



The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



**JANUARY Bulletin Sponsor– In memory of my grandfather Michael Pasloskey
Given by Natalia Simko**

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, January 19

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Monthly Panichda /
Social by Sisterhood / Choir Rehearsal)

Tuesday, January 21

11:00 AM: Orthodoxy 101 Class

Wednesday, January 22

6:00 PM: Fire Training

Thursday, January 23

11:00 AM: Book Club

Saturday, January 25

6:00 PM: Vespers

Sunday, January 26

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

READER SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY 2025

January 19 - Reader Nick Vansuch

January 26 - Robert Willison

Local Clergy Join for First-Ever Blessing of the Detroit River

For the first time in recent memory, Orthodox faithful gathered on the Feast of Theophany to bless the Detroit River. Represented were faithful from the Detroit area Diocese of the Midwest communities of Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, and the parishes of Holy Trinity (Detroit), Holy Transfiguration (Livonia), and St. Mark (Rochester Hills).

The service took place in the middle of the river on Belle Isle in downtown Detroit. With the weather in the low 20s, young and old bundled in blankets and coats as they stood on the beach where the service was held. The Great Blessing of Waters was served by Archpriest Lev Kopistiansky, Priest Phillip Dage, Dean of Ss. Peter and Paul Cathedral, Priest John York, Rector of Holy Trinity Church, and Deacon Lazarus DerGhazarian.

A cross dive followed the blessing of the river. Six people jumped into the icy waves to retrieve the cross, symbolizing the triumph of Christ over death. The successful diver this year was Dan Haller of Holy Transfiguration parish.

This blessed event was a wonderful witness to the glory of our faith to the city of Detroit.

SECOND ANNOUNCEMENT ANNUAL MEETING Sunday, February 2, 2025

The Annual Meeting will take place on Sunday, February 2 following the Liturgy. The Hours will begin at 9:10 AM followed by Divine Liturgy at 9:30AM.

Following Liturgy there will be a brief meal in the basement with the meeting to hopefully begin at 11:00 AM in the Church. Clean-up needs to be complete by the time of the meeting.

This year everyone can pick up the Annual Meeting

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

February 2– Mike Dubinka / Pani Joan Mahler / Dorthy Sudak

February 9– Frank Kusky / Noreen Moderalli /
Sub-Deacon Vladimir (Walter) Rusnak

JANUARY CHARITY
OCMC– Support a mission Priest

Office: 330-755-4931 / Cell: 570-212-8747

<https://www.stjohnthebaptist-campbell.org/>

padrebartek@gmail.com

PLEASE KEEP OUR ELDERS OF THE CHURCH & SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a “Thinking of You” card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon Attends Funeral for President Jimmy Carter

On January 9, 2025, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon joined civic and religious leaders at the National Cathedral in Washington, DC to honor the late President James Earl Carter, Jr.

The 39th President of the United States of America passed away on December 29, 2024 at the age of 100 in Plains, Georgia and was the longest-living President in U.S. history.

His Beatitude participated in the procession and was seated in the sanctuary alongside other religious leaders. Also attending with Metropolitan Tikhon was Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor and Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America.

The late president’s body was received with a ceremony at the cathedral at around 10:00 AM, followed by the commencement of the funeral service and several tributes among which one offered by the current president, President Joseph R. Biden.

Venerable Macarius the Great of Egypt Commemorated on January 19

Saint Macarius the Great of Egypt was born in the early fourth century in the village of Ptinapor in Egypt. At the wish of his parents he entered into marriage, but was soon widowed. After he buried his wife, Macarius told himself, “Take heed, Macarius, and have care for your soul. It is fitting that you forsake worldly life.”

The Lord rewarded the saint with a long life, but from that time the memory of death was constantly with him, impelling him to ascetic deeds of prayer and penitence. He began to visit the church of God more frequently and to be more deeply absorbed in Holy Scripture, but he did not leave his aged parents, thus fulfilling the commandment to honor one’s parents.

