

# Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church

1723 E. Fairmount Avenue, Baltimore, MD. 21231

410-276-6171 [www.HolyTrinityOrthodox.com](http://www.HolyTrinityOrthodox.com)



**7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pascha**  
**Holy Fathers of the 1<sup>st</sup> Ecumenical Council**  
 (325 AD)  
**Sunday after Ascension**

**May 27/June 9, 2019**

Hieromartyr Therapon, bishop of Sardis (259); Finding of the relics (1667) of Venerable Nilus of Stolben Island (1554); Righteous John the Russian, confessor (1730); Virgin-martyr Theodora and Martyr Didymus the Soldier of Alexandria (304); Venerable Therapontes, abbot of Byelozersk (White Lake) (1426); Translation of the relics (1472) of Sts. Cyprian (1406), Photius (1431), and Jonah (1461), metropolitans of Kiev; Venerable Therapontes, abbot of Monza (1597). "Chelnsk" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos named "Tenderness".

**Today's Scriptural Readings:**

Acts 20: 16-18, 28-36 / John 17: 1-13

**We magnify Thee, O Christ the Giver of Life, and we honor Thy Divine Ascension with Thy most pure Flesh into Heaven.**

<b>This Week's Liturgical Calendar</b>	
Saturday, June 15 <sup>th</sup> – 10:00 AM <i>Trinity Ancestral Saturday</i>	Divine Liturgy in the Chapel <i>General Panikhida</i>
Saturday, June 15 <sup>th</sup> – 6:00 PM	Vigil Service in Church
Sunday, June 16 <sup>th</sup> – 10:00 AM <i>Our Parish Altar Feast</i>	Divine Liturgy in <b>Church</b> & Great Vespers with Kneeling Prayers <i>Pentecost – Feast of the Most Holy Trinity</i>

**Saints Peter & Paul Chapel**  
**Holy Trinity Orthodox Cemetery at Cathedral Gardens**  
**6480 Elibank Drive, Elkridge, MD. 21075**

**Please join us for the Sunday School Picnic after services**  
 Coordinated by the Sunday School Parents and Teachers

### **Sunday School Graduation – June 9<sup>th</sup>**

On Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup> we will mark the last day of Sunday School for the 2018/19 term at Holy Trinity! The students will receive their certificates of accomplishment at the end of Divine Liturgy. After the services, everyone is invited to the special lunch where we will honor our “graduating” Sunday School students!

Thank you to our Sunday School teachers – Dr. Pat Disharoon, Catalin Frujinoiu, Ekaterina Radchenko, Dr. Anca Frujinoiu, with help from Kleopatra Shipley. Each week they prepare lesson plans to ensure that the instruction is informative and interesting for our children. Also, we sincerely appreciate the ongoing support from all the parents. Thank you for a very productive year. God bless you all.

### **Congratulations, Graduate!**

We offer our warmest congratulations to this year's only parish graduate – Gregory Vass who received bachelor's degrees in biology and psychology. May God bless him with wisdom, many talents and much success in his graduate studies at Appalachian State University in NC next fall. Many Years! Многая лета!

### **Major Clean Up – Thursday, June 13**

We are on schedule! The installation of the new tile flooring in the church will be completed this week. On Thursday, June 13<sup>th</sup> starting at 7:00 PM we need many volunteers to clean the church and place all the icons back in their places. Please help. We must get the church ready for our altar feast on Pentecost – next Sunday!

### **Challenge Grant – Matching Donations**

Three families in our parish have pledged to match all donations for the flooring and altar icons on a 1:1 ratio. For every dollar you donate, they will match one dollar, up to \$30,000, towards the Church Restoration Fund. Double the value of your donation: \$20 becomes \$40, \$50 becomes \$100, and \$100 becomes \$200! Special donation forms are on the candle stand in the vestibule of the church.

### **International Coffee Hour – June 23<sup>rd</sup>**

In our parish, we are blessed to have 10 different languages spoken. What a rich culture our many parishioners bring to our church! What interesting histories from their native lands! What delicious and unique cuisine! Our Orthodox faith unites us! Our love for God nourishes our friendships! And, in many ways, such richness is also expressed through food. To celebrate this, a few times during the year, our Sisterhood will conduct International Coffee Hours, when the cuisine of certain countries will be prepared for us. On Sunday, June 23<sup>rd</sup> our second International Coffee Hour will feature the delectable cuisine of Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. Don't miss it! For more information please contact Larisa Hidar at 443-986-0047.

### **Convocation of the Patriarchal Parishes**

The next Convocation of the Patriarchal Parishes is scheduled for September 30 – October 3, 2019 at Antiochian Village in Western PA. At this conference we will discuss plans for celebrating in 2020 the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA. All parishes are requested to present proposals on how best to mark this milestone. Please discuss your ideas with any member of the parish council. Contact Fr. John for more information.

### **Water Park Trip – For ages 6 - 99**

Again this summer we will conduct a Sunday School trip to Guppy Gulch <http://guppygulchcamp.com> a water park north of Bel Air on a **Saturday in July or August**. Everyone in the parish is invited. We ask for your suggestions on convenient days. Please contact Olga Hansen 410-967-6738.

