



# St. Innocent Orthodox Church

✙ Founded in 1967 ✙ Moscow Patriarchal Parishes ✙

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PASTOR: Rt. Rev. Mitered Archpriest ROMAN STAR † Cell: 313-319-0590

Dean, Central States Deanery, Patriarchal Parishes

February 21, 2016

ASSISTANT PRIEST: Rev. DANEIL SHIRAK † 313-295-3073

EPISTLE: 2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 3:10 - 15 (#296)

DEACON: Rev. Dn. Michael Comerford

GOSPEL: St. Luke 18:10 - 14 (#89)

SUBDEACON: Dr. Joshua Genig

TONE: 5

ATTACHED: Sister Ioanna

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Elizabeth Star Hatfield

READERS: Robert Joseph Latsko & George Hanoian

## ✙ PUBLICAN & PHARISEE SUNDAY: Pre-Lenten Sunday #1 ✙

† 9:15am—HOURS, AKATHIST OR CANON; CONFESSIONS †

† 10am—DIVINE LITURGY OF ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM †

**COMMEMORATED TODAY:** Beginning of the Lenten Triodion. Ven. Timothy of Symbola in Bithynia (9th c.). St. Eustathius (Eustace), Archbishop of Antioch (377). St. George, Bishop of Amastris on the Black Sea (802-811). The "KOZEL'SHCHANSKAYA" Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos (1881).

**FOR THE REPOSE OF:** Estelle & Joseph Star; Anna & John Witkowski; Michael Sr. & Margaret Rusko; Mary, Andrew, Daniel, Michael & Lottie Yakuber; Ross & Margaret Falsetti; Helen, John & Carole Andrayko; Peter & Theresa Harvilla; Marc Dade; Betty Martell; Frances & Todd Smoly; Peter Glover; Irene Adams; Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver; David Horka; Michael Rusko, Anna Lichagina, Yelena & Zinaida Korniyevskaya, Joseph Nossal, Michelle Tucker, Todd Comerford

**ALSO FOR:** John Bacik (newly departed, January 21, in Passaic, NJ) (*brother of Fr. Lawrence, St. Elias Church, Battle Creek*)  
**MEMORY** Boris Nicoloff (newly departed, January 31; St. Paul Church in Dearborn Hts.), *by Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie*  
**ETERNAL!** John Johnson (newly departed, February 7<sup>th</sup>; St. Andrew Church, E. Lansing), *by Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie*  
 Fr John Udies (newly departed, February 7<sup>th</sup>; St. Andrew Church, ), *by Fr. Roman*

**FOR THE HEALTH OF:** Archimandrite Seraphim; Priest Daneil, Matushka Debra & Corrina Shirak; Deacon Michael, Matushka Mary Ellen & Julius Comerford; Matushka Mary Donahue; Subdeacon Joshua & Abigail Genig; Reader Robert Latsko, Reader George & Betty Hanoian, Rose Nossal, Mary Glover, Nancy Cupp, Deborah Dade, Vasiliki Stamoulis, Gerald Martell, Azbehat, Donald Yakuber, Carl deVyver, Jo Anne Nicholas, Joan Rusko, Daria, Alice Ladhu (*cancer*); Joseph Nossal; Ed Manier (*recovering from stroke*); Ted Gomulka

**ALSO FOR:** Matushka Rose Marie, who celebrates her birthday on Tuesday, 23 February  
**MANY YEARS!** Elizabeth Star Hatfield, who celebrates her birthday on Tuesday, 23 February  
 Kim & Mark Hancock, who celebrate their wedding anniversary on Thursday, 25 February

✙ **MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!** ✙

### SCHEDULE FOR THE COMING WEEK

\*\*\* No Fasting on Wednesday & Friday this Week \*\*\*

Saturday	2/27	4pm	GREAT VESPERS & CONFESSIONS
Sunday	2/28		2 <sup>nd</sup> Pre-Lenten Sunday: Prodigal Son Sunday — (Triodion continues until Pascha)
		9:15am	HOURS. AKATHIST OR CANON; CONFESSIONS
		10am	DIVINE LITURGY, followed by Coffee Hour

Feastdays this week: Saturday, 2/27, St. Raphael of Brooklyn

### PROSPHORA FOR TODAY IS OFFERED BY: Matushka Rose Marie & Fr. Roman

**In Memory Eternal of:** Joseph & Estelle Star; Paul & Alexandra; Basil & Ellen; John & Anna; Samuel & Mary; Thomas & Rose; Olga, Joseph, Marsha, Richard, Tom, Julia, George, Olga, Joseph, Ellen, and all departed family members & parishioners of St. Innocent; and

**For the Health of:** Fr. Roman (B-day, 2/4), Mat. Rose Marie (B-day, 2/23), Elizabeth (B-day, 2/23), Larry, Caitlin, Zachary, Thomas (B-day, 3/12), Barbara, Harry, Gregory, Tamiko; all family members & parishioners of St. Innocent.

