

Parish Prayer List (Living)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Thecla
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Susan Mary
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Connie
Lawrence	Emil	Seraphim	Evdokia
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Brian	Carolyn	Evangelos
Sharon & Bob	Kathy Tanner	Anthony	Pauline
Olga	Marina	Salvatore	Josephine
Nicholas (Nadja's brother)	Nina	Alma	Jason
Tatiana	Clint	Nadja	Travis
Randy	John	Chris	

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Andrew Kesselak (+7/14) Protodeacon John Youhas (+7/20)
Shawn Visconti (+7/21) Andrew Zatorsky (+8/8)
Mary Grace Beall (+9/2)

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Thoughts from the Fathers

Today the glad tidings go forth to the world. Today sweet fragrance is wafted forth, foretelling the glad tidings of salvation; and the barrenness of our nature hath been united: for the barren one hath become a mother to the one who remained a virgin after giving birth to the Creator; from whom cometh the God in nature, taking a foreign nature and working salvation in the flesh for the lost, Christ, the Lover of mankind, and the Deliverer of our souls.

Stephen the Jerusalemite, Second of his Stichera on "O Lord, I have cried..." at Vespers, The Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos

The joy of the whole world hath shone forth to us from the two righteous ones, Joachim and Anne, verily the all-extolled Virgin, who because of her surpassing purity became a living temple of God, and alone is known as truly Theotokos. Wherefore, by her intercessions, O Christ God, send forth safety to the world, and to our souls the Great Mercy.
Germanos the Patriarch, First Sticherion of the Aposticha,

*Vespers of the Feast of the Nativity of
the Theotokos*

The Fathers tell us that a man gains possession of the fear of God by keeping the thought of death before his mind and remembering eternal punishment, by examining himself each evening about how he has passed the day and each morning about how he has passed the night; by never giving rein to his tongue and by keeping in close and continual touch with a man possessed of the fear of God, as his spiritual director. A brother once said to one of the elders, 'What shall I do, Father, that I may learn to fear the Lord?' And he said, 'Go and become a disciple of a man possessed of the fear of the Lord.' We chase away from us the fear of the Lord by the fact that we do just the opposite; we do not keep before us the thought of death, or punishment, nor do we attend to our own condition, or examine how we spend our time, but we live differently and are occupied with different things, pandering to our liberty, giving way to ourselves, self-indulgence - this is the worst of all, this is perfect ruin. What chases away the fear of the Lord as effectively as indulging our fancies? And when he was asked again, 'Is it so very dangerous?' he said, 'Yes, there is nothing more dangerous than self-indulgence. It prepares the ground for all the vices because it chases out from the soul the fear of God.'

Saint Dorotheos of Gaza

In a few days it will be your birthday - you will be twenty-one years old, that is, you will be of age. I will be praying especially fervently for you, my boy, that the Lord help you to traverse your earthly path worthily and as righteously as possible, and to save your soul; that He grant you happiness, strength of soul and body, bravery and daring, and strong unwavering faith. The faith alone, that everything does not end here with our earthly existence, will give you the strength neither to cling, no matter what happens, to your own life....Believe firmly, without wavering, always pray fervently and with faith that the Lord will hear you. Fear nothing in the world save the Lord God, and guide your conscience by Him -

don't take anything else into consideration.

Martyr Alexander Antonovich Medem, Letter to His Son, Theodore, 1922

Theophan the Recluse wrote about prayer: 'Our life is in our heart and that's where we have to love; do not think that this is a task for the perfect. No, this is how all search for God begins. We begin to love only when our heart grows warm with an unfailing constant warmth. This is the fire that our Lord brought down on earth. Unfailing constant warmth in our heart' is the grace of God which abides in us and which makes our heart simple and sincere.

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Give Thanks!

Eat Your Meal with Prayer and Thanksgiving to God, So That It Would Be to Your Benefit

Why is it, brethren, that one would eat the most exquisite food but still complain about lack of flavor, poor appetite and poor health?

And why the other, on the contrary, would eat just bread and water, but at the same time will be happy with the meal, would not crave anything else and be in great health? In the first case, even the best of the best meals don't do any good to a man because he forgets, that food is a gift from God, that he must eat it with thanksgiving and prayer and be happy with what he gets; and for another one, bread and water are of a great benefit, because he thanks God for what he receives from His hands, and eats it with reverence and prayer.

Once upon a time, one prophetic elder was watching the monks at trapeza eating all the same food. And he saw how some were eating honey, others – bread, and the rest something very unclean. The elder was astonished by such a difference and prayed to God, saying: "Lord, uncover this mystery for me:

everyone at trapeza is offered the same food but why is it changed so much for some and it seems like some eating honey, some eating bread and others are eating something unclean”. And the elder heard a voice from above, saying: “Those, whom you saw eating honey, are receiving the meal with the fear of God, reverence and spiritual joy; they pray unceasingly and their prayer, like burning incense, ascending to God, and therefore their meal is like honey. Those, whom you saw eating bread, are happy with what God sent them. And those, whom you saw eating something unclean, - are those, who when receiving meal are complaining that smth is good and smth is rotten. Therefore one should not think like that but thank and give glory to God, as it is said: *“whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Cor. 10, 31).

It means that we: 1 – must be satisfied with what Lord gives us to eat; 2 – receive every meal with thanksgiving and prayer, and, 3 – remember, that only under these circumstances the food will be both good in taste and beneficial for the health. This is true, look at the zealots of old times: some of them ate grains and roots, but lived over hundred years. And look at some modern Christians: they change their food all the time, but at the same time are constantly sick and many don't even make it till the half age.

It is clear that some lived till old age because they did not care about food, ate little and always received their meals with a prayer; and the other ones are very selective in their food, eat too much, and often forget even to cross themselves before eating. Let us not be like them, brethren! Let us be satisfied with what God sends us and let us not forget to thank God for the food. We don't need to follow the fashion: *Whosoever therefore, says the Lord, shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.* (Mk. 8, 38). Let us not forget this. Amen.