



The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church

301 Struthers Liberty Rd

Campbell, OH 44405

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



FEBRUARY Bulletin Sponsor- OPEN

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, February 9- Publican & Pharisee

9:35 AM: Hours

10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / 40 Day Panachida for Sub-deacon Vladimir / Choir Rehearsal / Social Sisterhood fundraiser / Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 12

6:00 PM: Fire Training

Saturday, February 15

6:00 PM: Vespers / Confessions

Sunday, February 16

9:35 AM: Hours

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

Hebrews 7:7-17 (Epistle, Meeting)

Now beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. Here mortal men receive tithes, but there he receives them, of whom it is witnessed that he lives. Even Levi, who receives tithes, paid tithes through Abraham, so to speak, for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man has officiated at the altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest who has come, not according to the law of a fleshly commandment, but according to the power of an endless life. For He testifies: "You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek."

FEBRUARY CHARITY

Wild fires in CA to Greek Cathedral in Los Angeles

February 2025

Reader Schedule

February 9: Deacon James Hyrb (Publican & Pharisee)

February 16: Deacon David Gemmel (Prodigal Son)

February 23: Natalia Simko (Meatfare Sunday)

Statement from His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon on the Plane Crash in Washington, DC

With great sorrow we have learned of the tragic plane crash that took place over the Potomac River on the night of Wednesday, January 29, 2025, claiming the lives of all on board. Among the departed were Aleksandra Ter and her daughter Olivia, two long-time parishioners of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Washington, DC.

On behalf of the clergy and faithful of the Orthodox Church in America, I extend my deepest condolences to all their family and friends, and to the family and friends of all who perished in this disaster. I urge the faithful to pray for the families of all the victims and all those affected by the tragedy, and especially for the Ter family and all their friends and loved ones. I also ask you to join me in beseeching the Lord on behalf of the newly-departed handmaidens of God Aleksandra and Olivia.

May the Lord grant them rest with the righteous departed, and may their memory be eternal!

+TIKHON

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

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

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

March 9– Aleksandra & Olivia Ter & all those who lost their lives in the Washington, DC & Philly Plane Crashes

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

Metropolitan Tikhon Celebrates Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs at St. Vladimir’s Seminary

On Wednesday, January 30, and Thursday, January 31, 2025, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon visited St. Vladimir’s Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, NY, to celebrate the Feast of the Three Holy Hierarchs, the altar feast of the seminary chapel.

On the eve of the Feast, His Beatitude presided at the Festal Vigil. The seminary mixed and male choirs sang the responses, led by Dn. Harrison Russin and Mr. Zach Mandel. In the morning, His Beatitude presided at the celebration of the hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Concelebrating with His Beatitude were His Grace Irinej, Bishop of Washington-New York and the Eastern America Diocese of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor and Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Rector of Three Hierarchs Chapel, and numerous faculty, visiting, and student clergy.

Before the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude tonsured seminarian John Rexford a reader and ordained him to the subdiaconate. The homily was offered by Archpriest Alexander Rentel. During the liturgy, His Beatitude ordained third year seminarian Dn. Justin Taylor to the priesthood and second year seminarian Subdeacon John Rexford to the diaconate. After liturgy, following the blessing of the kolyva, His Beatitude greeted all those

present in the joy of the feast and offered words of congratulations and encouragement to the newly-ordained priest and deacon. His Beatitude stressed that ordination is a gift that is a gift of God. “It is not something we earn, but something we are given. And truly, ordination is the proverbial gift that keeps on giving: we receive ordination so that we can share, through our ministry, the abundant gifts of the grace of God.”

Fr. Alexander Rentel then welcomed the hierarchs on behalf of the seminary community, and Bishop Irinej offered thanks for his recent visits to the seminary.

That evening, the festivities continued with the 42nd Annual Fr. Alexander Schmemmann Lecture and Mid-Year Commencement. This year’s keynote presentation, “Heaven to Earth, Earth to Heaven: Neoplatonic Theology and the Art of Byzantine Churches,” was delivered by Dr. Henry Maguire, Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at Johns Hopkins University. Before the presentation, Dr. Maguire was presented with an honorary doctorate by Dr. Ionut-Alexandru Todorie, Interim President and Academic Dean of St. Vladimir’s Seminary. Following the lecture, degrees were conferred upon three graduating students; Archpriest Alessandro Magheritino (D.Min.), Deacon Habib McGee (M.Div.), and Mr. Christopher Abdelehad (M.A.).