✙ CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST! ✙ HE IS NOW & ALWAYS SHALL BE! ✙

## CANDLES FOR LAST SUNDAY, 14 FEBRUARY

### CHURCH VIGIL LAMPS:

*Royal Doors Lamp:* In Memory of Husband Joe; Son Kenneth; parents Michael & Margaret Rusko, & John & Martha Nossal, *by Rose Nossal*

*Altar Candles:* In Memory of Nicholas and Susan Yakuber, *by son, Donald Yakuber*

*Iconostasis Lamps:* In Memory of parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua; Robert David H; & Health of brother, Carl, *by Sister Ioanna*

*Candles on the Solea:* In Memory of Pete & Theresa Harvilla, Norman & Monica Holst, & Ricky Ellis, *by Jason & Debra Truskowski*

*Nave Reliquary-Icon Lamps:* (1) In Memory of Ross & Margaret Falsetti, *by daughters, Margie Martell & Rose Ann Everhardt*

*Nave Reliquary-Icon Lamps:* (2) In Memory of Edwin Rusko, *by the Nossal Family*

*Table of Oblation Lamp:* In Memory of parents, Helen & John Andrayko, Sr. & sister, Carole Andrayko, *by John Andrayko, Jr.*

### IN MEMORY OF (MEMORY ETERNAL!)

Joseph & Estelle Star, *by son Father Roman and family*

Paul & Alexandra Yupco, Basil & Ellen Starinshak, *by grandson, Father Roman and family*

John & Anna Witkowski, *by daughter, Matushka Rose Marie and family*

Samuel & Mary Kupec, *by granddaughter, Matushka Rose Marie and family*

Parents, Helen & John Andrayko, and sister, Carole Andrayko, *by John Andrayko*

My husband, Joe; my sisters, Margaret & Ross Falsetti, Anna & Mike Elascat, Theresa & Pete Harvilla, Irene, & brothers, Michael, John & Edwin Rusko; niece, Rose Mary & Dean Hough; Joe's brothers, Raymond & Walter Nossal, & sisters, Theresa, Florence & Helen Nossal, *by Rose Nossal* + + + Pete & Theresa Harvilla, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay Truskowski* + + + My husband, Michael Rusko, *by Joan Rusko*

Parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua; David H; Nina I; Marion P; Fr. Photius; Mo. Benedicta; Archm. Roman; Olive, *by Sister Ioanna*

Child Lana Wilson, Shirley Troyer, Marsha Olsen, Betty Stelmaszek, *by Becky Jurczyszyn*

### FOR THE HEALTH OF: (MANY YEARS!)

Elizabeth & Lawrence, Caitlin & Zachary, *by parents & grandparents, Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie*

Gregory & Tamiko Star, *by parents, Father Roman & Matushka Rose Marie*

Children, Grandchildren & Great-grandchild; Monk Fr. Sdn. Tikhon (Dade); *by Rose Nossal*

Father Roman & Matushka & family; Sister Ioanna; John Andrayko; Nancy; Mary G; Jo Anne N; Grandson Joey (*in the Navy Reserves*) & all people in the Armed Forces; & all the people of St. Innocent Church, *by Rose Nossal*

My Mom, Jaime Truskowski, *by Kay Truskowski* + + + Family & Friends, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay T.*

Brother, Greg & Donna, nephew, Gregory & Liz & nephew, Alex, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay* + + + Ed Manier, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay*

Archimandrites Nafanail, Gregory & Seraphim; Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie; Fr. Lawrence & fam; Fr. Laurence & fam; Fr. Daneil & fam; Dcn.

