

St. Hilarion the New Martyr (1929)

In the host of Martyrs of the Russian Church Archbishop Hilarion Troitsky occupies a special place. From 1923 till 1929 he was an inmate of the concentration camp on Solovetsk isles. His fight in the name of the Church during the Russian Revolution cost him his freedom and, ultimately, his life. Archbishop Hilarion lived just 43 years. In the terrifying years of persecution against the Church, Archbishop Hilarion was destined to become the greatest aide to the persecuted Patriarch Tikhon. A difficult task lay before the Patriarch – to preserve the unity of the Church. At the time there emerged within the Russian Church an oppositional movement — so-called “renewal”. The ‘Renewalists’ set themselves the task of adapting the Church to the times, and ideologically finding a way to join ranks with soviets. The achievement of Archbishop Hilarion, helpmeet of Patriarch Tikhon, lay in the fact that despite the revolutionary turmoil, the Church succeeded in overcoming this split. The powers-that-be didn’t forgive the Archbishop for his struggle against the split in the Church and his active attempts to cement its unity. Archbishop Hilarion stoically accepted all the hardships and privations thrown his way during his incarceration in a Soviet work camp. He managed to preserve all the good kind qualities that were always his distinctive features. His love for all people, sincere interest and attentive concern for everyone and general amicability were amazing. He was loved and respected by the generals, officers, students and professors; he was profoundly respected by the thieves and criminals, too. Everyone simply knew him for a good and respectable person that it was impossible not to love. He always spoke with respect to everyone, treating them as an equal. After years of tortuous labor he died of typhoid in 1929.

“Let us Attend!”



“Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion Pray to God for us!”

A PARISH BULLETIN OF
ALL SAINTS ORTHODOX CHURCH
Olyphant, Pennsylvania

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15 December 2024

25th Sunday After Pentecost

Sunday of the Forefathers of Christ

Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion (Troitsky)

Bulletin, Sunday, 15 December 2024

25th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 8. Sunday of the Forefathers. Hieromartyr Eleutherius, Bishop of Illyria, his mother, Martyr Evanthia, and Caribus the Eparch (2nd c.). Ven. Paul of Latros (955). St. Stephen the Confessor, Archbishop of Sourozh, Crimea (8th c.). Ven. Tryphon, Abbot of Pechenga (Kol'sk), and his martyred disciple, Jonah (1583). Martyr Eleutherius at Constantinople (3rd c.). Ven. Pardus, Hermit, of Palestine (6th c.). Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion (Troitsky) Archbishop of Vereya (1929).

Epistle: Colossians 3:4–11 **Gospel:** Luke 14:16–24

Our souls and minds are strengthened and fortified by the regular reading of the Holy Scriptures. Daily readings can be found on the parish's wall calendar, or online by visiting the OCA's daily reading page <https://www.oca.org/readings>.

Schedule

- **Wednesday, 18 December 2024. 9:00M Akathist to St. Iganatius the God-bearer.**
- **Friday, 20 December 2024. Small Compline, Prefeast of Nativity. Fr. Paul available for Confession following.**
- Saturday, 21 December 2024. 5:00–5:45PM. Fr. Paul available for Confession; 6PM Great Vespers.**

- **Sunday, 22 December 2024, Sunday before Nativity. 9:30AM Divine Liturgy, Followed by Agape Coffee Hour Fellowship.**
- **Monday, 23 December 2024, 9AM Royal Hours of the Nativity. Fr. Paul available for confession following.**
- **Tuesday, 24 December 2024: 7PM Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord.**
- **Wednesday, 25 December 2024: 9:30AM Festal Divine Liturgy of the Nativity.**
- **Thursday, 26 December 2024. 9:30AM, Divine Liturgy for 2nd day of Nativity: Synaxis of the Theotokos, followed by a Festive Parish Potluck in the Church Hall. Please bring a covered dish.**

Announcements

- ~ This Friday 20 December begins the Pre-feast of Nativity of Christ which will culminate with our Celebration of our Lord's Birth on 25 December. Let us come together as a family in Christ to take part in the beautiful services related to the Feast so that we can greet the One who has come to save us.
- ~ The parish is collecting donations for flowers that will adorn the Church during the Nativity Season. If you wish to give a flower donation, please place "Christmas Flowers" on the outside of a giving envelope.