Until his parents died, Saint Macarius used his remaining substance to help them and he began to pray fervently that the Lord might show him a guide on the way to salvation. The Lord sent him an experienced Elder, who lived in the desert not far from the village. The Elder accepted the youth with love, guided him in the spiritual science of watchfulness, fasting and prayer, and taught him the handicraft of weaving baskets. After building a separate cell not far from his own, the Elder settled his disciple in it. *Con’t Pg 4*

PRAYER LIST– Updated

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Helen Colaluca / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Gianna Hryb / Sue Kennedy / George Kolesar / Heidi Kuzemchak / Barbara Kolesar / Matushka Helen Psinka / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Melanie Yannitto / Marion Zwinski

HIERARCHS & CLERGY: AB Alexander from Dallas / AP James Gleason (Fr.) / AP Michael Rustic / AP Emil Hutyán / Fr. Matthew Nyumu & his family & parish

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Diane Caban (Sirilla) / George Caban (Sirilla) / Donna Chiarelli / Karen Debiec / Paul Demkosky (Fr.) / Trudy Ellmore / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Bruce Harris (Sabol) / Paula Kennedy / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / James Malchisky (Fr.) / Mea Mahan / Mary Mahan / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Matushka Raisa (Nicoloff) / Teri Petroff (Fr.) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Diane Ruff / Julia Shirilla / Bob Smrek (Sirilla) / Emilia Yanitto / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / Brian (Shirilla) / Chrissy (Fr.) / David (Willison) / Drew (Willison) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Ellen (Clark) / Ellen (Kessler) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Karen (Vansuch) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Katie (Garrity) / Paul (Kolesar) / Paula (Voytilla) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Richard (Tusinac) / Steven (Fr)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive & Metropolitan Arseny imprisoned / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - DECEMBER	2023	2024
1st Week		
New Years Day	19	Father on Vacation
Vespers	None	6
Theophany Supper	None	18
Theophany Vigil	9	29
Liturgy	Not recorded	43 / 24
Theophany Liturgy	9	Weather– Can- celed
2nd Week		
Vespers	8	6
Liturgy	55 / 38	55 / 33
3rd Week		
Vespers	6	
Liturgy	33 / 22	
4th Week		
Vespers	None-Weather	
Liturgy	50	
5th week		
Vespers	10	
Liturgy	50 / 39	

JANUARY Celebrations

Birthday

- 1- Beth Hull
- 2 Stella Jane Zelinsky
- 3 Terri Konik
- 6 Karen Simko / Faith Simko
- 7 Lueleta Dardovski / Luke Clark / Charles Wilfong
- 10 Elizabeth Willison
- 11 Ronald Allen Fredericks
- 12 Patricia Pethtel
- 14– Nobby Kennedy
- 15 James Bufalini / Ron Luthern
- 19 Balaci Kristian / Nicola Nicoloff
- 21 Andrea Stokley
- 22 Stephen Elash / Lorraine Livosky
- 23 Susan Beskid
- 25 Frank Batura
- 26 Mildred Wilfong
- 30 Nadine Todessa
- 31 Julie Dardovski

Anniversary

- 01-02-05 Diaconate Ordination of AP Andrew Bartek
 16-2023 His Grace Nikodhim Bishop of Boston & Albanian Diocese
 24-2015 AB Daniel of Chicago & the Diocese of the Mid-west
 25-2020 His Grace Bishop Alexis Bishop of Sitka & Alaska
 26- Fr. James Gleason Anniversary to the Holy Priesthood

Names Day

- 2 Retired Bishop Seraphim of Sendai / Julia Simko

JANUARY Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

NOTE: If anything is missing from the Sponsorships please contact Fr. Andrew ASAP

Bulletin: In memory of my grandfather Michael Pasloskey Given by Natalia Simko

Wine: Donated by Linda Livosky

Incense: Donated by Linda Livosky

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: For the health Of Mildred Wilfong on the occasion of her 89th birthday – Given by Michele Basile

Altar Candles: In memory of sub-deacon John Zelina– Given by Maureen Koval

Tetrapod Candles: In memory of my husband Robert Kennedy on his birthday– Given by Sue Kennedy / Kindness showed from the Vansuch families– Given by the Gemmel Family

St. Herman Candles: Commemorating all who participate in maintenance of the church, the teachers, singers & those who participate in social events. Praying for everyone to love one another.