Michael & fam; Mat. Mary D; Carl; Sdn Fr. Tikhon; Sdn Andrew; Sdn Joshua, Abigail & children; Rdr Robert; Robert M; David Samuel & Sky & new baby, Avi; Jo Anne & Nick; Athanasius; John A; Ed (*stroke*) & Tiffany; Vasiliki; Rose; Emil; Billy & Fonda, *by Sister Ioanna*

Jay Nossal, *by Rose Nossal* + + + John Andrayko (May God watch over him), *by Rose Nossal* + + + Rose Nossal, *by John Andrayko*

Joan & Bob Jurczyszyn, Leia & Mike & Rece(?) Wilson, Levi Troyer, Damon Trestain, Liz Tomechewsky & Andrea Faust, Toni & Holle(?)

Bussen, *by Becky Jurczyszyn* + + + Sdn. Joshua Genig, *by Genig Family* + + + Shirley Peponis, *by brother, Nick & JoAnne*

Galina Chernukhina, Oleg Chernukhin + + + Marianna, Jason, Amilia, Liliana Wess + + + Wess family: Eric, Patricia, Randy, Dena

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**THE TRIODION BEGINS TODAY.** What is the Triodion? This is the name of a large service book that contains the special texts for all the Divine Services between now and Pascha, in other words, for Great Lent and the 4 preparatory Sundays (and all the other weekday services). Therefore, today we start using the hymns & prayers in the Triodion, and continue until Pascha. Today is the 1<sup>st</sup> Pre-Lenten or Preparatory Sunday, when the Gospel is the Parable of the Pharisee & the Publican. (Pharisees were the elite, educated Jewish religious leaders who studied the Bible in depth, and publicans were the despised, immoral tax-collectors.) Next Sunday is the Parable of the Prodigal Son Sunday, and then Meatfare & Cheesefare/Forgiveness Sundays. In preparation for the rigors of the Great Fast to come, this week we do not fast at all. Meatfare Sunday (3/6) is the last day we eat meat, and Cheesefare (3/13) is the last day we eat dairy products until Pascha. The Great Fast/Lent begins Monday, 3/14.

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### ANNOUNCEMENTS

**1) SUPPLIES NEEDED FOR THE KITCHEN & COFFEE HOUR, etc.:** Please be so kind as to bring in some needed supplies: paper towels; 8-oz. (foam) cups; 6-oz. (juice) cups; coffee-stirrers; bottled water; 1-gallon zip-lock baggies; micro-fiber dust cloths; tiny 2-oz. plastic cups

**2) NEW ITEMS ON OUR CHURCH'S WEBSITE: (1) FEBRUARY, MARCH & APRIL Calendars** up to Pascha, at: <http://stinnocentchurch.com/calendar.html>. **(2)** Sdn. Joshua's latest *Meditation, "Getting Jesus' Attention"* at: [http://stinnocentchurch.com/getting\\_jesus\\_attention.html](http://stinnocentchurch.com/getting_jesus_attention.html)

**(3) PHOTO SLIDE-SHOW, "FR. JEROME (SANDERSON) VISITS ST. INNOCENT ON FEB. 7<sup>th</sup>**

**3) LISTEN EVERY SUNDAY TO THE COCC'S DETROIT'S OWN ORTHODOX RADIO HOUR [DOOR] ON WNZK 690-AM, 4-5 pm, or on your computer, live, at <http://www.doorradio.org>.** This website also has an archive of all its previous weekly programs. **Today, Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>,** Fr. Jerome Sanderson, renowned iconographer & wood-carver, will be discussing the holy art of Orthodox Iconography.

**4) A SERIES OF 3 FREE LECTURES BY ABBOT FR. TRYPHON, AT ST. DEMETRIUS CHURCH IN JACKSON, on Friday and Saturday, March 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>.** Fr. Tryphon is the Abbot of the Orthodox Monastery of the All-Merciful Savior on Vashon Island, Washington, near Seattle, and does daily podcasts at: <http://www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/morningoffering>. On Friday, 3/25, 7 -8:30pm, his **1<sup>st</sup> lecture** is: "The Destruction of the Image of God in the Womb and How to Restore It." At 10am on Sat. the **2<sup>nd</sup> lecture** is "The Destruction of the Image of God in the Individual and How to Restore It." After lunch (12 - 1), the **3<sup>rd</sup> lecture** is "The Destruction of the Image of God in the Family and Nation and How to Restore It." The day ends with Vespers at 3:00. St. Demetrius Church is located at 3043 Seymour Rd, Jackson. See directions at: [www.stdemetrius.com](http://www.stdemetrius.com). He is a fantastic speaker. Visit the Vashon Monastery's website (<http://vashonmonks.com/wp/>) to hear and see Fr. Tryphon talking on YouTube programs.