FEBRUARY Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

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

Bulletin: OPEN

Wine: In memory of my dad Steven Elash, Eileen and Stephan Elash Eileen and Tim Nolder and all members of the Graban & Elash families– Given by Cindy Ferrick

Incense: For the Health of all the members of the Graban & Elash Families– Given by Cindy Ferrick

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: OPEN

Altar Candles: OPEN

Tetrapod Candles: In health for the Ruff family & Parishioners– Given by Carol Ruff

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

St. Panteleimon Icon Candles: In honor of Ryan Debiec on the occasion of his birthday on 2-13- FGiven by Sue Kennedy & Family

Protection Icon Candles: OPEN

St. John the Baptist Candles: OPEN

Flowers: In memory of sub-deacon John Zelina– OPEN

<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		

Minneapolis Deacon Ordained to the Priesthood

On Saturday, February 1, the Fore-feast of the Meeting of the Lord into the Temple, His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest celebrated the Divine Liturgy at the Diocesan Cathedral, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL.

Celebrating with His Eminence were Archpriest Herman Kincaid, Chancellor, Mitered Archpriest Andrew Morbey, Priest Alexander Koranda, Cathedral Dean, Priest Gregory Ealy, Deacon Paul Garklavs, Deacon Jason Ketz, and Deacon Nikola Tambur. The choir was directed by Matushka Miho Ealy.

After the Great Entrance, Deacon Jason was ordained to the priesthood. The Archbishop congratulated the newly ordained after the liturgy offering his prayers and blessings. A meal was held at a local restaurant in celebration of the occasion.

The newly ordained traveled by to Minneapolis where he will be serving the full cycle of services.

Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee Beginning of the Lenten Triodion Commemorated on February 9

The Sunday after the Sunday of Zacchaeus is devoted to the Publican and the Pharisee. At Vespers the night before, the Triodion (the liturgical book used in the services of Great Lent) begins.

Two men went to the Temple to pray. One was a Pharisee who scrupulously observed the requirements of religion: he prayed, fasted, and contributed money to the Temple. These are very good things, and should be imitated by anyone who loves God. We who may not fulfill these requirements as well as the Pharisee did should not feel entitled to criticize him for being faithful. His sin was in looking down on the Publican and feeling justified because of his external religious observances.

The second man was a Publican, a tax-collector who was despised by the people. He, however, displayed humility, and this humility justified him before God (Luke 18:14).

The lesson to be learned is that we possess neither the Pharisee's religious piety, nor the Publican's repentance, through which we can be saved. We are called to see ourselves as we really are in the light of Christ's teaching, asking Him to be merciful to us, deliver us from sin, and to lead us on the path of salvation.

Two weeks before the beginning of the Fast, as part of our preparation for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha, the Church prescribes the reading of Saint Mark's Gospel. From Monday to Friday the focus is on the end times, and the Savior's death and burial.

