

Parish Prayer List (Living)

Alexandra	Rachael	Paige	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Susan Mary
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Lawrence	Emil	Seraphim	Evdokia
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Brian	Carolyn	Monk Nicholas
Evan Daniel	Kathy Tanner	Anthony	Pauline
Olga	Marina	Salvatore	Josephine

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Nicholas Georgeopoulos (+11/3) Mildred Zelko (+10/31)
Betty Pilja (+12/6) Josephine Urban (+12/15)
Mary Louise Blomeley (+12/10) John Reymers (+11/17)

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Words from the Fathers

Abba John the Short said, “If a king wanted to take possession of his enemy’s city, he would begin by cutting off the water and the food, and so his enemies, dying of hunger, would submit to him. It is the same with the passions of the flesh: if a man goes about fasting and hungry, the enemies of his soul grow weak.

Desert Fathers

It is not by chance and not without meaning that in the Orthodox Church the community invoke divine aid in order to understand the Scriptures. In every Divine Liturgy before the reading of the Gospel, the priest prays: “O merciful Master, cause the pure light of the knowledge of Thee to shine in our hearts and open the eyes of our mind to perceive the proclamation of Thy Gospel.” Scripture cannot be approached by reading but by understanding, and this understanding is wrought through the Church. The Church opens the path towards understanding and the Church has the power to open this road because she does not base herself upon human judgment but upon the original apostolic interpretation. *Christopher Veniamin, “Holy Scripture and Councils,”*

Some philosophers once visited an elder, and after he had offered a prayer he remained silent, braiding cord and paying no attention to them. They besought him, saying, "Say something to us, father," but he held his peace. They said to him, "This is what we came for: to hear you say something and to benefit." The elder said to them, "You spend your money to learn how to speak: I left the world to learn how to keep silent." They were filled with amazement on hearing this and went their way edified.

*John Moschus Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow) 222
early 7th century*

We know that the Lord became man, and we know Him as a Man. He came that near to us. He came close to us, not only in spirit, but also in the flesh, for we are His kin. Since this is so, we must strive to get close to Him in our heart. When we think about a certain person often, we begin to love that person. Do you understand? It is impossible to love a person if we do not pay any attention to him for a long time and do not think about him. Let us think about the Lord in the same way, all the time.
Elder Thaddeus, "On Prayer, # 21, Our Thoughts Determine our Life

A man's heart can never be empty. It is always filled with something: either with hell, the world, or God. A heart's contents are intrinsically linked with its purity. There was a time when the heart of man was filled only with God - a mirror of the beauty of God, a harp for the praise of God. There was a time when it was, in truth, in the hand of God, preserved from danger; but when man, in his madness, took things into his own hands, many wild beasts attacked the heart of man; and from there has, inwardly, come the bondage of the heart of man and, outwardly, that which is seen as the history of the world.
Saint Nikolai of Zhicha, "Homily on the Annunciation"

"A time is coming when people will go mad and when they see someone who is not mad, they will attack him, saying 'You are mad, you are not like us.'"

- *St. Anthony the Great*

The day after Thanksgiving ...

On the day after Thanksgiving, in the brightness of a clear afternoon, the late autumn sun shone free on an Orthodox cupola. Beneath its vaulted arches, my wife and daughter and I stared dumbfounded at a heavenly thing of beauty. It was two icons of the Theotokos, holding her Son and Lord.

The sun gleamed, and in its shining we saw, with our own eyes, the welling up of a substance on the surfaces of both icons a substance that could barely be called "oil," so light it was, so delicate even in sight and even more so to the touch, by our trembling fingers and shuddering lips.

The oil of weeping does not proceed from the substance of the icon. Another priest has said, and I fully agree, that the oil descends from the Hand of God, and settles like manna upon this eschatological object, this icon made by our hands, upon this part of sanctified earth -- the earth we present in our uplifted hearts when we pray, "Thine own of Thine own."

This oil, whose scent is anticipated (but not comprehended) by roses, is manna on the Sabbath day, in the rest of believers who have come to the mountain.

I looked and beheld, out of the darkness. I touched with my own grasp, into the light. And thus will not deny. I will not minimize, nor can I ignore. I will not explain, for there is nothing that can be scientifically defined. The Lord is at joyful play with our calculations, and will dance above our adult demands for rationalization. He, I think, enjoys our scientific discomfiture.

I told my friend, the priest who is now guardian of these icons that weep, this: "I have a thousand scientific questions, and not a one of them can be answered, and I rejoice that *they cannot be.*"

We left after kneeling on the floor in tears. We left, singing “Bohorodice D’ivo,” understanding better the greeting sung by Gabriel, who knows how to praise.

We left then, for the road and the remains of the day.

But that day of Thanksgiving will continue to lodge and grow in our memory. It captivates our imaginations, and radiates blessing in our hearts. More and more of our thoughts, and emotions, and intentions, are invaded by this single grace.

My friend will still not call the News. So this miracle may never be reported by the media outlets. Commentators will not comment; pundits will not opine. These weeping icons will not become a trending issue on the net.

It will thus escape the gravitation of the world, and will fly away from the notice of history, and into legend, where more true things reside than the sensible world would ever think.

It will ascend, like the feather of a dove, into the skyward vaults of hope.

The world, caught in the mace of black Fridays, will tally its columns, and will not notice. The world cannot hope, and thus cannot see the Signs.

Inasmuch as the world would not see Him, they will not see His meaning nor His Father, and *can* not hope.

We, though, on the day after Thanksgiving, said “Surely the Lord is in this place.”

And it is up to us whether that place will descend from a single location in experience, to the more profound substance of our hearts ... whether that place will remain in prayer and peace, kindness and eternal memory, and change our mourning into joy. – *Fr. Jonathan Tobias*