

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

Alexandra	Dennis	Paige	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Polly
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Nanette	Alexandra	Illisa	Rachael
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Erin and baby	Connie	Fr. George

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

Michael Pilja (+4/7)

Christine Henn (+4/21)

## **Random Liturgical Notes**

1. From today (the Sunday of St. Thomas) to the leavetaking of Pascha (this year on June 1) there are some changes to the Liturgy to reflect the Paschal season. The first is at the beginning of the Liturgy, when after the exclamation “Blessed is the Kingdom...”, the priest will sing the Paschal tropar two and one half times, with the third singing being completed by the choir and the people.

At that part of the Liturgy when we would normally sing to the Theotokos “You are truly deserving of glory..”, we will instead sing “The Angel cried...” followed by “Shine, shine O Jerusalem...”

2. Remember that in our daily prayers we also substitute “Christ is risen...” for the prayer to the Holy Spirit “O heavenly King...”

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## ***Words from the Fathers***

"...presumption alone, without any other sin, is enough to destroy the soul; for he who regards his sins as trivial is allowed to fall into those that are greater..."

*St. Peter of Damaskos*

"When tested by some trial you should try to find out not why or through whom it came, but only how to endure it gratefully, without distress or rancour."

*St. Mark the Ascetic*

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**ST. EPHRAIM THE GREAT MARTYR & WONDERWORKER - May 5th**

The holy New Martyr and wonderworker Ephraim was born in Greece on September 14, 1384. His father died when the saint was young, and his pious mother was left to care for seven children by herself.

When Ephraim reached the age of fourteen, the all-good God directed his steps to a monastery on the mountain of Amoman near Nea Makri in Attica. The monastery was dedicated to the Annunciation and also to St Paraskeva. Here he took on his shoulders the Cross of Christ, which all His followers must bear (Matt. 16:24). Being enflamed with love for God, St Ephraim eagerly placed himself under the monastic discipline. For nearly twenty-seven years he imitated the life of the great Fathers and ascetics of the desert. With divine zeal, he followed Christ and turned away from the attractions of this world. By the grace of God, he purified himself from soul-destroying passions and became an abode of the All-Holy Spirit. He was also found worthy to receive the grace of the priesthood, and served at the altar with great reverence and compunction.

On September 14, 1425, the barbarous Turks launched an invasion by sea, destroying the monastery and and looting the surrounding area. St Ephraim was one of the victims of their frenzied hatred. Many of the monks had been tortured and beheaded, but St Ephraim remained calm. This infuriated the Turks, so they imprisoned him in order to torture him and force him to deny Christ.

They locked him in a small cell without food or water, and they beat him every day, hoping to convince him to become a

Moslem. For several months, he endured horrible torments. When the Turks realized that the saint remained faithful to Christ, they decided to put him to death. On Tuesday May 5, 1426, they led him from his cell. They turned him upside down and tied him to a mulberry tree, then they beat him and mocked him. "Where is your God," they asked, "and why doesn't he help you?" The saint did not lose courage, but prayed, "O God, do not listen to the words of these men, but may Thy will be done as Thou hast ordained."

After extensive tortures, the saint died. These things remained forgotten for nearly 500 years, hidden in the depths of silence and oblivion until January 3, 1950. On that day, Abbess Makaria (+ April 23, 1999) was wandering through the ruins of the newly re-formed monastery on Amomos Mountain, thinking of the martyrs whose bones had been scattered over that ground, and whose blood had watered the tree of Orthodoxy. She realized that this was a holy place, and she prayed that God would permit her to behold one of the Fathers who had lived there.

After some time, she seemed to sense an inner voice telling her to dig in a certain spot. She indicated the place to a workman whom she had hired to make repairs at the old monastery. The man was unwilling to dig there, for he wanted to dig somewhere else. Because the man was so insistent, Mother Makaria let him go where he wished. She prayed that the man would not be able to dig there, and so he struck rock. Although he tried to dig in three or four places, he met with the same results. Finally, he agreed to dig where the abbess had first indicated.

In the ruins of an old cell, he cleared away the rubble and began to dig in an angry manner. The abbess told him to slow down, for she did not want him to damage the body that she expected to find there. He mocked her because she expected to find the relics of a saint. When he reached the depth of six feet, however, he unearthed the head of the man of God. At that moment an ineffable fragrance filled the air. The workman

turned pale and was unable to speak. Mother Makaria told him to go and leave her there by herself. She knelt and reverently kissed the body. As she cleared away more earth, she saw the sleeves of the saint's rason. The cloth was thick and appeared to have been woven on the loom of an earlier time. She uncovered the rest of the body and began to remove the bones, which appeared to be those of a martyr.

Mother Makaria was still in that holy place when evening fell, so she read the service of Vespers. Suddenly she heard footsteps coming from the grave, moving across the courtyard toward the door of the church. The footsteps were strong and steady, like those of a man of strong character. The nun was afraid to turn around and look, but then she heard a voice say, "How long are you going to leave me here?"

She saw a tall monk with small, round eyes, whose beard reached his chest. In his left hand was a bright light, and he gave a blessing with his right hand. Mother Makaria was filled with joy and her fear disappeared. "Forgive me," she said, "I will take care of you tomorrow as soon as God makes the day dawn." The saint disappeared, and the abbess continued to read Vespers.

In the morning after Matins, Mother Makaria cleaned the bones and placed them in a niche in the altar area of the church, lighting a candle before them. That night St Ephraim appeared to her in a dream. He thanked her for caring for his relics, then he said, "My name is St Ephraim." From his own lips, she heard the story of his life and martyrdom.

Since St Ephraim glorified God in his life and by his death, the Lord granted him the grace of working miracles. Those who venerate his holy relics with faith and love have been healed of all kinds of illnesses and infirmities, and he is quick to answer the prayers of those who call upon him.