St. Panteleimon Icon Candles: In honor of my grandson Bobby Kennedy on his birthday- FGiven by Sue Kennedy / For the Health & salvation to the Presbyter Andrew- Given By Deacon David

Protection Icon Candles: In memory of my mother– Given by Sue Kennedy / For the Health & salvation to Deacon James– Given by Deacon David

St. John the Baptist Candles: In memory of my brother William Karr– Given by Carol Ruff / For the health & Salvation to the choir master DR. Nick, the choir, all parishioners, family & friends– Given by Deacon David

Flowers: In memory of sub-deacon John Zelina– Given by Maureen Koval

<u>\$50 per month</u>	<u>\$30 per month</u>	<u>\$25 per month</u>
*Wine	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Bulletin	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Protection Icon candles	Flowers - \$50 for 2 weeks at a time– <i>Updated</i>
*Altar Candles	*St. John the Baptist candles	
*Tetrapod Candles		

Ven. Marcarius con't from pg 2

The local bishop arrived one day at Ptinapor and, knowing of the saint's virtuous life, ordained him to the diaconate against his will. Saint Macarius was overwhelmed by this disturbance of his silence, and so he went secretly to another place. The Enemy of our salvation began a tenacious struggle with the ascetic, trying to terrify him, shaking his cell and suggesting sinful thoughts. Saint Macarius repelled the attacks of the devil, defending himself with prayer and the Sign of the Cross.

Evil people slandered the saint, accusing him of seducing a woman from a nearby village. They dragged him out of his cell and jeered at him. Saint Macarius endured the temptation with great humility. Without a murmur, he sent the money that he got for his baskets for the support of the pregnant woman.

The innocence of Saint Macarius was manifested when the woman, who suffered torment for many days, was not able to give birth. She confessed that she had slandered the hermit, and revealed the name of the real father. When her parents found out the truth, they were astonished and intended to go to the saint to ask forgiveness. Though Saint Macarius willingly accepted dishonor, he shunned the praise of men. He fled from that place by night and settled on Mt. Nitria in the Pharan desert.

Thus human wickedness contributed to the prospering of the righteous. Having dwelt in the desert for three years, he went to Saint Anthony the Great, the father of

Egyptian monasticism, for he had heard that he was still alive in the world, and he longed to see him. Abba Anthony received him with love, and Macarius became his devoted disciple and follower. Saint Macarius lived with him for a long time and then, on the advice of the saintly abba, he went off to the Skete monastery (in the northwest part of Egypt). He so shone forth in asceticism that he came to be called "a young Elder," because he had distinguished himself as an experienced and mature monk, even though he was not quite thirty years old.

Saint Macarius survived many demonic attacks against him. Once, he was carrying palm branches for weaving baskets, and a devil met him on the way and wanted to strike him with a sickle, but he was not able to do this. He said, "Macarius, I suffer great anguish from you because I am unable to vanquish you. I do everything that you do. You fast, and I eat nothing at all. You keep vigil, and I never sleep. You surpass me only in one thing: humility."

When the saint reached the age of forty, he was ordained to the priesthood and made the head of the monks living in the desert of Skete. During these years, Saint Macarius often visited with Saint Anthony the Great, receiving guidance from him in spiritual conversations. Abba Macarius was deemed worthy to be present at the death of Saint Anthony and he received his staff. He also received a double portion of the Anthony's spiritual power, just as the prophet Elisha once received a double portion of the grace of the prophet Elias, along with the mantle that he dropped from the fiery chariot. **Con't Pg 7**

JANUARY Reposed List

- Margaret Graban (1978) ©
Judith Banas (2019)
1- Katherine Kristian (1994) ©
1- Anna Harvischak (2013) ©
2- Nicholas Libertin (2021) ©
2- Nicholas Bohac (1921) ©
2- Elia Dudin (1949) ©
3- Mitred Archriest Stavros Rousos
3- Anna Roman (1978) ©
3- Elizabeth Kuzma (1925) ©
4- George Bartek (1983)
4- Archpriest Michael Slovesko
4- Peter Fatholitis (1937) ©
5- Ann Marie Petroff (2006) ©
6- Helen Pender (2016)
6- John Timkovich (1951) ©
6- Infant Klimis (still born) (1964)
6- Mother Elizabeth (2024)
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9- Carolyn Weil (1998) ©
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9- William Boldish (1968) ©
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12- AP Moses Berry (2024)
14- George O'Shanie (1981) ©
14- John Graban (1990) ©
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14- John Genaros (1960) ©
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30- Archpriest John Mason (2019)
30- Stephen Kurtos (1965) ©
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31- Olga Venslavsky (2003) ©

Luke 18:35-43 (Gospel)

Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, "What do you want Me to do for you?" He said, "Lord, that I may receive my sight." Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

"There is your brother, naked, crying, and you stand there confused over the choice of an attractive floor covering."

