

St. Innocent Orthodox Church

+ Founded in 1967 + Patriarchal Parishes +

23300 W. Chicago † Redford, MI 48239 † 313-538-1142 † Fax: 313-538-8126

Church Web Site: www.stinnocentchurch.org † E-Mail: frroman@firebirdvideos.com

St. Innocent Monastic Community: 9452 Hazelton, Redford, MI 48239 † 313-535-9080

PASTOR: Rt. Rev. Mitered Archpriest ROMAN STAR

Dean, Central States Deanery, Patriarchal Parishes

Cell Phone: 313-319-0590

FEBRUARY 1, 2015

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

DEACON: Rev. Dn. Michael Comerford

ATTACHED: Sister Ioanna

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Elizabeth Star

READERS: Robert Joseph Latsko

George Hanoian

EPISTLE: 2nd Timothy 3:10-15 (#296)

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

TONE: 1

† PHARISEE & PUBLICAN SUNDAY † 1st PRE-LENTEN SUNDAY †

† 9:15 AM — HOURS & AKATHIST; CONFESSIONS †

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

COMMEMORATED TODAY: Forefeast of the Meeting. Beginning of the Lenten Triodion. Martyr Tryphon of Campsada in Syria (250). Martyrs Perpetua of Carthage, & Catechumens: Saturus, Revocatus and Felicitas (202-203). Ven. Bridget (Brigid) of Ireland (523).

FOR THE REPOSE OF: Estelle & Joseph Star; Ellen Starinshak; 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 Smoly; Todd Smoly; Peter Glover; Irene Adams; Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver; David Horka; Michael Rusko, Anna Lichagina, Yelena & Zinaïda Korniyevskaya, Joseph Nossal, Michelle Tucker, Edwin Rusko, Dean Hough (newly departed, December 31st) Archpriest Paul White (newly departed, Sunday, Jan. 25th) Fr. Deacon Basil Frenchek (newly departed, Thursday Jan. 15th), Deacon at St. Paul's, Dearborn Hts. Irene Adams, whose Anniversary of her repose is on Monday, 4 February Mary Kravitz, whose Anniversary of her repose is Saturday, 7 February, by nephew Fr. Roman Lottie Yakuber, whose Anniversary of her repose is Saturday, 7 February

FOR THE HEALTH OF: Archimandrite Roman (Braga) (*cancer*); Archimandrite Il'ya (Barna); Igumen Seraphim; Archpriest Lawrence Bacik; Archpriest Paul Waters; Archpriest Thomas Hopko; Priest Daneil, Matushka Debra & Corrina Shirak; Deacon Michael, Matushka Mary Ellen & Julius Comerford; Matushka Melania Sviridov; Matushka Mary Donahue; Reader Robert Latsko (*safe travel*), Reader George & Betty Hanoian, Jordan Manier, Rose Nossal, Mary Glover, Nancy Cupp, Deborah Dade, Vasiliki Stamoulis, Gerald Martell, Jaime Truskowski, Azbehat, Donald Yakuber, Carl deVyver, Jo Anne Nicholas, Joan Rusko, Daria, Alice Ladhu, (*cancer*); Helen Hall (*cancer*), Julia Korniyevskaya & her unborn-child, Matushka Barbara Frenchek (*for loss of her husband*), Michael Benton, Mike Rusko, Jr.

ALSO FOR: Deborah Dade, who celebrates her birthday on Monday, 2 February Fr. Roman, who celebrates his Namesday on Tuesday, 3 February & his birthday on Wednesday, 4 February Daneil Shirak, Jr., who celebrates his birthday on Saturday, 7 February

MAY GOD GRANT THEM MANY YEARS!