FEBRUARY Reposed List

- 1- Jane Sablak (2004) ©
- 1- John Jay Truhan (2004) ©
- 1- Helen Gozur (2006) ©
- 1- Thomas Livosky (1951) ©
- 3- Ann Sature (2012)
- 3- Nicholas Tsaknis (1952) ©
- 3- Mary Lisko (1953) ©
- 3- Mike Alesafis (1960) ©
- 4- Michael Livosky (2003) ©
- 5- Mike Alesafis (1960) ©
- 6- Bessie Poullos (1961) ©
- 7- Rossetas Kallis (1958) ©
- 8- Joseph Durshaw (1972) ©
- 8- Andrew Libertin (1985) ©
- 8- Anna Graban (1937) ©
- 8- Steve Hamanzi (1946) ©
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- 9- George Cross (2020) ©
- 10- George Bobosh (1984) ©
- 10- Steve Elash (1998) ©
- 10- T. Rago (1924) © (no name)
- 10- Helen Holubanich (1924) ©
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- 12- John Holibonich (2004) ©
- 12- Theodore Kalos (1932) ©
- 13- Bishop Varlaam (2020)
- 13- Vera Kristian (1980) ©
- 14- Emmanuel Balale (1956) ©
- 14- Bertha Ginnis (1961) ©
- 14- John Macala (1963) ©
- 14- Nicholas Angelides (1963) ©
- 15- Justina Popodich (grandmother)
- 15- George Billik (1998) ©
- 15- John Timkovich (2004) ©
- 15- Thelma Psaras (1930) ©
- 15- Alfteria Jaetanis (1930) ©
- 15- Anna Sirilla (1955) ©
- 15- Mary Shirilla (1962) ©
- 16- Albert Bartek (1952)
- 16- Paul Cole (1997) ©
- 16- John Stamatinas (1946) ©
- 16- Infant Klimis (1 hr old) (1956) ©
- 16- Ann Leschinsky (1956) ©
- 17- Metropolitan Orestes (1977)
- 17- Myron Bilchik (1982) ©
- 17- Emmanuel Balale (1956) ©
- 17- Robert Fischer (1995) ©
- 18- Virginia Nosik (2004) ©
- 18- George Caleris (1957) ©
- 18- Paul Petruschak (2024)
- 19- Elizabeth Antas (1921) ©
- 19- George Berezovsky (1922) ©
- 19- Michael Voyis (1949) ©
- 19- Ann Allshouse (1984) ©
- 20- Daniel Shirilla (1992) ©
- 21- Fr. Michael Shuster (2020)
- 22- Fr. Andrew Hutnyan (2004)
- 22- Manuel Smyrmios (1944) ©
- 22- Carol Ann Feltovich (2016) ©
- 22- Sub-deacon Wylie Meath (2024)
- 23- Rose Dobrovolski (1995) ©
- 24- Nicholas Andrew Shirilla (2012) ©
- 24- Still born Volchko (1924) ©
- 24- Eva Wolfe (1925) ©
- 24- Elizabeth Cvercko (1929) ©
- 25- Vasil Heib (1920) ©
- 25- John Kotuka (1960) ©
- 25- Veronica Shirilla (1995) ©
- 25- Charlette Zenko (2024)
- 27- Steve Basala (1985)
- 27- Mike Kazonis (1950) ©
- 28- Mike Babiak (1922) ©
- 29- Milan Miller Batalo (1920) ©

Metropolitan Tikhon Participates in International Religious Freedom Summit

On February 4, 2025, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon participated in the International Religious Freedom Summit held at the Washington Hilton in Washington, DC. The Metropolitan was accompanied by Archpriest Alessandro Margheritino, Acting Chancellor and Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America.

The International Religious Freedom Summit, an annual gathering that draws hundreds of distinguished religious leaders, policymakers, and advocates from across the globe, serves as a platform for dialogue on religious liberty and human rights. During the summit's midday session, Metropolitan Tikhon was invited as a featured panelist at a luncheon sponsored by the Alliance of Virtue. He shared the panel with former Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom Sam Brownback and renowned Islamic scholar Shaykh Abdallah bin Bayyah, among other distinguished leaders. The discussion focused on practical strategies for advancing religious freedom and building interfaith partnerships. Following the panel discussions, Metropolitan Tikhon met with Chris Halverson, Minister-At-Large at the International Foundation. Mr. Halverson has extensive experience in fostering dialogue among political leaders, having served as Acting Chaplain to the United States Senate (1992-1995) and continuing to organize faith-sharing events for governmental officials at various levels.

He also remains active in the prayer breakfast movement, which promotes peace and unity among diverse groups of people. The meeting was joined by Fr. Alessandro and Jonathan Pageau, a member of the Orthodox Church in America's Metropolitan Council, and popular speaker, artist, and author.

NCMAF Holds Annual Conference

On January 14-16, 2025, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces (NCMAF), Endorsers Conference for Veterans Affairs Chaplaincy (ECVAC), and the Armed Forces Chaplains Board were held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, VA. Archpriest Theodore Boback, Dean and Executive Director of the Orthodox Church in America Military and VAMC Chaplaincies participated in the three meetings.