St. Ambrose of Milan.

JANUARY FINANCIALS

Expenses	\$11,718.43
Income	\$3,890.70
TOTAL	-\$7,827.73
Weekly Tithe	\$3,636.70
Weekly Candles	\$154.00
Perpetual Memorial Fund	\$50.00
Unneeded Gifts	\$20.00
Christmas Flowers	\$30.00
Bulletin	\$50.00
Monthly Charity Collection: OCMC (Support a Mission Priest)	\$269.00

Metropolitan Tikhon makes Pastoral Visit to the Diocese of Mexico

On January 10, 2024, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon traveled to Mexico City for a primatial visit to the Diocese of Mexico. Over many years, it has become customary for His Beatitude to travel to Mexico on the weekend following the feast of the Theophany of our Lord.

Upon his arrival at the Benito Juarez International Airport, His Beatitude was welcomed by His Eminence Archbishop Alejo and numerous clergy and faithful of the Diocese of Mexico.

Also present during His Beatitude's visit to the Diocese was His Eminence Archbishop Benjamin, who traveled to Mexico on the same day. His Eminence has been a fervent supporter of the Diocese for many years.

Traveling with His Beatitude was Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor and Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America. Also present were Archpriest John Parker, Dean of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Theological Seminary, and Priest David Wooten, rector of St. Anthony the Great Orthodox Church in San Antonio, TX. Both Fr. John and Fr. David are well known to the Diocese of Mexico, having traveled there many times and supported the Diocese in many ways.

On Saturday, Metropolitan Tikhon, the rest of the delegation, and diocesan clergy and laity from across the Diocese traveled to the Monasterio Orthodoxo San Antonio El Grande for the Diocesan Assembly. The monastery is part of the Antiochian Metropolis of Mexico and was graciously made available to the Diocese for the event.

His Beatitude opened the Assembly with prayer and, at the invitation of Archbishop Alejo, offered a talk on the conciliar life of the Church. His Eminence Alejo then offered his address to the assembly, which was then followed by various reports from the diocesan officers,

heads of departments, and parish reports. Following the meeting, the Assembly was concluded with Great Vespers.

On Sunday, His Beatitude presided at the Hierarchical Liturgy at Holy Ascension Cathedral in Mexico City. Concelebrating with Metropolitan Tikhon were His Eminence Iakovos, Metropolitan of Mexico and Exarch of Central America and the Caribbean Islands (Ecumenical Patriarchate), His Eminence Metropolitan Ignatius, Archbishop of Mexico, Venezuela, Central America and the Islands of the Caribbean Sea (Patriarchate of Antioch), Archbishop Alejo, Archbishop Benjamin, His Grace Isichios, Bishop of Markiani and Auxiliary Bishop of Mexico (Ecumenical Patriarchate), Fr. Alessandro, Priest Demetrio Azocar Martínez, Diocesan Chancellor, and several priests and deacons of the Diocese and the delegations.

As it has become customary during these primatial visits, His Beatitude presided at the Great Blessing of Water following the Divine Liturgy.

At the conclusion of the divine services, His Beatitude offered his gratitude to Archbishop Alejo for the invitation and for the great work of the Diocese of Mexico that continues to grow on many fronts. His Beatitude also offered his greetings to the concelebrating bishops who, on their part, greeted His Beatitude remarking their gratitude for being able to be present as such a joyous celebration which is a testimony to the brotherly relationship among the three dioceses in Mexico and their continual work together. Archbishop Alejo also offered his greetings to His Beatitude thanking him for presiding at the services and his ongoing support to him and the Diocese. His Eminence also greeted and offered his gratitude to the concelebrating bishops and clergy.

A festive luncheon followed the celebration.

His Beatitude returned to Washington, DC, on Monday, January 13.