## WHO DO I RESEMBLE?

By Fr. Steven Kostoff

*Christ the Savior-Holy Spirit Church, Cincinnati, Ohio*

February 16, 2016



The Gospel reading at the Divine Liturgy for February 21, 2016 — the first of the four pre-Lenten Sundays — is Luke 18:10-14. In it we discover our Lord’s *Parable of the Publican and the Pharisee*.

As with all of the parables of Christ, we can understand this parable in two very different ways. We can listen to it carefully, reflect upon it through the course of the week, and discern what in the parable “speaks” to us today. Or we can take a “ho-hum” attitude — essentially forgetting the parable by the time we return home from the Liturgy — while moving on to the next distraction on our busy schedules (which now includes Sundays), and conclude that the parable does not really apply to us anyway.

For those who actually “hear” the parable of the Publican and the Pharisee, the first question that may arise is very basic: Do I resemble the Publican or the Pharisee in my attitude toward God and my neighbor? Other questions follow: Am I also afflicted with self-righteous pride, as was the Pharisee of the parable, or is my goal at least the slow and patient road of learning and practicing humility? Then there is a blunt but honest question: Do I even care? Somewhat unusual for the parables is that the intention of this parable is clearly stated before Christ actually delivers it: “He also told this parable to some who trusted themselves that they were righteous and despised others” [Luke 18:9]. Is this a fair description of me when I enter the church on any given Sunday? If so, what could I possibly do to change such an attitude?

With the best of intentions, we could possibly turn this great opportunity for “self-examination” into the ho-hum approach of selective forgetfulness or remembrance, wherein we forget the parable but remember the score of whatever game was on television later in the day or evening. That would be a colossal example of a missed opportunity. Perhaps one way to spare everyone from the ho-hum approach would be to provide the insights of others during the week — Church Fathers or contemporary writers — on this parable of the Publican and the Pharisee. This way, at least the material that lends itself to meditation will be present, and then we can choose to avail ourselves of it — or not.

A good beginning could be this passage from the Blessed Augustine:

*“How useful and necessary a medicine is repentance. People who remember that they are only human will readily understand this. It is written: ‘God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble....’ The Pharisee was not rejoicing so much in his own clean bill of health as in comparing it with the diseases of others. He came to the doctor. It would have been more worthwhile to inform him by confession of the things that were wrong with himself instead of keeping his wounds secret and having the nerve to crow over the scars of others. It is not surprising that the tax collector went away cured, since he had not been ashamed of showing where he felt pain.”*

# DANDELIONS —

## A Valentine's Day Message

by Fr. Stephen Powley

*Executive Director, Orthodox Christian Prison Ministry*



Can you tell the difference between a flower and a weed? Many folks in our society view people in prison as weeds. But as Orthodox Christians, we take a different view. We believe that every person has the potential to be a flower — people in prison, and you and me.

Many years ago I had the opportunity to take my oldest daughter to a concert for her birthday present. We went to see her favorite group, Five Iron Frenzy, a Christian Ska band. As we stood in line at a theater in downtown Denver, I began to wonder what I had gotten us into! Drug dealers were walking and driving up and down the street. There were wild looking

young folks with huge spiked hair of all colors and lots of body piercings. It would have been easy to look at them as weeds.

As I began to talk with them though, I saw past the exterior. I found they were all really nice and did their best to help me understand what was going on (I was the oldest guy at the concert, so they were filled with mercy toward me). As it turns out, the band was terrific and their songs had some great messages (my daughter interpreted the words for me). Thankfully there was no sexual garbage, no violence, no cussing, and no suicidal messages. Somehow I came out of it only slightly hearing-impaired (that only lasted for a couple of days) and my legs quit cramping after a day (we stood for about 5 hours straight).

With that as a background, I wanted to share with you the message of one of their songs, called “Dandelions.” As we approach Valentine’s Day, it has a great message for us. The song is about a hopeful little boy who picks a bouquet of dandelions for his mother, which he presents to her with so much love and joy. His mother holds the dandelions to her heart as though they are the most valuable bouquet. “She sees love, where anyone else would see weeds. All hope is found. Here is everything he needs,” the song goes. And then the song turns from the mother and son to us and God: “All that I ever wanted, was to give my best to You...Lord, search my heart, create in me something clean / Dandelions / You see flowers in these weeds.”



I love these lyrics because they remind us that, just as a mother’s love sees flowers where there are weeds, so it is with our loving God. Not only does he see our humble offerings as a treasure but He sees flowers in these weeds that are us! And if there are some “weeds” in our lives...may we see them as God sees them: as flowers!!

