

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Efthalia	Denny
Anthony	Paula	Kathleen	John L.
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Jason	Silouan	Susan Mary
Maximus	Emilia	Clint	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	John H.
Barbara	John	Pam	Gracie
Olga	Marina	Seraphim	Maria
Sophia	Danny	Katina	Jeffery
Andrea	Subdn. Gregory	Tad	Terra
Rachel	Katherine	Lilly	Joyce

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Seraphim	Evdokia
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige and Paul	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Barry Pierce	Rick P.	Susan K	Penny
Anna	Brian	Hugh	Raymond
Lane	Megan	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Thomas Pappas	Lillian Pappas
Pietra & Piero	Michael	Grover	Valentina
Mike	Ron	Brian	John Howard

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Michael Pilja (+4/7)

Fr. Michael Rosco (+5/15)

Michael Urban (+6/21)

Robert Beall (+6/24)

Thoughts from the Fathers

In the years of Constantine's triumph "...he pictured a united empire, spiritually renewed by a united Church. Suddenly, instead of his dream there was sad reality: new disputes and divisions. In all likelihood his Christian counselors gave him the idea of summoning a council of bishops, the customary means used by the Church to settle controversy. Constantine wanted to make of this council the symbol and crown of his own victory and of the new position of the Church in the empire. And so the first ecumenical council was summoned at

Nicaea in the spring of the year 325AD. It was universal, not in the number of bishops attending (tradition defines it as the council of the 318 Fathers), but in its conception and significance. For the first time, after centuries of semi-subterranean existence, prelates gathered from all parts of the Church, many still with the marks of wounds and mutilations received under Diocletian. The unprecedented magnificence of their reception and the hospitality and kindness of the emperor confirmed their joyous assurance that a new era had begun and that Christ was indeed victorious over the world.

Constantine himself was the first to interpret the council in this way. He had designated it for the twentieth anniversary of his reign and wanted a gala occasion and rejoicing, as he said in his speech to the assembled bishops on the opening day, disputes were ‘more dangerous than war and other conflicts; they bring me more grief than anything else.’”

Alexander Schmemmann, The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy

In ascending, the Lord left the world and the human race different from they had been when He descended to them. The earth then had been the accursed earth, and the human race had been the offspring of wrath. But this earth carried Him, saw His Transfiguration, preserved Him for three days within its depth, and was illuminated by His Resurrection. And the human race was given “the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (Jn. 1:12). God’s blessing was given to creation: “And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (Lk 24:50-51). The Lord ascended, blessing: He blessed His disciples and, in their persons, the entire human race. He blessed the earth and the waters, the air and all other natural things. And this blessing reposes upon the world, which is saved, redeemed, and once again blessed. The world remembers and preserves this blessing.

Sergius Bulgakov, “The Joy of Separation,” in Churchly Joy

Even the saints of God were at times seized with diabolical despair and despondency. What, therefore, can we sinners expect? O, the enemy often wounds us by the wrath, humiliation, and cruel despondency of the heart! We must continually turn to God and be every moment with Him, in order that we may not be besieged with the wrath and despondency of the enemy.

St. John of Kronstadt

"When despondency seizes us, let us not give in to it. Rather, fortified and protected by the light of faith, let us with great courage say to the spirit of evil: "What are you to us, you who are cut off from God, a fugitive for Heaven, and a slave of evil? You dare not do anything to us: Christ, the Son of God, has dominion over us and over all. Leave us, you thing of bane. We are made steadfast by the uprightness of His Cross. Serpent, we trample on your head."

St. Seraphim of Sarov

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Orthodox Prayer against Depression: Prayer to the Mother of God

O my beloved Queen, my hope, O Mother of God, protector of orphans and protector of those who are hurt, the saviour of those who perish, and the consolation of all who are in distress: Thou seest my misery, thou seest my sorrow and my loneliness. Help me; I am powerless. Give me strength. Thou knowest what I suffer, thou knowest my grief. Lend me thy hand, for who else can be my hope but thee, my protector and my intercessor before God? I have sinned before thee and before all people. Be thou my Mother, my consoler, my helper. Protect me and save me; chase grief away from me; chase away my lowness of heart and my despondency. Help me, O Mother of my God!

Day-by-Day...

Triumphing Love

A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:
and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,
and I will give you an heart of flesh (Ezek.36, 26)

What a torment it is when we realize that our heart has been turned into a stone! Has your soul cooled down? Do you feel distanced from God, dead, joyless, hopeless? Your prayers ceased, your light extinguished, you are oppressed by spiritual poverty, and you wonder if the Lord can still love you, the heartless, unworthy, and even maybe unfaithful one? Look then at the endless, unchangeable Love, which is the same for ages and ages; it does not change because of the changes within you, and it can warm even your stony heart up, having transfigured it by its power.

The Lord still loved Peter even then, when, not long before his denial, he was following him “afar off”. The look of unceasing Love of our Lord has crushed Peter’s heart and lit up in him the extinguished fire. This faithful Love of God belongs to you as well. Grab it, hold on to it, and step into its wonder right away.

Do you grieve after those, who used to be the joy of your life, but are in the Kingdom of Heaven now? Are you exhausted by the sorrow and bitterness of this separation? The heart connection with them is as alive as before. When your heart thirsts after reunion with them, look at the heights of Love of Christ.

The same Love, triumphing in the glory with those, who found salvation, freed from the earthly sin, hearing their singing of glory, is spread to your sorrow as well, hugging you empty heart from all the sides and forming a live connection between you and them.

The same Love, which encloses the heaven and earth, rejoices about those, who returned there, and those, who are still here. Believe, that your stony heart will be alive again and beat faster under the influence of this Love, for no difficulty of earthly life, nor height, nor depth of sorrows, nor any other creature, “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.8, 39)

(Translated by Tatiana Rozzell from “Every Day is a Gift from God. Diaries of an Orthodox Priest”, author unknown)