

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

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|-------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 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)

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|-------------|-------------|------------------|------------|
| 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 | Constance |
| Peter | Maria | Michael | Timothy |
| Petrese | Genevieve | Carla and family | Michael C. |

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Angelina Visconti (+2/14)

Olga Specian (+2/19)

Pauline LoGalbo (+2/22)

Lorraine Solinko (+2/27)

Metropolitan Nicholas (+3/13)

Laura Crikis (+3/17)

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Thoughts from the Fathers

If you have transgressed...as a man, and have sinned, do not despair. But at that very moment, confess your sin and fall down with humility before the compassionate eyes of God and ask mercy with the voice of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" (Lk. 18:13), and your sins will be forgiven you.
Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk

Prayer and fasting - Christian fasting - serves as means of self-study, of discernment of our true moral state, of an accurate estimation of our sins and of a knowledge of their true character."

St. Nectarios of Aegina

The evil spirits are always wanting to interfere with whatever we are doing for our salvation. Alas, we - who are lukewarm - usually say to ourselves, *'Wait, I have not yet done this, I have not yet tried that ... I will repent later. After I have done all these things, I will repent, God; and I will walk the straight path --- wandering neither to the right nor to the left.'* This is exactly what the spirits of evil want us to do. They want us to put off our salvation until tomorrow, or the day after, and so on and so forth, until the end of our life. But the Holy Fathers say, *'Go with the Lord, go today, follow Him!'*

Elder Thaddeus of Serbia (+2002)

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Saint Arsenios of Paros and the Restoration of the Fallen Woman

A certain girl from Syros came to the Convent of the Transfiguration to visit her sister, who was a nun. The nun had previously been informed that her sister had fallen into a serious sin. When she learned that the girl was outside the doors of the convent, the nun screamed at her, "Go far away from here. Since you are defiled, you will defile the convent and the nuns." Instead of feeling pity for her sister, and trying to lead her to repentance, the nun and some of the other nuns struck the poor girl and told her to go away.

The wretched girl cried, "I have made a mistake. Forgive me!"

The nun shrieked, "Go away, or I will kill you to wash away the shame you have brought to our family."

"Have you no pity, my sister, don't you share my pain?"

"No," the nun shouted, "you are not my sister, you are a foul harlot."

"Where shall I go?" she sobbed.

"Go and drown yourself," was the heartless reply.

The poor girl fled from the convent, bleeding and wounded, intending to kill herself. At that very moment, St Arsenius was on his way to visit the convent. Seeing the girl in such a state, he asked her what was wrong. She explained that she had been led astray by corrupt men and women. Realizing her sin, she went to the convent to ask her sister for help

"See what they have done to me, Elder. What do you advise me to do? Shall I drown myself, or leap off a cliff?"

"I do not advise you to do either, my child. If you wish, I shall take you with me and heal the wounds of your soul and body," he said gently.

"Where will you take me?" the miserable girl asked.

"To the convent, my child."

"I beg you not to take me there, Elder. My sister and the other nuns said they would kill me if I came back."

The saint replied, "Do not be afraid. They will not kill you, because I shall entrust you to Christ, and no one will be able to harm you."

"Very well," she said, "If you entrust me to Christ I will not be afraid of them, for Christ is more powerful than they."

St Arsenius led her to the convent, consoling her and encouraging her to repentance and confession. After hearing her confession, he made her a nun. Then he called all the nuns into the church and severely rebuked those who wounded the girl. He reminded them of the parable of the Prodigal Son, and of how Christ had come to save sinners. He often associated with sinners, showing them great love and mercy.

"You, however, have done the opposite. Though you knew that her soul had been wounded by the devil, you did not feel sorry for her. You did not embrace her and try to save her from further sin, but you attacked her and beat her. Then you urged her to kill herself. Now I, your Spiritual Father, tell you that you are not nuns, you are not Christians, you are not even human beings. You are devoid of compassion, affection, and sympathy. You are murderesses! Therefore, I forbid you to receive Holy Communion for three years, unless you recognize your sin. Repent and confess, weep and ask forgiveness from God and from me, your Spiritual Father, and from the other nuns who did not participate in your sinful behavior."

The nuns began to weep bitterly and they repented. Thus, he lessened their penance and forgave them. He gave the girl's sister the penance of not receiving Holy Communion for a whole year. Because the other nuns had shared in this sin, he would not permit them to receive Communion for six months.

(From Constantine Cavarnos, *Modern Orthodox Saints, Vol. 6: St. Arsenios of Paros*. Belmont, Mass.: Institute for Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies, 1978.)

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"By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion".

In these words of the Lenten Psalm, we Orthodox Christians, the New Israel, remember that we are in exile. For Orthodox Russians, the Psalm has a special meaning; but all Orthodox Christians, too, live in exile in this world, longing to return to our true home, Heaven.

For us the Great Fast is a session of exile ordained for us by our Mother, the Church, to keep fresh in us the memory of Zion from which we have wandered so far. We have deserved our exile and we have great need of it because of our great sinfulness. Only through the chastisement of exile, which we remember in the fasting, prayer and repentance of this season.

Do we remain mindful of our Zion?

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem..."

Weak and forgetful, even in the midst of the Great Fast we live as though Jerusalem did not exist for us. We fall in love with the world, our Babylon; we are seduced by the frivolous pastimes of this "strange land" and neglect the services and discipline of the Church which remind us of our true home. Worse yet, we love our very captors - for our sins hold us captive more surely than any human master - and in their service we pass in idleness the precious days of Lent when we should be preparing to meet the Rising Sun of the New Jerusalem, the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There is still time; we must remember our true home and weep over the sins which have exiled us from it. Let us take to heart the words of St. John of the Ladder: "Exile is separation from everything in order to keep the mind inseparable from God. An exile loves and produces continual weeping." Exiled from Paradise, we must become exiled from the world if we hope to return.

This we may do by spending these days in fasting, prayer, separation from the world, attendance at the services of the Church, in tears of repentance, in preparation for the joyful Feast that is to end this time of exile; and by bearing witness to all in this "strange land" of our remembrance of that even greater Feast that shall be when our Lord returns to take His people to the New Jerusalem, from which there shall be no more exile, for it is eternal.

Fr. Seraphim Rose