Sexual Sins

Sins of a sexual nature are common. Much of the struggle is directly related to the fact that people do not take advantage of having a spiritual father or mother. If you are your own guide, your struggles with sexual passions can be beyond your ability to fight, leading to despair.

Our bodies are temples that have been bought with a price. We do not, therefore, own our own bodies.

The sixties mantra of the women's movement that laid claim to the right of a woman to abort her baby is the ultimate result of the misuse of human sexuality. Much justice came out of the women's movement regarding equal pay, equal opportunity, the end to discrimination, and the right not to be sexually exploited. But the idea that a woman can make the decision to abort a child (or a man pressure her into it, which often happens) is unjust, because such a belief ignores the right of a child to life.

That a man would see sex with a woman as a right because he took her out to dinner and a movie is another example of the wrongful view of the role of sex.

Our bodies belong to God, and our sexuality should be expressed only in ways that are sanctioned by God's law. Yet no one should be embarrassed by struggles with masturbation or falling into other temptations of a sexual nature.

Without the help of a spiritual father or mother, abstinence can seem impossible, especially given the powerful drive of our sexual nature and the pressures of our society to express our sexuality freely. For young men or women who are bombarded with the tales of the sexual exploits of their friends, the struggle for purity can seem impossible. This is one more reason we need to surround ourselves with friends who are committed Christians and who know the importance of living lives centered on Christ. Again, frequent confession with one's spiritual father or confessor is a tool that can make all the difference in our struggle to be free of sinful passions and triumphant in our goal of purity before the Lord, who loves us so.

The Purpose of Our Sexuality

Our sexuality is a gift from God and is meant to feel good, but it is also a gift that has been given for a purpose. Through sexuality, our species increases, and through it a man and a woman become one. The sexual act between a husband and a wife is meant to unite them as one flesh, bringing them closer to each other in a bond of love. For this gift to be used in any other way is to trespass against God's intent.

Because our sexual drive is so powerful, it can be hard to control without the help of an experienced spiritual guide. In an age when sexual expression is seen as one's right and when many believe that people cannot be fulfilled if they are not sexually active, keeping oneself chaste can be a daunting task indeed. If everyone is doing it, how can it be wrong?

It is illogical for Christians to be selective about which commandments they are going to keep. We don't steal, because we know it is against God's commandments, and we don't murder another person, because we know all life is precious. Yet some of us think nothing of coveting another man's wife or sleeping with someone for the sake of personal pleasure. With such an attitude, an unborn child is dispensable because she is the inconvenient result of an evening of sexual gratification and would be costly to support.

Our human sexuality is a sacred gift from God. For the celibate monk or nun, this is a gift from God that we offer back to Him as a sign of our love and of our desire to be united completely to the Lord of lights. To the unmarried, sexuality is a gift saved for the marriage bed, where one gives of oneself to one's spouse.

Unwittingly Entertaining Angels

All of us meet someone in any given week who is in need of encouragement, love, and mercy. Consider mothers whose children are going to bed at night hungry because they cannot afford to buy food, or old women whose husbands are long gone and whose children are too busy to check in on them. The world is full of lonely people in need of comfort, kindness, mercy.

How about the college student down the hall in the dorm who has no place to go for Christmas, no caring family wanting to see him? Or the crabby old neighbor who is always frowning? Is it not possible that his frown masks grief for a lost wife or for a son who turned his back on his father? There's the police officer who pulled you over for going over the speed limit and was abrupt with you. Is there a chance she's having marital problems?

All these people can be in need of a word of kindness, a gentle smile, and a word of encouragement. Can you imagine the impact on the officer's day if you, after having been served with the traffic ticket, thanked her for making our roads safer? What if you sat down next to the old man and asked him how he was doing? What if you offered to take him to a café or baked a plate of cookies for him? What if you invited the lonely college student to celebrate Christmas with you?

