The Weekly Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
301 Struthers Liberty Rd
Campbell, OH 44405

FEBRUARY Bulletin Sponsor-OPEN

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, February 15
9:15-9:45 AM: Confessions by app't
9:35 AM: Hours
10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Monthly Panachida / Potluck Meatfare Social

Tuesday, February 17
6:30 PM: Parish Council Meeting

Wednesday, February 18
7:30 pm City Public Meeting

Saturday, February 21
3:15-3:45 pm Confessions by App't
4:00 pm Vespers

Sunday, February 22
9:15-9:45 am Confessions by app't
9:35 am Hours
10:00 am Divine Liturgy / Social followed by Forgiveness Vespers

His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist)

His Grace Bishop Seraphim (Sigrist), former Bishop of Sendai, fell asleep in the Lord on the morning of February 7, 2026.

Bishop Seraphim was born Joseph Sigrist on December 13, 1941 in New York and baptized in a Presbyterian Church. He was brought up in Pleasantville, NY and studied at Nyack College. While studying at Nyack he began to attend the Orthodox Church and, on completing his degree there, he was received into the Orthodox Church at Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral in New York. He then began study at Saint Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary and, after graduating in 1967, went to Japan to assist the Orthodox Church in Japan.

In Japan working first as a teacher in a church related school and assisting as a deacon at the Toyohashi Church, he was tonsured a monk with the name Seraphim and served first as a parish priest in the town of Nakanida and then, being consecrated in Tokyo on December 19, 1971, from that time served as Bishop of East Japan living in Sendai.

Bishop Seraphim served in Japan for 19 years, returning to the United States in 1987. He taught in the graduate department of religion at Drew University, wrote three books, and visited Russia frequently in recent years in support of mission especially to youth in Russia.

Sunday of Meatfare of the Last Judgment Commemorated on February 15

Today's Gospel reading is Matthew 25:31-46, the parable of the Last Judgment. It reminds us that while trusting in Christ's love and mercy, we must not forget His righteous judgment when He comes again in glory. If our hearts remain hardened and unrepentant, we should not expect the Lord to overlook our transgressions simply because He is a good and loving God. Although He does not desire the death of a sinner, He also expects us to turn from our wickedness and live (Ezek. 33:11). This same idea is expressed in the prayer read by the priest after the penitent has confessed his or her sins (Slavic practice).

The time for repentance and forgiveness is now, in the present life. At the Second Coming, Christ will appear as the righteous Judge, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. 2:6). Then the time for entreating God's mercy and forgiveness will have passed.

As Father Alexander Schmemann reminds us in his book GREAT LENT (Ch. 1:4), sin is the absence of love, it is separation and isolation. When Christ comes to judge the world, His criterion for judgment will be love. Christian love entails seeing Christ in other people, our family, our friends, and everyone else we may encounter in our lives. We shall be judged on whether we have loved, or not loved, our neighbor. We show Christian love when we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, clothe the naked, visit those who are sick or in prison. If we did such things for the least of Christ's brethren, then we also did them for Christ (Mt.25:40). If we did not do such things for the least of the brethren, neither did we do them for Christ (Mt.25:45).

Today is the last day for eating meat and meat products until Pascha, though eggs and dairy products are permitted every day during the coming week. This limited fasting prepares us gradually for the more intense fasting of Great Lent.

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.

Mrs. Mary Fredericks
648 Dumont Ave
Campbell, OH 44405

Matushka Helen Psinka
c/o Concordia Villa St. Joseph
1030 W State Street / Room 1B49
Baden, Pa, 15005

Mrs. Dorothy Shirilla
8362 Van Dr.
Poland, OH 44514

Joan Cross
97 Butler Street / Apt 1-rear
Brooklyn , NY 11201

Mildred Wilfong
153 Runnemede Dr
Boardman, OH 44512

Mrs. Audrey Chengelis
c/o Assumption Village
9802 Market Street / Room 132
North Lima, OH 44452