SCHEDULE FOR THE COMING WEEK (No Fasting this week)

TODAY, SUNDAY 2/1 6pm , GREAT VESPERS for the FEAST DAY of the PRESENTATION OF CHRIST in the TEMPLE			
Monday	2/2	9am	DIVINE LITURGY for the FEAST DAY of the PRESENTATION OF CHRIST in the TEMPLE
Wednesday	2/4	7pm	MOLEBEN or AKATHIST
Saturday	2/7	4pm	GREAT VESPERS & CONFESSIONS
Sunday	2/8		2nd Pre-Lenten Sunday (Triodion #2)—Prodigal Son Sunday
	9:15am		Hours & Canon or Akathist; Confessions
	10am		DIVINE LITURGY, followed by Coffee Hour

PHARISEE & PUBLICAN SUNDAY
A Sermon by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
Delivered on 4 February 1990

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

How short, and how well known is today's parable, and yet, how intense its message, how challenging. Intense it is in its very words. Two men come into the church of God, into a sacred realm which in a world that is lost to God belongs to Him unreservedly, into His Divine Realm. And one of the men walks boldly into it, takes a stand before God. The other one comes, and doesn't even dare cross the threshold: he is a sinner, and the Realm is holy, like the space around the Burning Bush in the desert which Moses could not enter without having unshod his feet, otherwise than in adoration and the fear of God.

And how different the words spoken! Apparently the Pharisee praises God, he gives Him glory — but for what? Because He has made a man like him, a man so holy, so worthy of Him, of God; a man who not only keeps all the commandments of the Law, but goes beyond of what God Himself has commanded and can expect of man. Indeed, he stands before God praising Him, that he, the Pharisee, is so wonderful that he is God's own glory, the shining, the revelation of God's holiness.

The Publican does not even dare enter into the holy Realm of God. And the parable is clear: the man who came and stood brokenhearted, ashamed of himself, knowing that he is unworthy of entering this sacred space goes back home forgiven, loved, indeed: accompanied by God Himself Who came into the world to save sinners and Who stands by everyone who needs Him, who recognizes his need for salvation.

The Pharisee goes home, but he goes home less forgiven; his relationship with God is not the same; he is at the center, God is peripheral to him; he is at the heart of things, God is subservient to him. It does not mean that what he did was worthless; it simply means that as far as he is concerned, it has born no fruit of holiness in himself. The deeds were good, but they were spoiled, poisoned by pride, by self-assertion; the beauty of what he did was totally marred because it was addressed neither to God nor to his neighbor; it was turned in on himself. And we are told that this pride has despoiled this man, has taken away from him the fruits of his good works, the fruit of his outward faithfulness to the law of God, that only humility could have given him and his action full meaning, that only humility could have made his actions into life, into the waters of life gushing into eternity.

But then, the question stands before us: how can we learn anything about humility if that is the absolute condition to be not like the barren fig tree, but fruitful, to be rich harvest and from whom people can be fed? I do not think that we can move from pride, vanity into humility in a single unless something so tragic happens to us that we see ourselves, we discover ourselves completely bereft of everything that supported our sinful, destructive, barren condition. But there is one thing which we can do: however much we think



that we are possessed of gifts of all sorts of heart and mind, of body and soul, however fruitful our action may be, we can remember the words of Saint Paul: O, man! What have you got which was not given you?... And indeed, he echoes at this point what Christ said in the first Beatitude, the Beatitude that opens the door to all other Beatitudes, the Beatitude which is the beginning of understanding: Blessed are the poor in spirit... Blessed are those who know, not only with their intellect — but at least with their intellect! — that they are nothing, and they possess nothing which is not a gift of God.

