

St. Moses the Black, feast 8/28

St. Innocent Orthodox Church

✙ Founded in 1967 ✙ Moscow Patriarchal Parishes ✙

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

Church Website: www.stinnocentchurch.com † E-Mail: frroman@firebirdvideos.com

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

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

Dean, Central States Deanery, Patriarchal Parishes

August 23, 2015

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

EPISTLE: 1 Corinthians 15:1 – 11 (#158)

DEACON: Rev. Dn. Michael Comerford

GOSPEL: St. Matthew 19:16 – 26 (#79)

SUBDEACON: Dr. Joshua Genig

tone: 3

ATTACHED: Sister Ioanna

CHOIR DIRECTOR: Elizabeth Star Hatfield

READERS: Robert Joseph Latsko & George Hanoian

✙ 12th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST ✙

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

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

COMMEMORATED TODAY: **Leavetaking of the Dormition.** Martyr Lupus, slave of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica (4th c.). Hieromartyr Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons (202). St. Eutychius (ca. 540) and Florentius (547), of Nursia. St. Callinic, Patriarch of Constantinople (705).

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 & Todd Smoly; Peter Glover; Irene Adams; Ethel Elizabeth & Wayne Joshua deVyver; David Horka; Michael Rusko, Anna Lichagina, Yelena & Zinaïda Korniyevskaya, Joseph Nossal, Michelle Tucker, Todd Comerford

ALSO FOR: Peter Starinshak, whose anniversary of his repose is Monday, 24 August, *by nephew, Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose*

MEMORY Wayne Joshua deVyver, whose anniversary of his repose is Saturday, 29 August, *by daughter, Sister Ioanna*

ETERNAL! Mary Latsko, whose anniversary of her repose is Sunday, 30 August, *by son, Rdr. Robert Joseph Latsko*

FOR THE HEALTH OF: Archimandrite Seraphim; Priest Daneil, Matushka Debra & Corrina Shirak; Deacon Michael, Matushka Mary Ellen & Julius Comerford; Matushka Mary Donahue; 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*); Michael Benton; Abigail Genig & her new-born child, Anna Sophia; Joseph & Susan Nossal (*surgeries*)

ALSO FOR: Dcn. Michael Comerford, who celebrated his birthday this past Wednesday, 19 August

Elizabeth & Larry Hatfield, who celebrate their Anniversary Today, Sunday, 23 August

Faith Redding, who celebrates her birthday on Thursday, 27 August

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

SCHEDULE FOR THE COMING WEEK

TODAY, Sunday, 8/23, After Coffee Hour (1pm), **Monthly Lunch & Discussion**, at St. Innocent Monastic Community

Thursday 8/27 6:30pm **AKATHIST for St. Moses the Black** (*sponsored by Detroit Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black*)

Friday 8/28 7pm GREAT VESPERS for the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner & Baptizer of Christ

Saturday 8/29 10am DIVINE LITURGY for the Beheading of St. John the Forerunner & Baptizer of Christ; PANIKHIDA

4pm GREAT VESPERS & CONFESSIONS

Sunday 8/30 **13th Sunday After Pentecost**

9:15am Hours & Akathist or Canon & Confessions

10am DIVINE LITURGY, followed by Coffee Hour

✙ CHRIST IS IN OUR MIDST! ✙ HE IS NOW AND EVER SHALL BE! ✙

CANDLES FOR LAST SUNDAY, 16 AUGUST

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 deVyver; David Horka; Nina I; Marion P; Fr. Photius; Mo. Benedicta; Archm. Roman, *by Sister Ioanna*

My brother Ricky; Grandparents Holst & Harvilla, *by Debra Truskowski*

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 Truskowski* + + + Family & Friends, *by Mary Ann Harvilla & Kay*

