

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
Barry Pierce	Rick P.	Susan K	Michael C.
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Josephine	Billy Ray	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Astilee	Dan Brown
Tony	Donna	Joe and Jessie	Sherry

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Lois Lynn (+10/11)

Alvin Dizon

Betty Pilja (+12/6)

Josephine Urban (+12/15)

Mary Beach (+10/27)

William Matheson

Mary Louise Blomeley (+12/10)

Dominick LoGalbo (+12/25)

Thoughts from the Fathers

Do all in your power not to fall, for the strong athlete should not fall. But if you do fall, get up again at once and continue the contest. Even if you fall a thousand times because of the withdrawal of God's grace, rise up again each time, and keep on doing this until the day of your death. For it is written, 'If a righteous man falls down seven times' — that is, repeatedly throughout his life — 'seven times shall he rise again' [Prov. 24:16].

St John of Karpathos

The Lord's disciples are not only those who are called Christians because of His name, but those who truly confess Him to be their Lord. Shame, timidity, and hesitation are insupportable when one confesses Him. Confession requires decisive selflessness. Such a confession was offered to the Lord by the holy martyrs, who drenched the whole expanse of the earth with their blood and proclaimed their holy witness to the knowledge of God and reverence for God to the whole world.

Saint Ignatius Brianchaninov

I suppose that it is sometimes better to fall oneself and rise, than to judge one's neighbor; because one who has sinned is incited to self-abasement and repentance, while he who judges one who has sinned becomes hardened in an illusion about himself and in pride. Therefore everyone must guard himself, as much as possible, so as not to judge.

Abbot Nazarius of Valaam

Before any fall into sin the demons bring upon a man the following passions: dark forgetfulness; fierce anger, that is, inhuman and beast like malice; and ignorance, like darkness which has no trace of light. These three passions precede every sin. For a man does not perform a single sin before he has become disposed towards every sin, towards every evil, either by forgetfulness or by anger or by ignorance. From these proceed insensitivity of soul, that is, the mind, which is the eye of the soul, remains dark and is then captivated by all the passions. The first to be born is a weakness of faith; weakness of faith gives birth to self-love, the beginning and end, the root and origin of every evil.

Saint Paisius Velichkovsky

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The Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple: Praxis and Theoria for the World's Salvation

“Today is the preview of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. The Virgin appears in the temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all. Let us rejoice and sing to her: Rejoice, O Divine Fulfillment of the Creator’s dispensation.”

Today we celebrate the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple of the Lord, a solemn and joyous feast in the Orthodox Church, for it foreshadows our own redemption. It demonstrates, quite literally, how small and simple steps in the right direction can literally transform a human life and elevate it to a new level of holiness and participation in God. The Virgin Mary not only was sanctified by entering the temple, but also sanctified that Temple by a simple life of humble reverence and piety before God her Savior. In fact, she became the new temple by bearing within her womb God the Word.

Even our entrance into the Temple of the Church can be a highly significant way of demonstrating our dedication of God. Prior to the mystery of Holy Baptism, catechumens are given a choice at the threshold of the Church. They are exorcised of evil spirits and then they are led into the Temple, so that they can be immersed in the life of the Holy Trinity through Holy Baptism. Every time, we go to Church, we need to relive that baptismal decision by taking humble, but committed steps of devotion and piety, imitating the steps of that most pure maiden in Jerusalem. Lacking the Virgin’s celestial purity and childlike simplicity, we should enter the Church with heads bowed, with a light and timid step, devoutly making the sign of the Cross with our right hand, and whispering a “God be merciful to me a sinner” with our lips.

Through Holy Baptism, we are also called to be holy temples of God wherein the Triune God dwells and is present. However, if we are to become true temples of God, we must imitate our Lady Theotokos and dwell within the temple in stillness and prayer. In the Temple, the Most Pure Virgin grew increasingly humble and open to the will of God, becoming so like unto the Lord in goodness and virtue that she was able to

bear the Holy of Holies, Christ the Lord. If Christ is to be born in us, we must imitate her actions. We must commit our hearts and seal that commitment with our actions; we must dedicate ourselves to Him just as the holy child Mary was dedicated to God by her parents. In *Ancient Christian Wisdom*, I describe this as *praxis*, which means not only our decision to commit to a life dedicated to God, but also our taking physical steps, bowing down before Christ, making prostrations, going to Church, venerating icons and all with the humble mindset of that lowly, yet spiritually exalted, maiden in Palestine of old. And we must not forget that *praxis* loses its meaning without *theoria*, which means being attentive, being watchful, being aware of what we are doing, how we are doing it, and why we are doing it, all at the same moment of time that God has graciously given us.

It's interesting to note that neither the Theotokos' entry into the Temple nor her life therein are recorded in the canonical Scriptures, for these are not the good tidings to be proclaimed to the nations, although they proclaim to the faithful the coming of Christ. Everything about the most pure Virgin is veiled in humility and modesty, and for that reason is exalted beyond the Cherubim and the Seraphim. The events in her most sacred life, passed down through Sacred Tradition, bear witness to a silent mystery to be lived by those initiated into the faith of Christ. The Virgin's stillness, humility, holiness, and ascetic struggle were hidden with Christ in God (Col.3:3) as an exemplar for our own life of asceticism that is to be a hidden, but robustly active life in thought and deed, known only to God and one's spiritual father. Nevertheless, the fruits of such a life should be abundantly clear to all those who have eyes to see. And that fruit is the tangible presence of Christ, the fruit of the Virgin's womb, in our very midst.

Fr. Alexis Trader