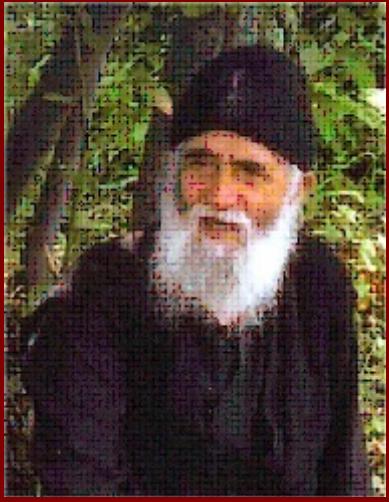
We were called into being out of naught, without our participation: our very existence is a gift! We were given life which we could not create, call out of ourselves. We have been given the knowledge of the existence of God, and indeed, a deeper, more intimate knowledge of God — all that is gift! And then, all that we are is a gift of God: our body, our heart, our mind, our soul — what power have we got over them when God does no longer sustain them? The greatest intelligence can of a sudden be swallowed into darkness by a stroke; there are moments when we are confronted with a need that requires all our sympathy, all our love - and we discover that our hearts are of stone and of ice... We want to do good - and we cannot; and Saint Paul knew it already when he said: The good which I love, I don't do, and the wrong which I hate I do continuously... And our body depends on so many things!

And what of our relationships, of the friendship which is given us, the love which sustains us, the comradeship — everything that we are and which we possess is a gift: what is the next move: isn't it gratitude? Can't we turn to God not as a pharisee, priding ourselves of what we are and forgetting that all that is HIS, but turning to God and saying: O, God! All that is a gift from You! all that beauty, intelligence, a sensitive heart, all the circumstances of life are a gift! Indeed, all those circumstances, even those which frighten us are a gift because God says to us: I trust you enough to send you into the darkness to bring light! I send you into corruption to be the salt that stops corruption! I send you where there is no hope to bring hope, where there is no joy to bring joy, no love to bring love... and one could go on, on, on, seeing that when we are sent into the darkness it is to be God's presence and God's life, and that means that He trusts us — He trusts us, He believes in us, He hopes for us everything: isn't that enough to be grateful?

But gratitude is not just a cold word of thanks; gratitude means that we wish to make Him see that all that was not given in vain, that He did not become man, lived, died in vain; gratitude means a life that could give joy to God: this is a challenge of this particular parable.

Yes, the ideal would be for us to be humble — but what is humility? Who of us knows, and if someone knows, who can communicate it to everyone who doesn't know? But gratitude we all know; we know small ways and small aspects of it! Let us reflect on it, and, let us in an act of gratitude recognize that we have no right to be in God's own realm - and He lets us in! We have no right to commune to Him either in prayer, or in sacrament — and He calls us to commune with Him! We have no right to be His children, to be brothers and sisters of Christ, to be the dwelling place of the Spirit — and He grants it all in an act of love!

Let each of us reflect and ask himself: in what way can he or she be so grateful in such a way that God could rejoice that He has not given in vain, been in vain, lived and died in vain, that we have received the message. And if we grow in a true depth of gratitude, at the depth of gratitude we will knock down, adore the Lord, and learn what humility is not abasement, but adoration, the awareness that He is all we possess, all that we are, and that we are open to Him like the earth, the rich earth is open to the plough, to the sowing, to the seed, to the sunshine, to the rain, to everything in order to bring fruit. Amen!



A MIRACLE BY ELDER PAISIOS

By Fr. Johannes L. Jacobse,

St. Peter's Orthodox Church, Naples/Fort Meyers, Florida

December 18, 2013; Naples, Florida USA — Early morning on April 2, 2013 I looked down at my phone and saw a text from Jeremiah's mother Patti, "Jeremiah was in a bad car accident. We are on the way to the hospital." Jeremiah was 23 years old at the time. She had just received the news from the police who came to her door to tell her.

I rushed to the hospital. Soon the rest of Jeremiah's family arrived and we got the news. It did not look good. Jeremiah's car hit the curb, rolled three times, and the paramedics found him sitting outside the car barely conscious. He had multiple skull fractures, slipped into unconsciousness and was laying on the gurney in the emergency room.

I told the family that this was a desperate time but in desperate times we pray and we are going to ask God to save Jeremiah. Then we prayed and I anointed Jeremiah with oil. It was foggy that morning so the helicopter could not fly Jeremiah to the trauma center in nearby Fort Myers. They drove him instead.

The next three days were touch and go. We did not know if Jeremiah was going to live. Meanwhile, Dimitri, a friend of Jeremiah's in Greece heard about the accident and told Jeremiah's sister Emily about Elder Paisios, particularly how the Elder helped many young people in car accidents in Greece who suffered brain injuries.