Brother, Greg & Donna, nephew, Gregory & Liz & nephew, Alex, *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 (B-day, 8/19) & fam; Mat. Mary D; Carl; Sdn Fr. Tikhon; Sdn Andrew; Rdr Robert; Robert M; David Samuel & Sky; Jo Anne & Nick; Martha; Athanasius & Angelica; John A; Elaine R; Ed & Tiffany; Vasiliki; Rose; Emil; Azbehat; Abigail Genig & unborn-child, *by Sr. Ioanna*

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

Barbara & Harold, *by Mat. Rose Marie, Fr. Roman, Thomas & family* + + + St. Innocent Monastic Community & All Parishioners, *by Nancy Cupp*

My husband & children, *by Debra Truskowski* + + + All family & friends, *by Debra Truskowski*

PROSPHORA FOR TODAY IS OFFERED BY: Sister Ioanna

In Memory Eternal of: Parents: Wayne Joshua (anniv. 8/29) & Ethel Elizabeth (B-day, 9/2); David Horka (anniv. 9/27); Alex Ruggieri (anniv. 7/21); Mother Benedicta (10th anniv. 8/7); Popadia Vera Nicoloff (anniv. 8/24); Olive Brower (anniv. 7/10); Elise Laney (anniv. 9/4); Met. Christopher (anniv. 8/18); Michelle Tucker (anniv. 8/28); Archim. Roman (Braga); Mat. Melanya; & all other departed family & friends; and

for the Health of: Brother, Carl; Rdr. Robert (B-day, 9/2); Fr. Roman & Mat. Rose Marie (Anniversary 9/3); Sdn. Andrew; Rose Nossal; JoAnne & Nick; John A; Dcn. Michael & family; Archm. Seraphim; Genig family & new-born child, Anna Sophia; all parishioners, family & friends.

PROSPHORA SCHEDULE FOR 2015: *August:* Sister Ioanna; *September:* Deborah Hartz; *October:* John Andrayko; *November:* Sister Ioanna; *December:* Nicholas Family. Thank you to Prosfora donors.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MONTHLY LUNCH & DISCUSSION GATHERINGS: Our parish monthly fellowship gatherings meet after coffee-hour for a pot-luck lunch and discussion, at the St. Innocent Monastic Community. The August gathering was rescheduled for **TODAY, SUNDAY, AUGUST 23rd**.

ANNUAL AKATHIST TO ST. MOSES THE BLACK & OPEN-HOUSE, THIS THURSDAY, AUGUST 27th, @ 6:30. The Detroit Chapter of the Brotherhood of St. Moses the Black (BSMB) is once again sponsoring the annual Akathist to St. Moses the Black, followed by delicious refreshments, fellowship & church-tour. **This is the perfect time to bring non-Orthodox friends & relatives to experience the Orthodox Church.** On 9/1, our St. Innocent altar-server & reader, Athanasius Phillips, will become the new president of our Detroit chapter of the BSMB.

LISTEN TO DETROIT'S OWN ORTHODOX RADIO HOUR [DOOR] EVERY SUNDAY, 5-6 PM ON WNZK 690 AM. Very interesting & varied programming, with different guest speakers and prerecorded interviews and presentations. Sponsored by the COCC. **Good News!** You can listen to all the past & current weekly radio program on your computer at: <http://listentodoor.org/> They are very well done & worth your time.

CONGRATULATIONS TO ABIGAIL & SDN. JOSHUA FOR THE BIRTH OF THEIR 4th CHILD! Named Anna Sophia, she was born on Tuesday, August 18th, and weighs 8 lbs. 10 oz., and measures 21". Both mother and baby are healthy and doing well. Anna joins her older sisters, Emma (9), Claire (5) and Rose Marie (Rosie) (3). **MANY YEARS** to the Genig family!

YOU CAN VIEW & PRINT OUT ST. INNOCENT'S CALENDAR FOR EACH MONTH AT: <http://stinnocentchurch.com/calendar.html>

REGULARLY VISIT OUR WEBSITE'S HOMEPAGE & READ THE NEW SECTION WITH NEWS/ANNOUNCEMENTS & NEW WEBSITE ADDITIONS & UPDATES: <http://stinnocentchurch.com/> (Scroll down to the **GREEN** section.)