Due to prior commitments, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Ecclesiastical Endorser of the Orthodox Church in America Military and VA Chaplains, was unable to attend this year's gathering.

The first sessions began on Tuesday afternoon. The ECVAC portion of the conference included a presentation by Chaplain Kimberly Willis, Executive Director, VA Chaplain Services who offered a presentation on the VA Chaplaincy.

Afterwards, Chaplain Heidi Kugler, Chief of Chaplains, Federal Bureau of Prisons, made a presentation to the attendees on the Chaplaincy within the Federal Prison system.

The day ended with an ECVAC business session which was held with Rev. Dr. Patricia Murphy, the ECVAC representative.

This year, the NCMAF had as its theme, "Foundations: The Heart of a Chaplain." The second day commenced or began with remarks and greetings from Rev. Dr. Gary Carr, Chairperson of the Executive Committee, and Rev. Doyle Dunn, Executive Director of NCMAF. Afterwards, presentations included "Endorsing Perspectives" by Monsignor Bob Cannon, Archdiocese of Military Services; "Recognizing Compassion Fatigue and Developing Self-Care" by Rev. Dr Michael Langston, Professor of Practical Theology at Columbia International University.

The next afternoon began with a panel presentation entitled, "Free Exercise of Religion Challenges." Afterwards, the branch recruiters from the Air Force, Army and Navy made presentations.

The day ended with the annual NCMAF Business Meeting.

The final day's events included the presentations "Chaplain Attachment (Fear vs Trust)" by Dr, Stephen P. Stratton, Professor of Counseling and Pastoral Care, Asbury Theological Seminary and "The free exercise of Religion and US Culture" by Rabbi David Saperstein (former Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom).

A number of other presentations were offered by various speakers prior to the luncheons each day, including Fr. Razz Waff, Major General, USA Retired, the Executive Director of the Military Chaplain Association (MCA), Fr. Robert Pleczkowski, Chaplain (Brigadier General) US Army retired, the President of the MCA; Rev. Dr. Richard

Stenbakken Chaplain (Colonel) US Army Retired, the Desmond Doss Foundation, and a presentation on Logos Bible Software.

In the afternoon, the Armed Forces Chaplains Board hosted presentations by the three branch Chiefs of Chaplains: CH, Major General, Trent Scott, US Air Force; CH (Major General), William Green, Jr., US Army; and Rear Admiral Gregory Todd, CHC, US Navy. A question and answer session concluded the day.

Chaplain David Wake (Colonel), Executive Director, Armed Forces Chaplains Board was present during the three days and also addressed the conference attendees.

The Orthodox Church in America endorses Priests for the United States Armed Forces and for the Veterans Affairs Medical Centers. If you have interest in the Military or VAMC Chaplaincies, please contact our office: chaplains@oca.org.

Monthly Charity Donation Recap for 2024

Thank You!

January: OCMC - \$722 + 250 (from church)

Total: \$972

February: Rescue Mission - \$1,035 + \$250 (from church)

Total: \$1,285

March: Workers of St Basil - \$597 + \$250 (from church)

Total: \$847

April: St Tikhon Seminary- \$637 + \$250 (from church)

Total \$887

May: St. Vladimir's Camp: \$646 + \$250 (from church)

Total \$896

June: St Theodosius Cathedral: \$2,168+\$332(from church)

Total \$2,500

July: St. Herman's Seminary: \$649+\$250 (from church)

Total \$899

August: Transfiguration Monastery: \$587+\$250 (from church)

Total \$837

September: Support Seminarists \$1,201 + \$250 (from church)

Total \$1,451

October: Hurricane Relief: \$1,015 + \$250 (from church)

Total \$1,265

November: St. Vladimir's Seminary \$533 = \$250 (from Church)

Total \$783

December: Zoe for Life \$754 + \$250 (from the church)

Total \$1,004 and

Alaska Project \$143 + \$250 (from church)

Total \$393

MONTHLY CHARITY FOR 2025

January: OCMC: \$900 + \$300 from the church

Total \$1,200

February: CA Fire Relief:

FEBRUARY FINANCIALS

Expenses	\$6,338.62
Income	\$6,371.44
TOTAL	-\$32.82
Weekly Tithe	\$5,655.70
Weekly Candles	\$92.00
Tetrapod Candles	\$30.00
Unneeded Gifts	\$10.00
Christmas Card	\$20.00
Cemetery Reimbursement	\$563.74
Monthly Charity Collection: CA Fire Relief	\$263.00

2024 - COUNCIL MEMBERS

Nancy Tusinac (President)
Phone- 724-456-7366

Cindy Ferrick (Treasurer)
Phone 330-531-1119

Joann Sirilla (Financial Secretary)
Phone 330-881-6775

Sub-deacon Dr. Donald Tamulouis (Council)
Phone 330-774-8860

Natalia Simko (Council) (Cemetery issues)
Phone- 330-980-3033

Maintenance Issues:

Michael Simko - 330-565-0084
Michael Centofanti - 330-544-3518

Luke 2:22-40 (Gospel, Meeting)

Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons." And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Now there was one, Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, and had lived with a husband seven years from her virginity; and this woman was a widow of about eighty-four years, who did not depart from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And coming in that instant she gave thanks to the Lord, and spoke of Him to all those who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. So when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

2 Timothy 3:10-15 (Sunday Epistle)

But you have carefully followed my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, love, perseverance, persecutions, afflictions, which happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra – what persecutions I endured. And out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them, and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus

Luke 18:10-14 (Sunday Gospel)

"Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men – extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

WHAT THE CHURCH FATHERS SAY ABOUT THE PUBLICAN & PHARISEE

SAYING FROM THE DESERT FATHERS

An old man much given to simplicity questioned Abba Ammonas: “Three thoughts occupy me, either, should I wander in the deserts, or should I go to a foreign land where no one knows me, or should I shut myself up in a cell without opening the door to anyone, eating only every second day?” Abba Ammonas replied, “it is not right for you to do any of these things. Rather, sit in your cell and eat a little every day, keeping the word of the publican always in your heart, and you may be saved.”

Amma Syncletiki said: “Imitate the Publican and you will not be condemned with the Pharisee. Choose the meekness of Moses and you will find your heart which is a rock changed into a spring of water.”
.....

SAINT JOHN KRONSTADT

When the foolish thought of counting up any good works enters into your head, immediately correct your fault and rather count up your sins, your continual and innumerable offences against the All-Merciful and Righteous Master, and you will find that their number is as the sand of the sea, whilst your virtues in comparison with them are as nothing.
.....

SAINT PETER OF DAMASCUS

If repentance is too much for you, and you sin out of habit even when you do not want to, show humility like the publican; this is enough to ensure your salvation.
.....

ELDER AMBROSE OF OPTINA

Repentance and humility are more important and higher than all of the other virtues, continuing until the end of our life. Referring to the words of the Prophet David, St. John Climacus writes, “I did not fast, I did not keep vigil, I did not sleep on the bare earth, but I humbled myself and the Lord saved me.”
.....

Let a neighbor praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger and not your own lips.

PROVERBS 27:202

The Orthodox Faith Volume IV - Spirituality / The Kingdom of Heaven

When Christ will come in glory at the end of the ages, and God will be all in all, then will come the new heaven and new earth foretold by the prophet Isaiah and described in the book of Revelation (cf. Is 65.17–66.24).

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband; and I heard a great voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling of God is with men. He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them; He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.”

And He who sat upon the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.” Also He said, “Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true.” And He said to me, “It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give water without price from the fountain of the water of life. He who conquers shall have this heritage, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the polluted, as for murderers, fornicators, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their lot shall be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death” (Rev 21.1–8).

Behold I am coming soon, bringing my recompense to repay everyone for what he has done (Rev 22.12).

To gain the “heritage” of the New Jerusalem is the whole meaning of life, the sole purpose of man’s being created by God. “He who conquers shall have this heritage.” And as Saint Paul has said simply, “We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us” (Rom 8.37).

For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord (Rom 8.38–39).

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of His glory He may grant you to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have power to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God (Eph 3.14–19).

To be “filled with all the fullness of God”—this, and this alone, is what Orthodox spirituality is about.