Colossians 3:12-16 (Epistle)

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Ven Marcarius con't from pg 4

Saint Macarius worked many healings. People thronged to him from various places for help and for advice, asking his holy prayers. All this unsettled the quietude of the saint. He therefore dug out a deep cave under his cell, and hid there for prayer and meditation.

Saint Macarius attained such boldness before God that, through his prayers, the Lord raised the dead. Despite attaining such heights of holiness, he continued to preserve his unusual humility. One time the holy abba caught a thief loading his things on a donkey standing near the cell. Without revealing that he was the owner of these things, the monk began to help tie up the load. Having removed himself from the world, the monk told himself, "We bring nothing at all into this world; clearly, it is not possible to take anything out from it. Blessed be the Lord for all things!"

Once, Saint Macarius was walking and saw a skull lying upon the ground. He asked, "Who are you?" The skull answered, "I was a chief priest of the pagans. When you, Abba, pray for those in hell, we receive some mitigation."

The monk asked, "What are these torments?" "We are sitting in a great fire," replied the skull, "and we do not see one another. When you pray, we begin to see each other somewhat, and this affords us some comfort." Having heard such words, the saint began to weep and asked, "Are there still more fiercesome torments?" The skull answered, "Down below us are those who knew the Name of God, but spurned Him and did not keep His commandments. They endure even more grievous torments."

Once, while he was praying, Saint Macarius heard a voice: "Macarius, you have not yet attained such perfection in virtue as two women who live in the city." The humble ascetic went to the city, found the house where the women lived, and knocked. The women received him with joy, and he said, "I have come from the desert seeking you in order to learn of your good deeds. Tell me about them, and conceal nothing."

The women answered with surprise, "We live with our husbands, and we have not such virtues." But the saint continued to insist, and the women then told him, "We married two brothers. After living together in one house for fifteen years, we have not uttered a single malicious nor shameful word, and we never quarrel among ourselves. We asked our husbands to allow us to enter a women's monastery, but they would not agree. We vowed not to utter a single worldly word until our death."

Saint Macarius glorified God and said, "In truth, the Lord seeks neither virgins nor married women, and neither monks nor laymen, but values a person's free intent, accepting it as the deed itself. He grants to everyone's free will the grace of the Holy Spirit, which operates in an individual and directs the life of all who yearn to be saved."

During the years of the reign of the Arian emperor Valens (364-378), Saint Macarius the Great and Saint Macarius of Alexandria were subjected to persecution by the followers of the Arian bishop Lucius. They seized both Elders and put them on a ship, sending them to an island where only pagans lived. By the prayers of the saints, the daughter of a pagan priest was delivered from an evil spirit. After this, the pagan priest and all the inhabitants of the island were baptized. When he heard what had happened, the Arian bishop feared an uprising and permitted the Elders to return to their monasteries.

The meekness and humility of the monk transformed human souls. "A harmful word," said Abba Macarius, "makes good things bad, but a good word makes bad things good." When the monks asked him how to pray properly, he answered, "Prayer does not require many words. It is needful to say only, 'Lord, as Thou wilt and as Thou knowest, have mercy on me.'" If an enemy should fall upon you, you need only say, "Lord, have mercy!" The Lord knows that which is useful for us, and grants us mercy."

When the brethren asked how a monk ought to comport himself, the saint replied, "Forgive me, I am not yet a monk, but I have seen monks. I asked them what I must do to be a monk. They answered, 'If a man does not withdraw himself from everything which is in the world, it is not possible to be a monk.' Then I said, 'I am weak and cannot be as you are.' The monks responded, 'If you cannot renounce the world as we have, then go to your cell and weep for your sins.'"

Saint Macarius gave advice to a young man who wished to become a monk: "Flee from people and you shall be saved." That one asked: "What does it mean to flee from people?" The monk answered: "Sit in your cell and repent of your sins."

Saint Macarius sent him to a cemetery to rebuke and then to praise the dead. Then he asked him what they said to him. The young man replied, "They were silent to both praise and reproach." "If you wish to be saved, be as one dead. Do not become angry when insulted, nor puffed up when praised." And further: "If slander is like praise for you, poverty like riches, insufficiency like abundance, then you shall not perish."