THE RICH YOUNG MAN

By Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

12th Sunday After Pentecost — Matthew 19:16-26

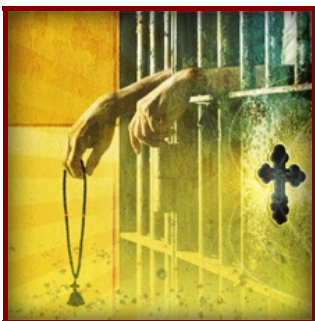
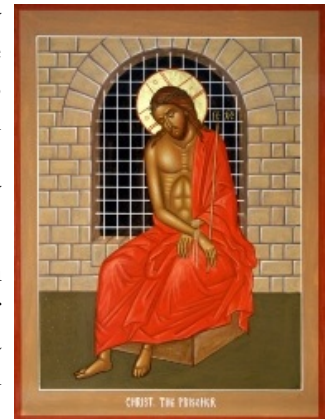
A Sermon delivered on August 18, 1991

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

The Lord warns us today of how difficult it is for a man who is rich to enter the Kingdom of God. Does it mean that the Kingdom of God is open only to destitute, to those who are materially poor, who lack everything on earth? No. The Kingdom of God is open to all who are not enslaved by possessions. When we read the first Beatitude, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven', we are given a key to this saying: the poor in spirit are those who have understood that they possess nothing which is their own. We have been created as an act of God, loved into existence; we are offered by God communion with Him to which we have no rights. All we are, all we possess is not our own in the sense that we have not made ourselves, we did not create what is seemingly ours — everything which we are and which we have is love, the love of God and the love of people, and we cannot possess anything because everything is a gift that escapes us the moment we want to have possession of it and say, "It is mine."

On the other hand, the Kingdom of God is really the kingdom of those who are aware that they are infinitely rich because we can expect everything from love divine and from human love. We are rich because we possess nothing, we are rich because we are given all things; and so, it is difficult for one who imagines that he is rich in his own right to belong to that kingdom in which everything is a sign of love, and nothing can be possessed, as it were — taken away from others; because the moment we say that we possess something which is not given us either by God or by human care, we subtract it from the mystery of love.

On the other hand, the moment we cling to anything we become slaves of it. I remember when I was young, a man telling me: Don't you understand that the moment you have taken a copper coin in your hand and are not prepared to open your hand to let it go, you have lost the use of a hand, the use of an arm, the use of your body, because all your attention will be concentrated on not losing this copper coin — the rest will be forgotten.



Whether we keep in our hand a copper coin, or whether we feel rich in so many other ways — intellectually, emotionally, materially is irrelevant — we are prisoners, we have lost the use of a limb, the use of our mind, the use of our heart; we can no longer be free, and the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of freedom.

On the other hand also, how difficult it is for one who has never lacked anything, who has always possessed more than he needs, to be aware of the poverty or the need of another: poverty — material, emotional or intellectual, or any other lack. It requires a great deal of understanding and sympathy, it requires from us that we should learn to be attentive to the movements of other people's hearts and to their material needs in order to respond to them. One says in Russian 'A satisfied person no longer understands a hungry one'; which of us can say that we are hungry in any respect? And this is why we do not understand the needs of people — of one another here, or of people beyond the confines of our congregation.

So, let us reflect on that; poverty does not mean destitution; it means freedom from enslavement to an illusion that we are self-sufficient, self-contained, the creator of what we are and what we possess. And also free from enslavement to what is given us to make husbandmen of God.

Let us reflect on this; because if we learn this, if we learn what Saint Paul said that whether he is rich, whether he is destitute, he is equally rich because his richness is in God and in the human love. Then we will be able, whether we possess material things or not, to be free of them, and to belong to God's Kingdom which is a Kingdom of mutual love, or mutual solidarity, of compassion for one another, of giving to one another what we were given freely. Amen.