Dimitri told Emily what to do. Get a picture of Elder Paisios (Dimitri sent one by email) and put it in his hospital room and ask for his direct intercession. I pinned the picture on the bed near the side of Jeremiah's head that was injured. We started to ask for the Elder's intercession on Jeremiah's behalf to God. A week later the oil arrived that Dimitri sent from the monastery where the Elder spent his last days in Greece and we anointed Jeremiah with it. Through Dimitri, Elder Paisios came to us.

Thousands of prayers were said for Jeremiah and we added ours to them. I could tell the day that Elder Paisios joined in, or at least when I became aware he was with us. It was as if the weight of the prayers lifted somehow, something I call "calling in the cavalry" — an American term that means that we are joined by fighters on horseback who sit higher and see the battlefield more clearly and make the prospect of victory tangible. This happened on the third day. We could sense the Elder's presence and strength with us. Some nurses remarked they could feel a power in Jeremiah's room.

We prayed and anointed Jeremiah daily. This was a particularly difficult time for his family but hope did not wane even though there were times of doubt and exhaustion. Jeremiah was in an induced coma for five weeks to give his brain time to heal and we waited with great anticipation for his return to consciousness so that we could get a sense of the extent of his injuries and healing.



*Jeremiah's 1st Liturgy
after the accident*

Finally the time came to wean him off his medication. It would take three days for the sedation to clear his body. On the third day Jeremiah's awareness returned. A test of a person's brain function after a serious injury is whether he can respond to commands. As I entered the room I asked Jeremiah to give me a "thumbs up." He lifted his thumb. Then I asked him to make his cross. He made it. We knew then that we might be witnessing a miracle.

Recovery was steady and after a few months Jeremiah was released from the hospital and went to the Shepherd Center in Atlanta, Georgia (a hospital specializing in brain injuries). There the doctors openly said that his survival and the extent of his healing was a miracle. On August 15, 2013 the portion of his skull that was removed a few days after his accident (to allow the brain to swell) was reattached. The surgeon told Jeremiah that 95% of his patients who had the kind of injury that he experienced do not survive. The other 5% another doctor told me are usually institutionalized for the rest of their lives.

Today (December 18, 2013) Jeremiah is fishing off the Gulf of Mexico with his friends. His healing is almost complete. We expect a full and complete recovery.

We are filled with gratitude to God and His servant Elder Paisios for Jeremiah's healing. We are grateful for the self-revelation of God to the family and friends of Jeremiah — an event that exceeds our comprehension to grasp entirely but which we see in countless ways. Our Lord has touched hundreds of lives and some have been changed.

May God be glorified in all things!

Source: <http://stpeterorthodoxchurch.com/a-miracle-by-elder-paisios/>

CANDLES FOR LAST SUNDAY, 25 JANUARY, 2015

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 Irene Adams, by daughter, Eileen Adams

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 Elaschat, Theresa & Pete Harvilla, Irene, & brothers, Michael, John & Edwin Rusko; niece, Rose Mary & Dean Hough (newly departed); Joe's brothers, Raymond & Walter Nossal, & sisters, Theresa, Florence & Helen Nossal, by Rose N.

Pete & Theresa Harvilla, by Mary Ann & Kay + + + My husband, Michael Rusko, by Joan Rusko

Parents, Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver; David Horka; Olive Brower; Nina I; Marion P; Fr. Photius; Mo. Benedicta; Dn. Basil, by Sr. Ioanna

Thelma Ratcliff, Louis Pitts, T.F. Shelton, Gloria Robinson, Reginald Bell, Lessie Favor, Lois Hamby, by Manier Family

Child Lana Wilson, Shirley Troyer, Wendell Philips, Lari, by Becky J. & Levi + + + Grandparents Harvilla & Holst, by Harvilla family

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; Monk Fr. 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 T.