May our hearts be right toward God in offering ourselves to Him.

*“Let us commit ourselves and each other and our whole life to Christ our God!”*

God’s blessings to each of you on this Valentine’s Day.

## **ORTHODOX NEWS**

### **(1) PATRIARCH KIRILL, POPE FRANCIS URGE EUROPE TO PROTECT BELIEVERS' RIGHTS**

*Havana, February 15, 2016; Interfax* — Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope Francis have warned Europe against integration processes that do not take into consideration the need to protect the rights of believers.

"The process of European integration, which began after centuries of blood-soaked conflicts, was welcomed by many with hope, as a guarantee of peace and security. Nonetheless, we invite vigilance against an integration that is devoid of respect for religious identities," Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis said in a joint declaration they signed following their first meeting in history, which took place at the Havana international airport on Friday [2/12].

"While remaining open to the contribution of other religions to our civilization, it is our conviction that Europe must remain faithful to its Christian roots. We call upon Christians of Eastern and Western Europe to unite in their shared witness to Christ and the Gospel, so that Europe may preserve its soul, shaped by two thousand years of Christian tradition," the declaration says. "We cannot remain indifferent to the destinies of millions of migrants and refugees knocking on the doors of wealthy nations. The unrelenting consumerism of some more developed countries is gradually depleting the resources of our planet. The growing inequality in the distribution of material goods increases the feeling of the injustice of the international order that has emerged," the patriarch and the pope said in the document.

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### **(2) PATRIARCH KIRILL, POPE FRANCIS SPEAK AGAINST JUSTIFICATION OF CRIMES BY RELIGIOUS SLOGANS**

*Havana, February 15, 2016; Interfax* — Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope Francis have opposed the use of religion to justify crimes. "Attempts to justify criminal acts with religious slogans are altogether unacceptable. No crime may be committed in God's name," Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis said in a joint declaration they signed following their first meeting in history, which took place at the Havana international airport on Friday [2/12].

"Interreligious dialogue is indispensable in our disturbing times. Differences in the understanding of religious truths must not impede people of different faiths from living in peace and harmony. In our current context, religious leaders have the particular responsibility to educate their faithful in a spirit which is respectful of the convictions of those belonging to other religious traditions," the declaration says.

Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis also welcomed "unprecedented renewal of the Christian faith in Russia, as well as in many other countries of Eastern Europe, formerly dominated for decades by atheist regimes."

"We observe that the transformation of some countries into secularized societies, estranged from all reference to God and to His truth, constitutes a grave threat to religious freedom. It is a source of concern for us that there is a current curtailment of the rights of Christians, if not their outright discrimination, when certain political forces, guided by an often very aggressive secularist ideology, seek to relegate them to the margins of public life," the patriarch and the pontiff said in the declaration.

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### **(3) PATRIARCH KIRILL, POPE FRANCIS SAY THEY RECOGNIZE AS FAMILY ONLY UNION BETWEEN A MAN & A WOMAN; OPPOSE ABORTIONS, EUTHANASIA**

*Havana, February 15, 2016; Interfax* — Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and Pope Francis have spoken in defense of a traditional family and against abortions and euthanasia.

"The family is based on marriage, an act of freely given and faithful love between a man and a woman. It is love that seals their union and teaches them to accept one another as a gift," Patriarch Kirill and Pope Francis said in a joint declaration they signed following their first meeting in history, which took place at the Havana international airport on Friday [2/12].

They regretted that "other forms of cohabitation have been placed on the same level as this union, while the concept, consecrated in the biblical tradition, of paternity and maternity as the distinct vocation of man and woman in marriage is being banished from the public conscience."

"We call on all to respect the inalienable right to life. Millions are denied the very right to be born into the world. The blood of the unborn cries out to God," they said.

"The emergence of so-called euthanasia leads elderly people and the disabled to begin to feel that they are a burden on their families and on society in general," the declaration says. "We are also concerned about the development of biomedical reproduction technology, as the manipulation of human life represents an attack on the foundations of human existence, created in the image of God," the patriarch and the pontiff said in the document.

#### **(4) PATRIARCH KIRILL TO PERFORM LITURGY AT RUSSIA'S BELLINGSHAUSEN STATION IN ANTARCTICA**

*Waterloo Island, Antarctic, February 17, 2016; Interfax* — Patriarch Kirill has arrived in Antarctica, which is the first ever visit of a Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia to the Earth's southernmost continent.