**Divine Services at Holy Trinity are live-streamed at**  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinitySermons>

### **Last Sunday's Picnic – Thank you**

All of us offer our thanks to Art Lisowsky with much help from Chris Pastor, Vadim Radchenko and Albert Blaszak for coordinating last week's Corned Beef picnic at Cathedral Gardens and to everyone who generously donated all kinds of dishes – salads, pasta, potatoes, vegetables, and desserts. We genuinely appreciate everyone who helped with cooking, serving and cleaning up...and of course everyone who attended – about 80 people. Because of all of you, the day was very enjoyable and the food was great. Thank you.

### **Sunday, June 30 – “O Jerusalem...!”**

Sunday, June 30, during coffee hour, we will make a presentation of the many photos and videos recorded by our parishioners on the Pilgrimage to the Holy Land this past March. You will hear about our many impressions and moments of inspiration, and you will see so many places connected to Holy Scripture.

### **Please join the WhatsApp group!**

As many of you know, the Jerusalem pilgrimage group of 2019 created its WhatsApp group. It was a great decision promoting our Christian unity, human connections, allowing memories and information exchange, and simply bringing us a lot of joy. We stay in touch continuously to this day. During the Centennial celebration of our parish, the incredible feeling of unity of our church family gave birth to the idea- to create our own, independent, church WhatsApp group. We hope that this mode of communication will bring us all even closer together, and the multi-lingual beauty of our unique parish will continue to grow and blossom! Open this link to join the Holy Trinity

WhatsApp Group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/LCMO7XxsMgfBEDIwaHY13L> We sincerely thank Nikolai Shashev and Natalia Gerachenko for creating this for us! O Lord bless!

### **Orthodox Pilgrimage Tours**

<https://www.orthodoxpilgrimage.com/>

Our sister parish in Tampa, FL coordinates Orthodox Pilgrimage Tours and announces its next pilgrimage to Moscow, Russia for eight days, July 15-23, 2019. Cities to be visited: Moscow, Sergiev Posad, Kozelsk, Optina Pustyn and Shamordino. Please visit their website for more information on this pilgrimage and other trips scheduled for the remainder of this year. All questions please direct to Irina Pakhomova 215-816-8132. Airline tickets will be purchased by the tour group.

### **Parish Picnics at 'Cathedral Gardens' / Ray Zaitin Pavilion**

On the following days, Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at Sts. Peter & Paul Chapel located at Cathedral Gardens, our parish cemetery. Afterwards, we will conduct picnics at the Ray Zaitin Pavilion.

**Sunday, July 14** – Liturgy at the Chapel (10:00 AM) and Mid-Summer Picnic. Menu: Shaslik, hamburgers, hot dogs and picnic fare. We need donations of salads, side dishes and homemade desserts. To help contact Albert Blaszak 410-799-3226 or Vadim Radchenko 410-465-6172

**Sunday, August 18** – Liturgy at the Chapel (10:00 AM) and our Annual 'Spas' Fish Fry – An expanded menu of various grilled fish and fish kabobs will be offered. More information to come...

### **Birthday / Anniversary Celebrations: June 9-15**

We offer our best wishes and birthday congratulations to Fr. John Vass (6/9), Fyodor Merzliakov (6/10), Natalia Gerachenko (6/11), Sophia Griffith (6/13) and wedding anniversary congratulations to Glen and Nina Lewis (6/13). May God bless them with health, prosperity and many years. To include your birthday /anniversary in the bulletin call Fr. John.

### **Special Petitions for the Unity of the Orthodox Church**

Again we pray to the Lord and our Savior to preserve the Orthodox Church abiding in the whole world in unity and right belief, and to grant her peace and tranquility, love and consent, let us all say, Lord, hearken and have mercy.

Again we pray to look upon the Holy Orthodox Church with the goodness of heart and with mercy, and to preserve her from divisions and schisms, from hostility and disorder, so her unity will not be diminished or shaken, but Thine Thrice-Holy name be glorified in her, let us all say, Lord, hearken and have mercy.

### **Vigil Candles: On the Altar and near St. Barbara**

**June 9-15:** Candles offered by the Griffith Family for the health/salvation of the servants of God: Sophia Griffith and Nadezhda Mineeva. A \$15 donation will keep all three candles lit for one week. Please schedule your candle offering with Elena Loyko 443-537-8978.

### **Submit your 2019 Pledge**

The mission of our parish is to spread the Word of God, to grow, to expand, to improve and not just to preserve our traditions. Our parish shouldn't become stale, but pursue holiness. We strive to fulfill the mission of our parish, through prayer, work and sacrifice. Prayer – because we are called to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17); work – because we are taught to increase the talents given to us (Matt. 25: 14-30); and sacrifice – because "everyone to whom much is given, from him will much be required" (Luke 12:48).

