

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

*(Parish)*

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

*(non-Parish)*

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Tetiana	Rick P.	Susan K	Michael C.
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Josephine	Billy Ray	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Fr. Dan Mahler	Constance G.
Tony	Donna	Seraphim	Evdokia
Jeff	Andrea	Subdcn. Gregory	Juan
Jennifer Mary	Barry Pierce	Dan Brown	Joe and Jessie

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

Mary Grace Beall (+9/2)

Olga Rustick (+9/14)

Lois Lynn (+10/11)

Mary Beach (+10/27)

### **Thoughts from the Fathers**

The enemy tries in every way to divert a Christian from [the Jesus] prayer. He fears it and hates it most of all. Truly, by the power of God a man who always does this prayer is preserved unharmed from the snares of the enemy. When a man is totally permeated by this prayer the gates of Paradise are opened to him, and even though he hasn't received any special gifts or grace on earth, his soul will boldly cry out: "Open unto me the gates of righteousness" (Ps. 117:19).

*Saint Barsanuphius of Optina*

Peace is an inner state of the heart and of the mind. But Christian peace is not a mere psychological condition; rather, it

is a ‘relationship.’ Christian peace flows from the believers relationship with God and with other people. It’s impossible for a person to have a good, peaceful relationship with God and not enjoy peace with others. So if our relationship with God or others suffers, our peace will flee from us. Every person who does not feel a full, deep, eternal peace within him will find his relationship with God distorted. There is a hard verse, which I am reluctant to quote, but here it is: “There is no peace for the wicked” (Is. 57:21, NKJ). Any deformation in our relationship with God, or friends, or family, or colleagues, or even with enemies, causes our peace to flee. That is why Christ focused strongly on man’s relationship with his neighbor....He desires peace to sink deep within us; for without this, He cannot reign over our hearts.

*Matthew the Poor*

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Life of SAINT THEKLA

According to ancient Syrian and Greek manuscripts, Saint Thekla was born into a prosperous pagan family in the Lycaonian city of Iconium (present-day Konya in south-central Turkey) in A.D. 16. When she was 18 years old and betrothed to a young man named Thamyris, Saint Paul the Apostle and Saint Barnabas arrived in Iconium from Antioch (Acts 14). Thekla’s mother Theokleia prohibited her from joining the crowds which gathered to hear Paul preach. But Thekla found that if she sat near her bedroom window she could hear his every word. Thekla sat there for three days and three nights listening to Paul preach the word of God. She was particularly touched by his call to chastity. As it became apparent that Thekla was becoming interested in the new Faith, Theokleia and Thamyris went to the governor of the city and complained about Paul and his preaching. To pacify them and the other outraged citizens of Iconium, the governor had Paul imprisoned to await trial. When Thekla learned of Paul’s arrest she secretly went to the prison, and using her golden bracelets to bribe the guard, gained admittance to his cell. When she saw the Apostle she knelt before him and kissed the chains which bound his hands and feet. She remained there a long time listening to his message of the Good News of Jesus Christ. Being concerned at Thekla’s prolonged absence, Theokleia and Thamyris asked her servant if she knew where she was. The servant

said that Thekla had gone to visit an imprisoned stranger. Theokleia and Thamyris knew at once that she was with Paul. They decided to go again to the governor, this time demanding immediate judgement for the Apostle. After the governor chastened Paul for the disturbances he had caused in the city, he had him stoned and expelled from Iconium. The governor then admonished Thekla for her foolishness and commanded her to return home with her mother and fiancé. When Thekla announced that she had vowed to remain a virgin for the sake of Christ, her mother became enraged and asked the governor to threaten Thekla with severe punishment. The governor complied with this wish and ruled that Thekla was to be burned at the stake unless she renounced her faith in Christ.

When Thekla refused to renounce her Heavenly Bridegroom, she was taken to the arena for punishment. As she was tied to the stake she saw a vision of Jesus Christ which gave her strength to face the flames. The fire was lit, but as the flames came near Thekla a thunderstorm suddenly arose and a great torrent of rain and hail came down from heaven and extinguished the flames. Embarrassed because his plan had failed, the angry governor released Thekla but commanded that she must leave Iconium at once.

Upon her release, Thekla went to the outskirts of the city where she rejoined Paul. She told him of her trial and miraculous escape from punishment and asked for baptism. Paul refused to baptize Thekla, saying that this would be accomplished in God's own way and time. Paul and Thekla then departed from the region of Iconium and traveled to Antioch in Syria. As they were entering the city a young nobleman named Alexander saw Thekla. Being entranced by her beauty he rushed forward and tried to seduce her, but Thekla fought him off, thus disgracing him in front of his crowd of friends.

Alexander went to the governor of Antioch and complained that this wandering girl had disgraced him, a nobleman, in public. He demanded that she be punished with death. The governor complied and ruled that Thekla would face the wild beasts in the arena.

Thekla's only reply was that she be allowed to preserve her virginity unto death. Her wish was granted and she was given into the care of the noblewoman Tryphaena, a relative of Caesar, until the time of punishment.

When Thekla was taken to the arena, a lioness was set free to attack her. But to the astonishment of the crowd, the lioness approached the Saint and sat tamely at her feet. A bear was then released, but as it

came close to Thekla the lioness rose up to defend her and killed the bear. A large lion was then released. The lioness again came to Thekla's defense killing the lion, but losing her own life also. Then all the cages were opened and a large number of wild animals charged at the defenseless Thekla. After crossing herself and praying for courage, the Saint noticed a large tank of water which was nearby, containing the aquatic animals. She climbed into the water, asking that she might be baptized by Christ as she did so. Seeing that the beasts were unable to harm Thekla, Alexander asked that the Saint be given over to him for punishment. He tied her to two large bulls in the hopes that they would pull her asunder. But when the bulls charged off in opposite directions, the ropes which held Thekla to them were miraculously loosened and she was spared. Seeing that no harm could be done to Thekla, the authorities released her. She went to the home of Tryphaena where she remained for eight days preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ and converting Tryphaena and her entire household. When she departed from Antioch, Tryphaena gave her a treasure in gold and precious jewels.

After she left Antioch, Thekla journeyed to Myra where she rejoined Paul. She informed him of all that had occurred, including her baptism and asked that she might be permitted to spend the remainder of her life as an ascetic. Paul gave her his blessing and she departed, leaving with Paul all the gold and jewels that Tryphaena had given her so that he might distribute them among the poor and needy.

Thekla then traveled again to Syria where she went up into the mountains for a life of prayer and solitude. Many years later a young pagan found her praying in an isolated canyon and resolved to harass her and spoil her virginity. As he approached her and blocked her only exit to safety, she prayed that her Bridegroom would protect her as He had so many times in the past. At that moment the canyon wall was miraculously split allowing her to escape through a narrow crack in the rock.

Saint Thekla continued her life of asceticism and then peacefully fell asleep in Christ at the age of 90. Shortly after her death a community of virgins went to live in her mountain cell, building a small chapel to enshrine her body. This Convent of Saint Thekla still exists today near the village of Ma'loula, Syria.

Because of her many sufferings for the Faith the Church counts her as a “Protomartyr”. And because she converted so many people to Christianity she is also know as an “Equal-to-the-Apostles”.