Emilia Yannitto
8017 Salinas Tr.
Boardman, OH 44512-5402

Mrs. Pauline Fesz
488 Harmony Lane
Campbell, OH 44405

George Horodnic, Sr.
c/o Briarfield Manor
461 South Canfield-Niles Rd / Room 101
Austintown, OH 44515

Mrs. Julia Simko-UPDATED
c/o Woodlands @ Hampton Woods
1525 E Western Reserve Rd /
Room 1101
Poland, OH 44514

Carol Ruff
2207 Birch Trail Blvd
Youngstown, OH 44515-4910

Sue Kennedy
593 Hyatt Ave
Campbell, OH 44405-1479

Ann Cvercko
1875 Mallard Land
North Lima, OH 44452

FEBRUARY FINANCIALS

Expenses	$3,690.00
Income	$3,954.70
TOTAL	**$264.70**
Weekly Tithe	$3,119.70
Weekly Candles	$135.00
Eternal Light Candles	$50.00
Fr. Andrew's Pension	$650.00
Monthly Charity: Deanery	$198.00

FEBRUARY

Reader Schedule
February 15-Proto. Dc David Gemmel
February 22– Natalia Simko

Charity Collection
OCMC - Cleveland Deanery

Social
February 15– Meatfare Potluck
February 22– Sisterhood Social

1 Corinthians 8:8-9:2 (Epistle)

But food does not commend us to God; for neither if we eat are we the better, nor if we do not eat are we the worse. But beware lest somehow this liberty of yours become a stumbling block to those who are weak. For if anyone sees you who have knowledge eating in an idol's temple, will not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things offered to idols? And because of your knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died? But when you thus sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never again eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble. Am I not an apostle? Am I not free? Have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord? Are you not my work in the Lord? If I am not an apostle to others, yet doubtless I am to you. For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord.

MARCH Candle & Bulletin Sponsors

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

Bulletin: In memory of my Father's, George, 100th b-day– Given by V.R. Andrew Bartek
Wine: OPEN
Incense: **OPEN**
Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light:
Altar Candles: In memory of my ordaining bishop, Metropolitan Nicholas– Given by V.R. Andrew Bartek
Tetrapod Candles: OPEN
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 memory of my family & friends– Given by V.R. Andrew Bartek
Protection Icon Candles: OPEN
St. John the Baptist Candles: OPEN
Monthly Flowers:

$50 per month	$30 per month	$25 per month
*Wine	*St. Herman candles	Incense
*Bulletin	*St. Panteleimon Icon candles	Flowers– **NEW UPDATED PRICE / DECREASED**
*Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light	*Protection Icon candles	
*Altar Candles	*St. John the Baptist candles	
*Tetrapod Candles		

FEBRUARY Celebrations

Birthday

2- Dorothy Shirilla
3- Sonia Tsvetkoff / David Dionisio
4- Nathaniel Bremer
5- Zoland Zile
6- Alex Zarynow / Karen Simko
10- Mat. Pauline Gemmel / Fr. Eli Bremer
11- Lidija Arvan / Marcy Kubancsek / Cindy Ferrick
12- Fr. James Gleason
13- Dc. James Hryb
14- Mat Ann Lardas
15- Martha Centofanti
16- Carol Ruff / Jo Ann Kalantzis / Deena Vansuch
17- Nadine Sabo
19- Shelly Nicoloff / Vitaly Muzyka
20- Julianna Kusinski
22- Joey Clark
24- Marc Elash
25- Sandra Bufalini / Robert Willison
26- Andy Basile / Pani Bernadette Zarynow
28- George J Rusnak

Anniversary

1-2020- His Grace Bishop Andrei of Cleveland
9-69 AP John Steffaro (Priestly ordination)
13- John & Maureen Koval
14-2004- The Most Blessed Tikhon Consecration as Bishop
28- Michael & Natalia Simko