What if you collected all your children's old toys and gave them to a shelter for abused women? What if you gave out one hundred dollars worth of ten-dollar bills to homeless people on the street? What if you made a pact with yourself to do seven acts of kindness each and every day, without judgment?

What if you entertained an angel? "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels" (Heb. 13:2).

Standing and Falling before God

Standing before God has been the only acceptable posture for Orthodox Christians from the earliest of times. We recognize that a faithful servant would never sit before his master, and the faithful are all servants of the Lord. The Apostle Paul tells us, "Watch, stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13), and "stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth" (Eph. 6:14).

As Christians, we must always be on guard spiritually, including as we attend the divine services. By standing we subject our bodies in a way that helps us pay attention to properly and fully worshiping God with all our mind and soul. We subject ourselves before the Master as His humble servants, being attentive to Him. When we become fatigued during long services, we symbolically become offerings to the very God we worship. St. Paul said, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12:1).

In addition to the ascetic practice of standing in worship, we Orthodox can add the pious act of prostrations. Prostrations can be done when entering the nave from the narthex, before we venerate an icon in the temple, or when saying the Jesus Prayer in the privacy of our homes. There are times to sit (see the Kathismata, the sections of the Psalter read each day; *kathisma* means "seated") and not to sit (the *Akathistos*: "not seated").

Monks commonly perform prostrations while saying the Jesus Prayer, especially when fingering the beads that are spaced throughout a prayer rope. Prostrations, like standing, help aid in purifying the heart, for in these physical actions we bring the mind's attention back from wandering and worship God with body and soul united.

SATURDAY

Abstain from meat and dairy products, and fish.

Galatians 1:3-10
Luke 14:1-11

DECEMBER 14

Those who neglect the salvation of their souls and try to find joy and rest in this vain life are continually tortured and entangled in endless worldly machinery and live in hell in this life.

St. Paisios the Athonite

MARTYRS PHILEMON, APOLLONIUS, ARIANUS, AND FOUR BODYGUARDS. During the reign of Emperor Diocletian in the late third century, thirty-seven Christians were arrested in Antinopolis, in the Thebaid, and brought before the governor Arianus. One of them was Apollonius, a Reader in the Church there. He feared torture and martyrdom, so he offered Philemon, a pagan, four gold coins and gave him his clothes so it would appear as if Apollonius made the sacrifice. However, when Philemon put on the clothes and stepped forward, he made the Sign of the Cross and declared that he was a Christian. This caused Apollonius to repent and confess his Christian faith. Philemon was hung on a tree and struck with arrows. However, one of the arrows hit the governor in his eye, blinding him. Philemon told the governor that after his martyrdom, he was to take some dirt from his grave and apply it to his eye, and then he would receive his sight. Apollonius was tortured and then beheaded along with Philemon. Governor Arianus went to the grave of Philemon, and as the saint had foretold, he received his sight. This miracle caused Arianus and his four bodyguards to believe in Christ and receive Holy Baptism. But when Diocletian heard this, he had all of them tortured, then drowned in the sea.



COMMEMORATIONS: Philemon, Apollonius, Arianus, Theoctychus, and 4 guards converted by St. Arianus, martyred at Alexandria; Thyrsos, Leukios, Kallinikos, and others, in Bithynia; Folciunus, Bishop of Tervas; Hilarion, Metropolitan of Suzdal and Yuriev; Nicaise of Rheims; Venantius Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers; Hygbald, abbot in Lincolnshire; Bassian Pyatnitsky, Archbishop of Tambov; Commemoration of the Great Earthquake of Constantinople in 557.

SUNDAY

Eleventh Sunday of Luke
Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
Abstain from meat and dairy products, and fish.

2 Timothy 1:8-18; Luke 14:16-24

DECEMBER 15

In order to fulfill the commandments of Christ, you must know them! Read the Holy Gospel, penetrate its spirit and make it the rule of your life.

