38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth."

Before Christ was born, righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Symeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous people of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet the Savior in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by the holy bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the sixth century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. In thanksgiving to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: St Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; St Cosmas Bishop of Maium, St John of Damascus, and St Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century; and St Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica in the ninth century.

On this day we also commemorate the icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Symeon's Prophecy." The Mother of God is depicted without Her Child, with seven swords piercing her breast: three from the left side, three from the right, and one from below.

A similar icon, "Of the Seven Swords" (August 13) shows three swords on the left side and four from the right.

The icon "Symeon's Prophecy" symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of the righteous Elder Symeon: "a sword shall pierce through your own soul" (Luke 2:35).