Family & Friends, Aunt Rose, by Mary Ann H. & Kay + + + Brother, Greg & Donna, Gregory & Liz & Alex, by Mary Ann H. & Kay

Archimandrites Roman, Nafanail & Gregory; Igumen Seraphim; Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie; Fr. Lawrence & fam; Fr. Daneil & fam; Dcn. Michael & fam; Mat. Melania Sviridov; Mat. Mary Donahue; Carl; Fr. Tikhon; Sdn Andrew; Rdr Robert; Robert M; David Samuel & Sky; Jo Anne & Nick;

Martha; Athanasius; John A; Lena N; Jillian J; Ed & Tiffany; Vasiliki; Rose; Emil & fam; Azbehat; Yulia & un-born baby; Mat. Barb F. by Sr. Ioanna Health of: Manier family, Samantha Ketelson (Infant w/ hypo-thyroidism) + + + Salvation of: Brittany, Eddie, Breonna, Bronte, Kaitlyn, RJ, Xavier, Story, Robert, Cynthia, Demarion, Desmond, & Shelton Family + + + Marriages: Tim & Terry Goddos & Candice & Kevin Grant (*personal issues*), by Manier family + + + Truskowski family: Jason & Debra, Ian, Alex & Ricky & snow plow

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

Joan Jurczyszyn, Betty Stelmashuk, Leah & Mike Wilson, Maxine Wilson, by Becky Jurczyszyn & Levi + + + Shirley Peponis, by Brother Nick & Jo Anne Truskowski family: Jason & Debra, Ian, Alex & Ricky; Mary Ann H. & snow plow

PROSFORA 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, Marsha, Julia, George, 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, Barbara, Harry, Gregory, Tamiko, all family members & parishioners of St. Innocent

PROSFORA SCHEDULE:

2015: February: Matushka Rose Marie; March: Libby Glover-Booher; April: Deborah Hartz; May: Vasiliki Stamoulis; June: John Andrayko;

July: Matushka Rose Marie; August: Sister Ioanna; September: Deborah Hartz; October: John Andrayko; November: Sister Ioanna; December: Nicholas Family. Thank you to Prosfora donors for 2015.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

(1) TODAY WE WELCOME FR. JEROME SANDERSON AS OUR GUEST. We heartily welcome our good friend, Fr. Jerome Sanderson, who is concelebrating Divine Liturgy with us today. Yesterday afternoon (Sat. 1/31) he gave a presentation about the Life of St. Moses the Black and his relevance for us today here at St. Innocent, as part of a mini-seminar sponsored by the Detroit Chapter of the national Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black, that has its home here. Fr. Jerome then also served Great Vespers with us. **WELCOME!**

(2) A RETREAT FOR ORTHODOX MEN: "A Spiritual & Practical Look at Private Confession," led by Fr. John Fenton, Begins w/ Vespers on Thurs., 2/12 & ends w/ Vespers on Sat., 2/14. At Dormition Monastery, Rives Junction. \$50 donation for meals & lodging requested. See flyer at: www.coccdetroit.com OR <http://www.coccdetroit.com/files/Flyers/2015-event-flyers/Ad---Mens-Retreat-on-Confession.pdf> Registration was requested by yesterday, January 31st, so e-mail right away if you want to go. Fr. John is a good speaker and teacher, so it should be very good,

(3) OCW ANNUAL LUNCHEON, Sunday, Feb. 8th, 2:00pm, at St. George Romanian Cath, Southfield; \$25. See flyer at: www.coccdetroit.com. Reservations were requested by Friday, January 30th, so do call right away. (248-689-9721)

(4) THE COCC SUNDAY EVENING LENTEN VESPERS SCHEDULE IS AVAILABLE. See the downloadable flyer at: www.coccdetroit.com OR <http://www.coccdetroit.com/files/Flyers/2015-event-flyers/COCC-2015-Lenten-Vespers-flier-1.pdf>

(5) THE JAN-FEB ISSUE OF THE COCC'S BEAUTIFUL BI-MONTHLY MAGAZINE, "GOOD WORKS," IS NOW AVAILABLE IN FULL-COLOR ON-LINE. VIEW IT AT <http://www.coccdetroit.com/goodworks.html> Printed copies to be available soon.