St. Nikon of Optina

VENERABLE TRYPHON OF PECHENGA AND KOLA. Tryphon's father was a priest in the sixteenth-century Novgorod region. Tryphon was raised with the fear of God, and from an early age, he devoted his life to preaching Christ to the pagan Laplanders. He had heard of them through the accounts of fish vendors. Once while praying in the forest, he heard a voice, "Tryphon... An empty and thirsty land awaits you." He left home and went to live on the banks of the Pechenga River, where the Lapps lived. He began trading with them, then acquainted himself with their beliefs and studied their language. Then he began to preach the Christian faith to them. At first, the Lapps did not trust Tryphon and were hostile towards him. They even beat him. But his mildness and kind and wise words gradually converted many to Christ. Tryphon and two others built a church for the newly converted Christians. For those desiring the monastic life, he founded the Pechenga-Trinity Monastery, and Tsar Ivan the Terrible richly endowed it. Tryphon lived there for almost sixty years and became known as the Enlightener of the Lapps. He died peacefully in old age. St. Tryphon has often come to the aid of perishing seamen, who call upon him with faith.



COMMEMORATIONS: Susanna the Deaconess of Palestine; Eleutherios of Illyricum, and Anthia, Corivus the Eparch, and 2 executioners; Paul the New; Eleutherius of Byzantium; Pardus of Palestine; Stephen the Confessor; Bacchus the New; Hilarion of Vereya; Tryphon of Pechenga and Kola; (2nd Sunday before Christmas: Adam, Eve, Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Sarah, Rebecca, Jacob, Joseph, Job, Moses, Samuel, Joshua, Barak, Gideon, Judith, Esther, David, Manasseh, Elijah, Elisha, and others).

MONDAY

Strict Fast

DECEMBER 16

1 Timothy 1:1-7
Mark 9:42-10:1

Try saying the name of God all day. Call on Him, weep, and you will see how your thoughts disperse! God will ask us how we lived as His brides. Does an angel get angry? Does he laugh? Does he talk idly? An angel is next to the throne of God and worships Him all day. How much fear of God and love we must have in our soul! If someone has love within himself and sees another in a fallen state, he weeps and says, "This image and likeness of God is so fallen, so far from You, my sweetest Christ!" Unfortunately...we obey our thoughts and do things without a blessing. The angels are recording these actions and so are the demons. We lack attentiveness; we are careless and disorderly. Let us keep our nous on Paradise, on the prayer, and on Geronda.

Gerontissa Makrina of Volos †

ST. JOHN THE BAREFOOT, FOOL-FOR-CHRIST OF KIEV. John was from early nineteenth-century Ryazan. He wandered around the monasteries and always walked barefoot. In Kiev, he became a parishioner of the Tithe Church, and from the donations of wealthy people, he organized a shelter for cripples, beggars, and homeless people, where he would feed about 200 people a day. John wore heavy chains as an aesthetical labor and was buried with them when he died at around the age of fifty. There were many cases of healings and grace-filled help through the prayers of St. John during his life and after death.



COMMEMORATIONS: Prophet Haggai (Aggaeus); Modestos, Archbishop of Jerusalem; Theophano, wife of Byzantine Emperor Leo the Wise; Memnon, Archbishop of Ephesus; Sophia (Solomonina), nun, wife of Grand Duke Basil III of Moscow; John the Barefoot, fool-for-Christ, of Kiev; Nicholas Chrysovergis, Patriarch of Constantinople; Martyrs Promus and Hilarion; Marinos of Rome; Vladimir Alexeyev of Okhansk; Parasceva Rodimtseva, abbess of Toplovsky Convent (Simferopol); Arcadius Ostalsky, Bishop of Bezhetsk.

TUESDAY

Abstain from meat and dairy products, and fish.

DECEMBER 17

Hebrews 11:33-12:2
Mark 10:2-12

Monasticism is a struggle to the last breath, striving for God to the death.