Names Day

6-Dorothy Shirilla
8- Cindy Ferrick
28-Maureen Koval

ATTENDANCE: A Comparison - *JANUARY*	2025	2026
1st Week Publican		
Vespers	No Vespers	9
Lit. / Communion	40 / 28	30 / 23
Meeting of Lord– Vespers	7	22
Meeting of the Lord– Lit.	50 / 34 (it was a Sunday)	7 / 6
Theophany Liturgy		
2nd Week– Prodigal		
Vespers	5	13
Lit. / Communion	38 / 22	33 / 20
3rd Week– Meatfare		
Vespers	10	
Liturgy / Communion	49 / 33	
4th Week– Cheesefare		
Vespers	8	
Lit / Communion	50 / 30	
Forgiveness Vespers	43	
Clean Monday	26	
Clean Tuesday	16	
Clean Wednesday	27	
Clean Thursday	21	
Pre-Sanctified	31 / 17	
5th Week		
	No Record	No Record

Matushki Meet-Up Piloted at the Diocese of the South Pastoral Conference

The 2026 Pastoral Conference of the Diocese of the South, held February 4–6, 2026, marked an important milestone with the introduction of a dedicated clergy wives track, the Matushki Meet-Up. Held alongside the annual diocesan gathering for clergy, the Matushki Meet-Up brought together twenty priest wives, deacon wives, and prospective seminarian wives from across the Diocese for three days of fellowship, reflection, and shared encouragement.

The intentional programing was organized through the national Office of Pastoral Life's Clergy Wives Ministry of the Orthodox Church in America, and served as a pilot initiative for future diocesan and Church-wide gatherings. The conference offered a thoughtful blend of informal connection, guided conversation, and participation in select elements of the broader Pastoral Conference, allowing clergy couples to share in the rhythm of the week while also honoring the unique needs and experiences of clergy wives.

Throughout the three days, participants shared vignettes of joy in the midst of growth, reflected on spiritual practices that strengthen their marriages, and learned of resources for financial and hierarchical support. Clergy wives joined their husbands for services, as well as half of the Pastoral Conference sessions focused on the current convert surge. Time was also set aside for dinner and dialogue with the bishops, as well as matushka-only gatherings, offering space for open conversation, laughter, and mutual understanding. Conversations focused on reframing overwhelm into awe during this season of rapid growth, as well as various strategies for meeting personal and parishioner needs in a growing parish.

Clergy wives shared how the experience fostered authentic connection, mutual encouragement, and meaningful learning among matushki:

"Highlights for me were meeting other clergy wives and deepening my relationship with ones I know already, being mutually encouraged with each other's faith and worshipping together in a beautiful setting," said Mka Barbara Burch. "It was helpful learning about the extent of the convert surge and how to address the challenges involved in their reception. Finally, there were lots of opportunities to simply get together to enjoy great meals and each other's company."

Reflecting on the gathering, Mka Carrie Foley, Program Director of the Clergy Wives Ministry, emphasized the broader significance of the event: As Mka Juliana Schmemann of blessed memory so eloquently wrote, to be a clergy wife is "a joyous burden." We are called to a life of sacrifice in a myriad of ways. However, one thing a clergy wife is not called to give up is fellowship. My goal with Clergy Wives Ministry is to give my sisters to one another. By God's grace this happened at the Matushki Meet-Up through intentional programming focused on our shared experience. I'm thrilled at the overwhelmingly positive feedback we've received, not only from the clergy wives themselves, but also from diocesan clergy. My sisters told me they felt supported and encouraged in a way they never felt before. I look forward to offering the Matushki Meet-Up to all clergy wives across the entire Church!

Feedback from participants consistently affirmed the importance of intentional care for clergy families and identified the Pastoral Conference as a fitting and meaningful setting for this work. The Matushki Meet-Up complemented the conference's broader pastoral themes while creating a space where relationships could deepen and trust could take root.

As the Office of Pastoral Life's Clergy Wives Ministry continues its work, it is actively exploring a variety of ways to create intentional spaces where clergy wives can gather to build health, sisterhood, and shared strength. This growing attention to the well-being of clergy families reflects a wider pastoral conviction: when clergy couples are supported and strengthened, their stability and vitality help to nurture resilient, flourishing parishes.

The Diocese of the South's Matushki Meet-Up stands as a hopeful sign of the Church's deepening commitment to the health, connection, and flourishing of clergy families—recognizing that the life of the parish is closely tied to the well-being of those who serve it and their families.