**“AND FORGIVE US OUR DEBTS”:
A HOMILY ON THE ELEVENTH SUNDAY
AFTER PENTECOST**

A Homily by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev),

Source: www.pravmir.com, 16 August 2015



A certain man owed the king a large sum: 10,000 talents. But when the king wanted to receive this money from him, it turned out that he had nothing with which to pay him, and the king forgave his debt. This man, recognizing the gravity of his financial situation, decided to collect money from his own debtors. Meeting a man who owed him 100 denarii, he began to choke him, demanding repayment of the debt (Matthew 18:23-35).

This parable, which we have repeatedly heard and read, teaches us several things. **First** is the fact that we are all debtors before God, and the debt of each of us is very large. And the only reason we do not pay back this debt is that the Lord never seeks, in contrast with the king from the parable, to settle accounts with us. If the Lord decided to require that we repay this debt, if it were calculated how many of the talents He has given us we have made use of indeed, and how many we have wasted in vain, then, of course, we would have no excuse for our unpreparedness to fulfill the work of God, for our reluctance to follow the Gospel, for our inability to find what use the received talents have been put to, and for our passivity and laziness.

Second, the Lord's parable shows us that we rarely think of ourselves as being in debt to God. Forgetting that each one of us has received from the Lord a multitude of great and small gifts, and taking these gifts for granted, we are always seeking something more from God and, if we do not receive what we desire, we become insulted or irritated. We consider that, in addition to those 10,000 talents that the Lord has already given us, we should receive from Him yet more talents and, if we do not receive them, we consider ourselves offended and cheated. After all, the problem is not that we have been given little, but that the riches we have been given we have not put into circulation, but have buried them in the ground, and therefore not only do they not make a profit, but they are not enough to make sure that we can pay off our debts.

Third, the parable that we heard today [*last Sunday*] speaks of our relationship with our neighbors. The Lord gives us very much, but we give our neighbors very little. The Lord generously shares with us His grace and His gifts, but we begrudge people money, things, time, and attention; we fear wasting the talents given to us, forgetting that, if we do not put them into circulation, they will lose value, just as money, when withdrawn from real circulation, turns into useless pieces of paper. The Lord has given us talents not so that we would guard their wealth ourselves, but so that we would share them with our neighbors.

The Lord forgives us our debts, but we must forgive our debtors. In the “Our Father” prayer, we daily repeat: “*And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.*” But if we are to have any right to turn with this request to God, we should forget about the debts of other people to us and remember only our own debts before others. The Lord forgives us all our debts; He has enough generosity, mercy, and love to forgive any sin, but on one condition: that we also will forgive people. Everything is interconnected in life, and therefore if we are

awaiting forgiveness and mercy from God, then we should be able to show mercy ourselves, which we should provide to those near and far.

Let us put ourselves before the judgment seat of this parable. And if there is anyone whom we have been unable to forgive, let us forgive him. If someone is our debtor, let us forgive him his debt, that the mercy and grace of God would be with us always. Amen.



ST. MOSES THE BLACK

(ca. 325 – ca. 400)

Feast Day: August 28th



*Icon of St. Moses the Black
at St. Innocent Orthodox Church, Redford, MI*

St. Moses is a perfect example, like St. Mary of Egypt, that sometimes the greatest sinners can become the greatest saints, by means of deep and sincere repentance. Moses had been a murderer, a thief, and a very violent person. Therefore, St. Moses is a marvelous model for us of the power of repentance and of God's forgiveness, especially for those who might feel that they are too sinful to be reconciled to God and His Holy Church, because they have strayed and fallen into sin. The "righteous" can be further from God than the sinner, because the "righteous," like the pharisee and the elder son of Jesus' parables, do not see their sins, and therefore are filled with pride instead of humility. In contrast, like Jesus' prodigal son and tax-collector, the great sinner who repents can grow ever closer to God by means of his continued sincere repentance and consequent humility and self-abasement. St. Moses is just such a person.