St. Gabriel Urgebadzze

VENERABLE MARTYRS PATERMUTHIUS, COPRES, AND ALEXANDER THE SOLDIER. Paternuthius and Copres were fourth-century hermits in the Egyptian desert during the reign of Julian the Apostate. En route to a military campaign against the Persians, Julian heard about the two ascetics and sent soldiers to bring them to him. When Julian saw that Paternuthius had an iron resolve regarding his faith, he put him out of the room. Then the emperor summoned Copres and craftily persuaded him to renounce Christ. But when Paternuthius heard about the denial, he did not get angry. He reminded Copres of all their prayers, fasts, and ascetic labors they had endured together, and so Copres returned to the faith. However, when Julian heard this, he gave orders to cut out Copres's tongue and stretch him on a fiery gridiron. When Copres saw sparks flying from the iron, his faith began to lapse again, so Paternuthius laid down with him on the hot gridiron, and they remained unscathed. Alexander, one of the emperor's soldiers, who witnessed the bravery and suffering that Paternuthius and Copres endured, came forward and confessed Christ. All three saints were beheaded.



COMMEMORATIONS: Holy Prophet Daniel and Three Holy Youths: Ananias, Azarias, and Misael; Dionysius the New of Zakynthos; Daniel (Stephen) the Confessor of Spain; Paternuthius, Copres, and Alexander the Soldier, of Egypt; Athanasius, Nicholas, and Anthony, founders of Vatopedi Monastery; Nicetas of Nyssa; Iacchus of Triglia; Paisius of Turnovo, Cacak, and Avakum the Deacon, at Belgrade; Misael of Abalak Monastery (Irkutsk); Sturmius, abbot and founder of Fulda Monastery (Germany); Sergius Florinsky of Rakvere, Estonia; Begga of Landen.

DECEMBER 15th

1. The Hieromartyr Eleutherius.

A good fruit of a good tree, this wonderful saint had noble and eminent parents. He was born in Rome, where his father was in imperial service. His mother, Anthea, heard the Gospel from the great Apostle Paul himself, and was baptised by him. Being early left a widow, she entrusted her only son to the education and service of the Bishop of Rome, Anacletus. Seeing how greatly Eleutherius was gifted and illumined by the grace of God, the bishop ordained him deacon at the age of fifteen, priest at eighteen and bishop at twenty. Endowed by God with wisdom, he made up for what he lacked in years. This godly man was made bishop in Illyria, with his seat at Valona in Albania. He kept his flock like a good shepherd, adding to their number from day to day. The Emperor Hadrian, a persecutor of Christians, sent a commander, Felix, with soldiers, to seize Eleutherius and take him to Rome. When the furious Felix arrived in Valona and went into the church, and heard and saw God's holy hierarch, his heart was suddenly changed and he became a Christian. Eleutherius baptised him and set off with him for Rome, as merrily as though he were going to a feast, not to trial and torture. The Emperor put the gently-born Eleutherius to harsh torture, flogging him, burning him on an iron grid, boiling him in pitch and burning him in a fiery furnace. But, by God's power, Eleutherius was delivered from all these deadly torments. Seeing all this, Choribus the governor proclaimed that he himself was a Christian. Choribus was tortured and then beheaded, and so also blessed Felix. Finally, the imperial executioners cut off the honoured head of St Eleutherius. When his mother, holy Anthea, came and stood over the dead body of her son, she was also beheaded. Their bodies were taken to Valona, where St Eleutherius glorifies the name of Christ to this day by many wonders. He suffered in the time of Hadrian, in the year 120.

2. St Stephen the Confessor of Sourozh.

Born in Cappadocia and educated under the care of the Patriarch,

St Germanus, he went off into solitude and lived hidden from the world. An angel appeared to St Germanus and told him to make Stephen bishop of the town of Sourozh (now Sudak in the Crimea), and this the Patriarch did. Stephen brought many to the Christian faith by his zeal, and suffered much at the hands of the Emperor Leo the Isaurian because of his, Stephen's, struggle against the iconoclasts, prophesying to the Emperor his imminent decease. After the evil death of this evil ruler, Stephen returned to his diocese and was pastor to his flock as a true man of God, departing this life peacefully at the end of the eighth century.