About the Office of Pastoral Life

The Orthodox Church in America's Office of Pastoral Life supports the well-being of clergy and their families, the foundation of parish life across North America. Believing the health of the Church is inseparable from the health of her clergy, the Office offers programs that build resilience, connection and pastoral joy. Programs include Thriving in Ministry peer-learning groups, Financial Health Initiatives, quarterly Synaxis Gatherings, Retreats and Clergy Wives Ministry. In partnership with bishops, dioceses, parishes and our generous donors, the Office of Pastoral Life helps create sustainable conditions in which priests, deacons and their families of the Orthodox Church in America can flourish spiritually, vocationally and personally through every season of parish ministry.

40-DAY REMEMBRANCE

February 15 – Ed Kusinski
February 22 – Joanne Biros
March 15– His Grace Bishop Seraphim

ALTAR SOCIETY

The Altar Society is collecting dues in the month of February. Please see Maureen Koval.

FEBRUARY Reposed List

1- Jane Sablak (2004) © / John Jay Truhan (2004) © / Helen Gozur (2006) © / Thomas Livosky (1951) ©
3- Ann Sature (2012) / 3- Nicholas Tsaknis (1952) © / Mary Lisko (1953) © / Mike Alesafis (1960) ©
4- Michael Livosky (2003) ©
6- Bessie Poullos (1961) ©
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9- George Cross (2020) © / George Kolesar (2025) ©
10- George Bobosh (1984) © / Steve Elash (1998) © / T. Rago (1924) © (no name) / Helen Holubanich (1924) © / Steve Stavridis (1935) ©
12- V. Rev. Nicholas Vansuch (1987) © / John Holibonich (2004) © / Theodore Kalos (1932) ©
13- Bishop Varlaam (2020) / Vera Kristian (1980) ©
14- Emmanuel Balale (1956) © / Bertha Ginnis (1961) © / John Macala (1963) © / Nicholas Angelides (1963) ©
15- Justina Popodich / George Billik (1998) © / John Timkovich (2004) ©
Thelmia Psaras (1930) © / Alfteria Jaetanis (1930) © / Anna Sirilla (1955) © / Mary Shirilla (1962) ©
16- Albert Bartek (1952) / Paul Cole (1997) © / John Stamatinas (1946) ©
16- Infant Klimis (1 hr old) (1956) © / Ann Leschinsky (1956) ©
17- Metropolitan Orestes (1977) / Myron Bilchik (1982) © / Emmanuel Balale (1956) © / Robert Fischer (1995) ©
18- Virginia Nosik (2004) © / George Caleris (1957) © / Paul Petruschak (2024)
19- Elizabeth Antas (1921) © / George Berezovsky (1922) © / Michael Voyis (1949) © / Ann Allshouse (1984) ©
20- Daniel Shirilla (1992) ©
21- Fr. Michael Shuster (2020)
22- Fr. Andrew Hutnyan (2004) / Manuel Smyrmios (1944) © / Carol Ann Feltovich (2016) © / Sub-deacon Wylie Meath (2024)
23- Rose Dobrovolski (1995) ©
24- Nicholas Andrew Shirilla (2012) © / Still born Volchko (1924) © / Eva Wolfe (1925) © Elizabeth Cvercko (1929) ©
25- Vasil Heib (1920) © / John Kotuka (1960) © / Veronica Shirilla (1995) © / Charlette Zenko (2024)
27- Steve Basala (1985) / Mike Kazonis (1950) ©
28- Mike Babiak (1922) ©
29- Milan Miller Batalo (1920) ©

PRAYER LIST

PARISHIONERS: Achiles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / Joan Cross / Ann Cvercko / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / George Horodnic / Gianna Hryb / Elaine Johnston / Sue Kennedy / George Clark / Matushka Helen Psinka / Nadine Sabo / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Deborah Zelinsky