Patriarch Kirill is on a visit to Latin America on February 11-22. On Wednesday morning, he flew from the Chilean city of Punta Arenas to Antarctica where he will perform a liturgy at the Russian *Bellingshausen* station and meet with polar specialists. The prayer service will be attended by Russian polar specialists and invited members of expeditions from other countries, including Chile, the patriarch's spokesman, Priest Alexander Volkov said. After the liturgy the patriarch will speak to polar specialists. "This is an historical event in the Russian Orthodox life which is testament to the Russian Orthodox Church conducting its service on all continents. Here, at this place, the patriarch will be praying for the whole world," the priest said.

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#### **(5) COOPERATION BETWEEN POLAR EXPLORERS IN ANTARCTICA PROVES PEOPLE CAN LIVE WITHOUT BORDERS, ARMS AND ANIMOSITY — PATRIARCH KIRILL**

*Bellingshausen (Antarctica), February 18, 2016; Interfax* — Antarctica is an example of ideal humankind: it is free from weapons and hostilities and people from various countries are selflessly helping each other, Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia has said. "Antarctica is the only place free from weapons, military activity or research into new means of human destruction [...] This is an example of ideal humankind and proof that people can live so, without borders or arms or hostile competition, that they can cooperate and feel like members of one family," the patriarch told polar explorers at the Russian *Bellingshausen* research station in Antarctica. No matter what country they represent, polar explorers stretch out a helping hand to each other in complex situations and give an example of cooperation, he said. He expressed his wish that polar explorers would "preserve the Antarctic brotherhood and work for the benefit of all mankind." The Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia also made a trip to a penguin rookery on Ardley Island during his first-ever visit to Antarctica.

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#### **(6) PATRIARCH KIRILL BELIEVES EU'S IMMIGRATION POLICY ERRONEOUS**

*Moscow, February 16, 2016; Interfax* — Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia sees a mistake in the immigration policy pursued by European countries. "From the humanitarian, humanistic and Christian points of view, we need to help those who suffer. Assistance can vary — as one famous metaphor goes, there's a difference in giving a hungry man one fish and a fishing rod which he can use to catch more fish," the Patriarch said in an interview shown on the *Russia Today* TV on Tuesday [2/16]. "It means that support and assistance are helpful, but the primary focus should be given to eliminating the root cause behind the massive inflow of refugees into European countries," he said. "It is the political destabilization in the Middle East that has led to it," the patriarch said. "And so, we must do everything possible to resolve the ongoing conflict as soon as possible," he said, reiterating the need for coordinated work by all those concerned, primarily the United States, Russia, the European Union and Arab countries. "We can't have several coalitions that say they have the same purpose, but are, in reality, going after different goals. We need to come together, and set a joint goal, and take action to achieve it. If this can be made possible, and if countries concerned over the spread of terrorism can provide a concerted response to the threat, this would definitely help to stabilize the situation in the Middle East and stop the inflow of refugees," he said.

"I am convinced that many refugees will then leave Europe and return to their homes," he said.

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#### **(7) TURKS TOGETHER WITH ISLAMISTS ROBBED ARMENIAN CHURCHES IN SYRIA**

*Moscow, February 3, 2016; Interfax* — Residents of the Syrian town Kesab told about vandalism of Turks in local churches. "Kesab's centers of Armenian culture – our churches – especially suffered from actions of Islamists and Turks. When I came here for ministry after the town had been released, I saw bare walls remained from the once flourishing church," the priest of the local Armenian Protestant church Zhirajr Gazaryan was quoted as saying on Wednesday by the *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* daily. Akop, head of a Kesab Armenian family, told that militants from Tunisia lived in his house during the occupation. "Turkey played a great role in our troubles. When *Jabhad an-Nusra* invaded Kesab, entire divisions of the Turkish special operations' forces rushed into the town together with Salafi. Local guards saved residents of the town from a new genocide of Armenians. They started a battle against bandits, which gave local people time for leaving the town. However, when Turks seized the town, they brought here residents of their neighboring villages who loaded all valuable things we had in trucks, trailers, tractors, carts and just drove it to Turkey," he said. About 200 residents of the Syrian town of Salma were driven to Saudi Arabia and no one has heard anything about them ever since.

"Salafis rushed into the houses and shot men. They just ordered women and children to turn away and then shots were fired. Only old men and those who understood what was going on managed to survive and ran from the village to the valley. There were few of them. They killed almost all of us," 78-year-old Harun Dijib said.