St. Moses lived in Egypt during the fourth century. He was a very dark-skinned Ethiopian, and thus is also called St. Moses the Black. In his youth he was a slave of a high-ranking man, but after Moses committed a murder, his master banished him. Filled with much anger and bitterness, Moses joined a band of thieves who attacked,

robbed and murdered travelers in the Egyptian desert. His band of brigands chose Moses as their leader because of his enormous physical strength and readiness to sin. People were afraid at the mere mention of his name.

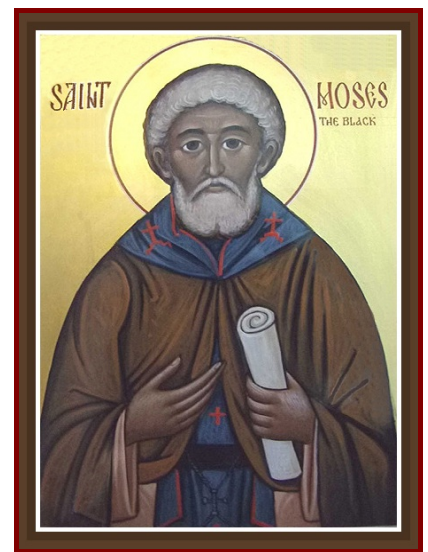
After a number of years of this sinful life, by the grace of God, Moses repented, abandoned his band of robbers and went to one of the desert monasteries. He had to weep and beg for a long time before the brethren believed he was sincere, and finally they accepted him. He wept bitter tears of repentance for his sinful life, and became very obedient to the abbot, his spiritual father and confessor, Abba (Father) Isidore, a wise and experienced spiritual guide. After a while, Moses withdrew to a solitary cell, where he prayed, fasted, and continued to struggle against the passions and the violent attacks of demons, with the guidance of Abba Isidore, who taught him how to pray all night and to struggle against the demons. His long struggle with the passions and demons was necessary in order to become completely cleansed of his former sins. In his battle between the legions of demons and angels, Abba Isidore assured Moses that the angels would prevail.

One time four robbers of his former band attacked him in his solitary cell, not realizing who he was. Having lost none of his great physical strength, Moses tied them up, threw them over his shoulder, and brought them to the monastery, where the elders said to release them. Upon learning that this was Moses, their former ringleader, and that he had dealt with them kindly, they followed his example, repented and also became monks. When the rest of the band of thieves learned what happened, they too abandoned their life of sin and became fervent monks.

Intensifying his spiritual efforts, St. Moses started carrying water every night from the well to each of the brothers, especially for the Elders, who lived far from the well, and for whom it was difficult to carry water. Once, while leaning over the well, the demons took revenge for Moses' victory over them, and delivered such a severe blow to Moses' back, that he fell unconscious, and for an entire year he lay crippled in his cell. After this, he was healed and was freed from his passions, and received from the Lord power over demons.

As the years went on, and word about St. Moses spread, people started coming to see him, and Moses left his cell to hide from visitors. Along the way he met the servants of the local governor who were sent to find the saintly desert dweller. Moses told them, "go no further to see this false and unworthy monk." When the servants returned to the governor at the monastery, they learned that they had encountered St. Moses himself.