CLERGY: AP James Gleason (Fr.) / AP Michael Rustic / AP Emil Hutyan / Fr. Peter Simko / Fr. Bryan Crivella / Fr. Matthew Nyumu & his family and his faithful at the parish of St Makarios in the Metropolis of Nairobi, Kenya / Fr. Michael Dayang & his family & his parishioners at 3 Hierarchs parish in Cameroon / Fr. Raphael Stephano & his family and parishioners of his 2 mission communities in the Diocese of Western Tanzania

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Diane Caban (Sirilla) / George Caban (Sirilla) / Donna Chiarelli / Karen Debiec / Trudy Ellmore / Thomas Hull, Jr. / Ron Hryb / Paula Kennedy / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Kelly Marie Konya (Candle guy's daughter) / Ginny McCay (Fredericks) / Matushka Raisa (Nicoloff) / Conner (Sabo) Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Bob Smrek (Sirilla) / Matt Turner (Sirilla) / Emilia Yanitto / Catherine Zile (Fr.) / David (Willison) / Drew (Willison) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Richard (Tusinac) / Genna Koval & her unborn baby / Kelly and her unborn baby / Miranda & her unborn baby / Blaire & her newborn Baby Tatiana

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

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.

Archbishop to lead Pilgrimage to Romania

A pilgrimage to Romania has been announced and is scheduled to take place from September 15-22. The pilgrimage will be lead by His Eminence Archbishop Daniel of Chicago and the Midwest, as well as Archpriest Paul Jannakos.

To reserve your spot or to make inquiries, please see the official advertisement.

Please see the flier on the bulletin board in basement.

Unceasing Prayer– Helpful for the Great Fast

In his letter to the Romans, Saint Paul instructs Christians to "be constant in prayer" (Rom 12.12). In his first letter to the Thessalonians he says simply, "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5.17).

These two commands of the apostle have been interpreted in the Orthodox tradition in two different ways. The first way, mentioned by Saint John Chrysostom and Saint Dimitry of Rostov, is that Christians should have regular times for prayer which they never skip—"in the evening and the morning and at noon day" (Ps 55.17)—and then in between they should always remember God and do all things to His glory (cf. 1 Cor 10.31), offering up supplications and petitions as the need may arise, praising and thanking when the occasion requires it. Such is the normal way that all Christians must live.

Prepare for your set times of prayer by unceasing prayer in your soul, and you will soon make progress (Saint John of the Ladder, Step 28).

The set times of prayer are very important, and should not be put aside for any reason, even when one prays continuously in his heart. This is the teaching and practice of the saints. Each person desiring to live the spiritual life should have his own rule of prayer. It should be brief and regular, such that it could be kept in all conditions and circumstances. In this set rule of prayer, the prayers of the Church should be used, the Lord's Prayer and those from the prayer book. This gives discipline in prayer and provides instruction and inspiration in prayer which is perfectly trustworthy and sound, having demonstrated its power in the lives of the saints. A person who does not follow a set rule of prayer using the traditional prayers of the Church runs the great risk of impoverishing his prayer and reducing its dimensions and scope to the limited perspective of his own individual desires and needs.

When praying with a set rule of prayer, the spiritual teachers tell us to put our whole mind and heart into the meaning of the words, not merely "saying prayers," which is not prayer at all, but genuinely praying through personal attention and fervor. They tell ***Con't next pg***

Matthew 25:31-46 (Gospel)

When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

LENTEN RETREAT

The Eastern Orthodox Clergy Association of Mahoning Valley invites you to a Lenten Retreat

"Acquiring the Mind of Christ"

WHEN: March 7th, 2026

WHERE:
St. John the Forerunner Greek Orthodox Church
4955 Glenwood Ave
Boardman, OH

From 11:00am-3:30pm & Lunch will be provided.

Join us as we welcome keynote speaker Archimandrite Sergius, Abbot of St. Tikhon's Monastery.

We are also blessed to have the Miraculous Icon of St. Anna present for veneration.

Families and children are welcome. Children and children's activities will be provided.

You must RSVP from the flier. It will be on bulletin board downstairs.