The prayer of Saint Macarius saved many in perilous circumstances of life, and preserved them from harm and temptation. His benevolence was so great that they said of him: "Just as God sees the whole world, but does not chastize sinners, so also does Abba Macarius cover his neighbor's weaknesses, which he seemed to see without seeing, and heard without hearing."

The monk lived until the age of ninety. Shortly before his death, Saints Anthony and Pachomius appeared to him, bringing the joyful message of his departure to eternal life in nine days. After instructing his disciples to preserve the monastic Rule and the traditions of the Fathers, He blessed them and began **Finished Next Pg**

St. Marcarius con't from previous pg

to prepare for death. Saint Macarius departed to the Lord saying, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit."

Abba Macarius spent sixty years in the wilderness, being dead to the world. He spent most of his time in conversation with God, often in a state of spiritual rapture. But he never ceased to weep, to repent and to work. The saint's profound theological writings are based on his own personal experience. Fifty Spiritual Homilies and seven Ascetic Treatises survive as the precious legacy of his spiritual wisdom. Several prayers composed by Saint Macarius the Great are still used by the Church in the Prayers Before Sleep and also in the Morning Prayers.

Man's highest goal and purpose, the union of the soul with God, is a primary principle in the works of Saint Macarius. Describing the methods for attaining mystical communion, the saint relies upon the experience of the great teachers of Egyptian monasticism and on his own experience. The way to God and the experience of the holy ascetics of union with God is revealed to each believer's heart.

Earthly life, according to Saint Macarius, has only a relative significance: to prepare the soul, to make it capable of perceiving the heavenly Kingdom, and to establish in the soul an affinity with the heavenly homeland.

"For those truly believing in Christ, it is necessary to change and transform the soul from its present degraded nature into another, divine nature, and to be fashioned anew by the power of the Holy Spirit."

This is possible, if we truly believe and we truly love God and have observed all His holy commandments. If one betrothed to Christ at Baptism does not seek and receive the divine light of the Holy Spirit in the present life, "then when he departs from the body, he is separated into the regions of darkness on the left side. He does not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but has his end in hell with the devil and his angels" (Homily 30:6).

In the teaching of Saint Macarius, the inner action of the Christian determines the extent of his perception of divine truth and love. Each of us acquires salvation through grace and the divine gift of the Holy Spirit, but to attain a perfect measure of virtue, which is necessary for the soul's assimilation of this divine gift, is possible only "by faith and by love with the strengthening of free will." Thus, the Christian inherits eternal life "as much by grace, as by truth."

Salvation is a divine-human action, and we attain complete spiritual success "not only by divine power and grace, but also by the accomplishing of the proper labors." On the other hand, it is not just within "the measure of freedom and purity" that we arrive at the proper solicitude, it is not without "the cooperation of the hand of God above." The participation of man determines the actual condition of his soul, thus inclining him to good

or evil. "If a soul still in the world does not possess in itself the sanctity of the Spirit for great faith and for prayer, and does not strive for the oneness of divine communion, then it is unfit for the heavenly kingdom."

The miracles and visions of Blessed Macarius are recorded in a book by the presbyter Rufinus, and his Life was compiled by Saint Serapion, bishop of Tmuntis (Lower Egypt), one of the renowned workers of the Church in the fourth century. His holy relics are in the city of Amalfi, Italy.

Chicago Communities Bless Lake Michigan

The four Orthodox communities of Chicago gathered at Lake Michigan to serve the Great Blessing of Water on Saturday, January 11.

Holy Trinity Cathedral, St. George Cathedral, Christ the Savior Church, and St. Makarios Mission, all Chicago parishes, came together to bless Lake Michigan during the Theophany season. Priest Alexander Koranda, Cathedral Dean, Priest Nikolai Lochmatow, Dean of St. George Cathedral, Priest John Kennerk, Rector of Christ the Savior Church, and Priest Philip Maikkula, Priest-in-charge of St. Makarios lead the service.

Participants gathered at Chicago's North Avenue Beach and processed to the edge of the lake singing the Theophany troparion. Upon arrival at the lake, the appropriate hymns and readings were pronounced, and the cross was lowered into the lake sanctifying the water.

This is an annual gathering of the communities celebrating the Great Feast of Theophany and blessing the main body of water of the city of Chicago.

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