After many years of monastic struggles, St. Moses was ordained deacon. In his humility, he believed himself unworthy of this office. Once, wishing to test him, the bishop told the clergy to insult and ridicule him as an unworthy Ethiopian, and to drive him out of the altar. The humble monk accepted the abuse. After this test, the bishop then ordained St. Moses as a priest. He was sixty years old at this time. For another fifteen years he continued his monastic labors, and about 75 disciples gathered around the saintly Elder, who had been granted by the Lord the gifts of wisdom, foresight, and power over demons. When he was 75, he warned his monks that soon brigands would attack their small monastery (skete) and murder everyone. He begged his monks to leave, but he himself refused to leave, because he believed the time had come for the Lord's words to be fulfilled: "All who take up the sword shall perish by the sword" (Mt. 26:52). Seven brethren stayed with their Abba, one of whom hid when attacked, and lived to tell how the robbers killed St. Moses and the other six monks. It was about the year 400.



ON PRAYER

By Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev), 25 August 2014

The following thirty-two part series on prayer was transcribed and translated from television episodes presented on Russian television in the spring of 1999 by Igumen (now Metropolitan) Hilarion (Alfeyev) with the blessing of His Holiness, the late Patriarch Alexy II of Moscow and All Russia. Source: <http://www.pravmir.com/prayer>



PART 17 (of 32): ON COMPUNCTION AND TEARS

I would like to say a few words about the spiritual and emotional condition that people experience in prayer. Let us recall the well-known verses of Lermontov:

PRAYER

In a trying minute of life // If sadness o'erfills the heart,
One miraculous invocation // By rote, without cease I recite.
There is a beneficent will // In the music of living words,
And there breathes in them // An unknown, sacred delight.
And the soul will release its burden, // Doubt is far away
And it's easy to trust, and to cry, // And I feel so light, so light...

In these beautiful, simple words of the great poet is described what happens to many people during prayer. One recites the words of prayer, perhaps familiar to one from childhood, and suddenly one feels a kind of enlightenment, lightening, and tears. In church language this condition is called compunction. It is a condition that is sometimes given one during prayer, when one feels the presence of God more than usual. It is a spiritual state, when the grace of God touches the heart directly.

Recall the passage from Ivan Bunin's autobiographical book, *The Life of Arsenyev*, in which Bunin describes his teenage years and how, while still a schoolboy, he attended divine services in the parish church of the Lord's Elevation. He describes the beginning of the All-Night Vigil, in the shadows of the church, where there are very few people: "How it all moves me! I am still a boy, an adolescent, but then, I was born endowed with the sense of all this, and during the past years I have so many times passed through that expectation, that tense silence preceding the service, so many times heard those exclamations and the 'amen' that unfailingly follows them and drowns them out, divining beforehand every word of the service, now gives a double response to everything, intensified by its expectation. 'Glory to the Holy and Consubstantial...' I hear the pleasant familiar voice coming faintly from the altar, and for the rest of the service I stand as if bewitched. 'O come, let us worship God our King! O Come let us worship...' 'Bless the Lord, o my soul,' I hear, while the priest, preceded by the deacon with a taper, quietly walks about the church, silently filling it with whiffs of the fragrance of incense, and bowing to the icons; and tears dim my eyes, for already I know with certainty that there is, and can be, nothing more beautiful or loftier on earth than all this. And on and on flows the holy mystery. The Tsar's Gate is closed and opened alternately, symbolizing now our ejection from the paradise lost by us, now the new contemplation thereof; wonderful light-prayers are recited, giving vent to our sorrowful awareness of our earthly weakness, our helplessness, and our eagerness to be led along the path of God." And Bunin writes that he was able to visit many Western churches where there were organs, that he went into Gothic cathedrals, but he "never wept in those cathedrals as I did in the tiny church of the Elevation of the Cross on those dark lonely evenings."

It's not just great poets and writers that can describe the grace-filled effects that visiting a church is necessarily bound up with. Everyone can experience it. It is very important that our soul be open to such feelings, so that, coming into church, we be ready to receive the grace of God to the extent to which it is given to us. If a grace-filled state does not come to us and we are not overcome by compunction, we should not worry. This means that our soul is not ripe for compunction. But minutes of such enlightenment are a sign that our prayer is not barren. They testify to the fact that God responds to our prayers and that the grace of God touches our hearts.