3. Our Holy Father Paul of Latros.

Born in Pergamum, he lived in asceticism on a mountain called Latros in Asia Minor. He was glorified by his asceticism and his many miracles, and entered peacefully into rest in old age, going to the Lord in the year 950.

4. Our Holy Father Pardus the Solitary.

In his youth, he was a waggoner, but because of an unintentional sin, he left the world and withdrew to the desert to live in asceticism. He lived in Palestine in the sixth century.

* * *

FOR CONSIDERATION

For unintentional murder, earthly law frees the murderer. The Church lays penance on the unintentional murderer, a penance much lighter than that for a wilful murderer, but does not leave him without a penance. If a priest kills unintentionally, for instance, the Church forbids him to serve as a priest for the rest of his life. Christians with sensitive souls and sharpened consciences take on themselves a harsher penance than the Church lays down. St Pardus, as a waggoner, once arrived in Jericho. Leaving his ass in front of an inn, he went in. At that moment, a child fell in front of the ass, and the animal trampled on it and killed it. When Pardus saw the dead

and trampled child, killed by his ass, his heart was so burdened that he felt as though he were himself guilty of the child's death. This conscience-stricken man laid on himself the harshest penance: he abandoned his trade, forsook the world although he was very young, and went off into the arid desert for strict bodily asceticism and spiritual toil and repentance. With many tears, he offered God his repentance for the murder of the child. He desired to give his life for that of the child, and prayed to God that He would somehow bring this about. He searched out a lion, hoping that it would eat him, but the lion fled from him. He lay in the narrow track that the lion had taken, hoping the beast would kill him, but the lion leapt over him and would not touch him. Seeing, therefore, that it was God's will that he live and not perish, he calmed down, but remained to his death a lowly penitent. Is this not a sensitive, loving and God-fearing soul? Is not this the refined and sharpened conscience of a true Christian?

TO PONDER

Let me ponder on the strong faith of Abraham (Gen. 15):

1. How God promised the childless Abraham that he would be the father of many.
2. How God promised him descendants as many as the stars in the sky.
3. How Abraham believed God, in spite of everything, and how God counted this for righteousness.

HOMILY

— on Joseph.

*... and he left his garments in her hand,
and fled, and got him out' (Gen. 39:12).*

The innocent and chaste Joseph endured two great and heavy temptations, and overcame them: the temptation of wicked jealousy on

the part of his elder brothers and the temptation of lustful passion from the Egyptian seductress. Jealousy sold him as a slave, and lustful passion put him, though innocent, into prison. In both cases he returned good for evil: he gave food to his hungry brethren, and preserved the life, throne and people of the frightened Pharaoh. His brethren thought to kill him, but God saved him; the harlot sought to destroy him, but God saved him. From slavery and imprisonment, God crowned him with glory and unbounded power, and him whom his wicked brethren could have killed with a blow, or Potiphar's powerful wife could with a nod have had put to death, God made a mighty ruler over the lives of many millions of people, and the only source of food for his starving brethren. Such is the wonderful mercy of God towards the righteous. Thus the Lord knows how to preserve and glorify the innocent and the chaste. In the high destiny of Joseph, we see the great mercy of God. There is one eye that never sleeps, my brethren. Let us cleave to God and fear no man. Let us be innocent and chaste, and not fear evil or slander or imprisonment, or mockery or misfortune. On the contrary, let us rejoice when all this comes upon us because of our innocence and chastity; let us rejoice and let us await with faith the revelation of God's wonders towards us. Let us, in every storm, await the thunder of God's righteousness — and the calm.

O mysterious Lord, who leadest the righteous secretly and vigilantly to slavery and imprisonment, and showest Thy mercy in Thine own time, help us to be innocent and chaste. To Thee be glory and praise for ever. Amen.