Unceasing prayer from previous pg

us to allow our mind not to wander from the words of the prayer, but to use the given words as the basis of our own personal devotion, even allowing our mind to go beyond the given words to our own words, or to no words in the prayer of silence, if the Lord leads us this way. They also tell beginners—and Saint Dimitry of Rostov says that we are all beginners, no matter how advanced—never to go back and repeat prayers done poorly. They tell us rather to put ourselves at the mercy of God, and to try to do better the next time. This method reduces the possibility of thinking that God hears our prayers according to the perfection of our performance and not according to the greatness of His mercy, and safeguards against both pride and despair. It gives humility and hope, and keeps us always forging ahead (cf. Lk 9.62, Phil 3.13–15).

Thus when one finishes his rule of prayer, however well or poorly he has done it, he should say "Amen," and go about his business of living in Christ, remembering God and doing His will until the next time comes for the rule of prayer to be done. Then he should do it as well as he can, beginning all over again.

The second way of interpreting the teachings about unceasing prayer is that men should actually pray with conscious awareness at every moment of their lives, and even in their unconscious selves while their bodies are sleeping. This understanding of "unceasing prayer" was developed in the monastic tradition, but then spread rapidly -throughout the whole membership of the church. It became very popular in recent times, mostly through the appearance of the book by the anonymous Russian peasant called The Way of the Pilgrim.

The search for active "unceasing prayer" has its source not only in the instruction of Saint Paul, but also in the literal interpretation of such words of the psalmist:

I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continuously be in my mouth (Ps 34.1).

And of the Song of Solomon:

I slept, but my heart was awake (Song 5.2).

The method of "unceasing prayer" is to have a brief prayer verse, usually the Jesus Prayer (see next section), which is repeated over and over, literally hundreds of times throughout the day and night, until it becomes perpetually implanted in the heart as a "bubbling spring," a continual presence in the soul calling out to the Lord (cf. Theophan the Recluse, 19th c., The Art of Prayer). It is often, but not necessarily, connected with one's breathing, so much so that it is uttered "with every breath" (Saint Gregory the Theologian; Saint John Chrysostom). It begins by being said vocally, silently with the lips, and then it becomes wholly mental. The claim is made that one can continue this "unceasing prayer" even while engaged in the normal activities of life, while reading or writing, and even while sleeping, thus the "body sleeps," but the "heart is awake." Then, whenever one's attention to the affairs of life cease, or when one awakes from one's bed, one finds that the prayer is continuing itself.

The prayer is also known to break through one's consciousness with power in times of temptation or stress, appearing, as it were, of its own accord (cf. The Art of Prayer, Igumen Chariton, ed.).

We are not commanded to work, keep vigil or fast without ceasing, but we are commanded to pray without ceasing. For . . . prayer purifies, and strengthens the mind which was created to pray . . . and to fight the demons for the protection of all the powers of the soul (Evagrius of Pontus, 4th c.).

He who has entered his room [i.e. his heart] and prays without ceasing has included in this all prayer everywhere (Saint Mark the Ascetic, 4th c., Direction from Discourses).

Let no one think, my brother Christians, that it is the duty only of priests and monks to pray without ceasing, and not of laymen. No, no; it is the duty of all Christians to remain always in prayer. . . . bear in mind the method of prayer—how it is possible to pray without ceasing, namely by praying in the mind. And this we can do always if we wish. For when we sit down to work with our hands, when we walk, when we eat, when we drink we can always pray mentally and practice this mental prayer—the true prayer pleasing to God.

Blessed are those who acquire this heavenly habit, for by it they overcome every temptation . . .

This practice of inner prayer tames the passions . . . by it the dew of the Holy Spirit is brought down into the heart . . . This mental prayer is the light which illumines man's soul and inflames his heart with the fire of love for God. It is the chain linking God with man and man with God. Oh, the incomparable blessing of mental prayer. It allows a man constantly to converse with God.

And what other and greater rewards can you wish than this, when . . . you are always before the face of God, constantly conversing with Him—conversing with God, without whom no person can ever be blessed, either here or in the life still to come (Saint Gregory Palamas, 14th c., How All Christians In General Must Pray Without Ceasing).