

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Subdcn Jason
John B.	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Anthony	Paula	Kathleen	SJ
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Thomas	Gloria	Thecla	Michael
Reader John	Kimberly	Matthew	Levi
Sbdcn Maximus	Emilia	Photini	George S.
Magdalini	Constanka	Emil	George D.
Rita	John D.	Pam	Grace
Priscilla	Thaddeus	Hesychios	Elizabeth
Sophia	Danny	Reader Mark	Evdokia
Nicholas	Mary	Rachel	Katherine
Lily	Theodora	Elizabeth	Joseph
Justine	David	Sabrina	Kay
Christopher	Crystal	Rosa-Jane	Ian
Gabriel	Marcia	John R.	Johannah
Maximus	Tamara		

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Thomas Pappas	David
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige and Paul	Jennifer
Gabriella	Josiah	Jacob	Catherine
Hugh	Raymond	Judy	Mike
Ron	Clint	Peter	Maria
Brian	George K.	Sean	Sara
Ruth	Janet H.	Pam	Ana
Roz	Krista	Marty	Margo
Joseph	Kera	Vanessa	Emma
Jane	Scott	Torin	Breanne
Lauren	Fr. Michael	Kay	John
Tracy	Patrick	Linda	

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Michael Urban (+6/21)

Robert Beall (+6/24)

Thoughts from the Fathers

In the years of Constantine's triumph "...he pictured a united empire, spiritually renewed by a united Church. Suddenly, instead of his dream there was sad reality: new disputes and divisions. In all likelihood his Christian counselors gave him the idea of summoning a council of bishops, the customary means used by the Church to settle controversy. Constantine wanted to make of this council the symbol and crown of his

own victory and of the new position of the Church in the empire. And so the first ecumenical council was summoned at Nicaea in the spring of the year 325AD. It was universal, not in the number of bishops attending (tradition defines it as the council of the 318 Fathers), but in its conception and significance. For the first time, after centuries of semi-subterranean existence, prelates gathered from all parts of the Church, many still with the marks of wounds and mutilations received under Diocletian. The unprecedented magnificence of their reception and the hospitality and kindness of the emperor confirmed their joyous assurance that a new era had begun and that Christ was indeed victorious over the world.

Constantine himself was the first to interpret the council in this way. He had designated it for the twentieth anniversary of his reign and wanted a gala occasion and rejoicing, as he said in his speech to the assembled bishops on the opening day, disputes were ‘more dangerous than war and other conflicts; they bring me more grief than anything else.’”

Alexander Schmemmann, The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy

In ascending, the Lord left the world and the human race different from they had been when He descended to them. The earth then had been the accursed earth, and the human race had been the offspring of wrath. But this earth carried Him, saw His Transfiguration, preserved Him for three days within its depth, and was illuminated by His Resurrection. And the human race was given “the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name” (Jn. 1:12). God’s blessing was given to creation: “And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven” (Lk 24:50-51). The Lord ascended, blessing: He blessed His disciples and, in their persons, the entire human race. He blessed the earth and the waters, the air and all other natural things. And this blessing reposes upon the world, which is saved, redeemed, and once again blessed. The world remembers and preserves this

blessing.

Sergius Bulgakov, "The Joy of Separation," in Churchly Joy

"When despondency seizes us, let us not give in to it. Rather, fortified and protected by the light of faith, let us with great courage say to the spirit of evil: "What are you to us, you who are cut off from God, a fugitive for Heaven, and a slave of evil? You dare not do anything to us: Christ, the Son of God, has dominion over us and over all. Leave us, you thing of bane. We are made steadfast by the uprightness of His Cross. Serpent, we trample on your head."

St. Seraphim of Sarov

Today our Master Christ goes up to his father's throne; today, he who was incarnated sits down with the Father; not that he was first separated from him, nor that he now sits with him for the first time, for he has always rested in the bosom of the Father, alone containing the Father, and alone contained by the Father. For "I", he said, "am in the Father, and the Father in me"; and the Word is in the Father and the Word is on the earth. Not descending and leaving the Father's bosom empty, nor ascending into heaven and leaving the earth empty of his presence; but both living together with men, and sitting together with the Father; and both sitting together with the Father, and not separated from men. For "be sure of this", he says, "I am with you always, to the very the end of the age."

St. John Chrysostom, On the Ascension.

+++++

Day-by-Day...

Triumphing Love

**A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:
and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh,
and I will give you an heart of flesh (Ezek.36, 26)**

What a torment it is when we realize that our heart has been turned into a stone! Has your soul cooled down? Do you feel distanced from God, dead, joyless, hopeless? Your prayers ceased, your light extinguished, you are oppressed by spiritual poverty, and you wonder if the Lord can still love you, the heartless, unworthy, and even maybe unfaithful one? Look then at the endless, unchangeable Love, which is the same for ages and ages; it does not change because of the changes within you, and it can warm even your stony heart up, having transfigured it by its power.

The Lord still loved Peter even then, when, not long before his denial, he was following him “afar off”. The look of unceasing Love of our Lord has crushed Peter’s heart and lit up in him the extinguished fire. This faithful Love of God belongs to you as well. Grab it, hold on to it, and step into its wonder right away.

Do you grieve after those, who used to be the joy of your life, but are in the Kingdom of Heaven now? Are you exhausted by the sorrow and bitterness of this separation? The heart connection with them is as alive as before. When your heart thirsts after reunion with them, look at the heights of Love of Christ.

The same Love, triumphing in the glory with those, who found salvation, freed from the earthly sin, hearing their singing of glory, is spread to your sorrow as well, hugging you empty heart from all the sides and forming a live connection between you and them.

The same Love, which encloses the heaven and earth, rejoices about those, who returned there, and those, who are still here. Believe, that your stony heart will be alive again and beat faster under the influence of this Love, for no difficulty of earthly life, nor height, nor depth of sorrows, nor any other creature, “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom.8, 39)

(Translated by Tatiana Rozzell from “Every Day is a Gift from God. Diaries of an Orthodox Priest”, author unknown)