SCHEDULE OF UP-COMING SERVICES, FEASTS & EVENTS

(In addition to regular weekly: 7pm Wednesday Service; 4pm Saturday Great Vespers; 10am Sunday Liturgy)

- ◆ Saturday, Jan. 31st, 1:30 - 4:30, "St. Moses the Black, A Model of Repentance," A seminar at St. Innocent Church, Redford.
Guest Speaker: Fr. Jerome Sanderson; sponsored by the Detroit Chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black.(see below)
- ◆ Sunday, February 1st, Publican & Pharisee Sunday; Triodion Begins (*no fasting on Wed. & Fri. this week*)
- ◆ Sunday, February 1st, 6pm, GREAT VESPERS for the GREAT FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
- ◆ Monday, February 2nd, 9am, DIVINE LITURGY for the GREAT FEAST OF THE PRESENTATION OF CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE
- ◆ Sunday, February 8th, Prodigal Son Sunday
- ◆ Sunday, February 8th, 2pm, Annual Feast Day Luncheon of the OCW (Orthodox Christian Women), St. George Rom.Cath. Sthfld.; \$25
- ◆ Tuesday, February 10th, 7pm, COCC Monthly Meeting, at Ss. Peter & Paul Romanian Church, Beech Daly, Dearborn Hts.
- ◆ Thursday, February 12th- 14th, A Retreat for Orthodox Men: "A Spiritual & Practical Look at Private Confession," led by Fr. John Fenton, at Dormition Monastery in Rives Junction (\$50 donation requested for room and meals); begins & ends w/Vespers
- ◆ Saturday, February 14th, SOUL-SATURDAY MEMORIAL DIVINE LITURGY FOR THE DEPARTED (#1 of 4)
- ◆ Sunday, February 15th, Last Judgment & Meatfare Sunday (*last day to eat meat until Pascha*)
- ◆ Sunday, February 15th, After Coffee Hour (1:00), Monthly Pot-luck Lunch & Discussion, at St. Innocent Monastic Community
- ◆ Sunday, February 22nd, Cheesefare / Forgiveness Sunday (*last day to eat eggs and dairy products until Pascha*)
- ◆ Monday, February 23rd, THE GREAT LENTEN FAST BEGINS

FR. ROMAN'S ADDITIONAL SCHEDULE

Friday & Saturday, Jan. 30th & 31st, Special Orthodox Prison Ministry meetings with new OPM Executive Director; at HTOC, Livonia
Thursday, February 19th, noon-2:00, Monthly Meeting, Redford Ministerial Alliance, at Our Lady of Loretto Church
Tues & Wed, May 5th & 6th, Spring Meeting of the Central States Deanery's Clergy, at St. John Chrysostom Church, Grand Rapids

THE MEETING OR PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE (Feb. 2nd)



Today the Church commemorates an important event in the earthly life of our Lord Jesus Christ (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the God-Infant was taken to the Jerusalem Temple, the center of the nation's religious life. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple of God for forty days. At the end of this time the mother came to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb or pigeon to the Lord as a purification sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin, the Mother of God, had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity without defilement. However, she humbly fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he should behold the promised Messiah. By inspiration from above, St Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and St Joseph had brought the Infant Jesus to fulfill the Law.

The God-Receiver Simeon took the Divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). St Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was the 84-year-old widow Anna the Prophetess, daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day. She arrived just when St Simeon met the divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:37-38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth." Before Christ was born, righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous people of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet the Savior in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons on the Feast by the holy bishops Methodius of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilocius of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the sixth century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. In thanksgiving to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: St Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; St Cosmas Bishop of Maium, St John of Damascus, and St Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the eighth century; and St Joseph, Archbishop of Thessalonica in the ninth century. (From: www.oca.org, slightly abbreviated)