### **Please Remember in Your Prayers...**

**Archpriest Michael** Hatrak; **Deacon Michael** Bishop; **Mat. Myra** Kovalak; **Mat. Klavdiya** Burbelo; **Kh. Frederica** Mathewes-Green; **Nun Elizabeth**; **Nun Magdalena**; **Mat. Natalia** Kosich; **Priest Gregory** and **Mat. Diane** Winsky; **Mat. Catherine** Kowalchik; **Marie** Vass; **Charles** Snipes; **Arthur-Stephen** Lisowsky; **Yelena** Radchenko; **Lydia** Zorina; **Tatiana**; **Katherine** Plaskowitz; **Philip** Plaskowitz; **Bernadine** Borawick; **Julia** Aymold; **Lilli Ann** Hoffman; **Lara** Marinich; **Oleg** Marinich; **Ioann** and **Galina** Zernetkin; **Monika-Anastasia** & **Stephanie** Handley; **Blanche-Julia** Stolkovich; **Ekaterina** Koroleva; **Nina** Lewis; **Maryann** Black; **Lyudmila**, **Anton** & **Aleksander** Karnup; **John Alexander** Bylen; **Katherine** Garrett; **Stephen** Kaminitzky; **John-Thomas** Planinshek; **Kenneth** Pukita; **William** and **Ann** Ferkile; **Irina** Kononova; **Petr** and **Lyudmila** Borodkin; **Anthony** Bakie; **Svetlana** &

**Aleksey; Nina; Alla; Anna; Alla; Raisa, Zinaida; Joseph Germano; Pavel, Vladimir, Valentina, Nina, and Maria; Maria Pappas; Bonnie Duke; Joseph Lacomy; Diana Radchenko; Aleksey & Lidia Potapov; Oleg and Andrei; Vitaliy, Tatiana, Olena & Nicholas Berchuk; David, Selina-Sophia, John, Maryann, David, Joseph, Lisa Ann Eichelberger; Cynthia and Bill (Basil) Popomaronis; Andrei, Marina, Valentina and Vladimir; Archpriest Cezar, Mat. Christina, Cezara–Maria, Darius, Justina, Christian; Victoria Lardiero; Richard Wright; Valentina Shultieva; Shanna, Stephen, Trent-Michael, Grant-Alexander, Adalynn Lisowsky; Julie Smith; Tayisia Solvieva; Lubov Pavuk; Leonid and Zoya; James McAteer; Jayne Sudol; Rita and Richard Herber; Svetlana, Mary Orzolek, Shane-Michael Sierakowski; George Matassov; Janice DesLauriers; John DesLauriers.**

**Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, June 11<sup>th</sup> – 7:00 PM in the Church Hall**

<b>Fr. John Vass, Rector 443-527-7067</b>	Fr. Deacon Michael Bishop: 410-563-0472
Victor Marinich, <i>Council President:</i> 443-512-0985	Vadim Radchenko, <i>Vice President:</i> 410-465-6172
Andrei Burbelo, <i>Recording Secretary:</i> 443-567-6031	Albert Blaszak, <i>Treasurer:</i> 410-799-3226
Oxana Chumak-Strianese, <i>Stewardship Chair:</i> 831-673-1937	Anna-Zumrat Shkurba <i>Member-At-Large:</i> 443-857-8541
Natallia Makarava <i>Sisterhood President:</i> 443-625-8470	Michael Mickel, <i>Cemetery Manager:</i> 410-666-2870

**John 17:1-13 (Gospel)**

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

**Holy Hierarch Theophan the Recluse: *Sunday of the Holy Fathers***

Arias began to deny the divinity of the Son of God and His oneness in essence with God the Father. The entire Church rose up against him; all believers, from all ends of the earth, unanimously confessed that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Only-Begotten Son of God, true God of true God; begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father. One would think that this unanimity was purely coincidental, but this faith was then tried by fire when the authorities and powerful of this world began to side with the Arians. Neither fire, nor sword, nor persecution could extinguish this faith, and it was immediately found everywhere among everyone, as soon as the pressure from external powers ceased. This means that it makes up the heart of the Church and the essence of her confession. Glory be to the Lord, Who preserves this faith within us! For, as long as it exists, we are still Christians, though we may not live as such. If it ceases to exist, Christianity will end.

**Sermon: Sunday of the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council**

***Fr. Milan Medakovic***

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit,

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we hear our Lord pray in the Gospel today for the Father to “keep through Your own name those whom You have given me, that they may be one, as we are” (John 17:11).

Our Lord prays these words because He knows the attacks that the Church will undergo after His death, resurrection and ascension into heaven. He further confirms these struggles in the Gospel of Saint Matthew when he says, “Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves” (Matthew 7:15).

The Church commemorates the fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, today, that were victorious over one of these wolves that attacked the unity of the Church. This attack came from a

priest of the Church of Alexandria by the name of Arius. What Arius had taught was that our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ was a creature created by God, from nonexistence, when God created all of creation. In other words, Arius denied that the divinity of Christ was the same as His Father's. There are many that still believe this today and many other false teachings about Christ and God.

These false teachings are stated the decisions of the Seven Ecumenical Councils. As a result of these false teachings, these councils affirmed the teachings of the Church regarding Christ and the All-Holy Trinity. To affirm the Church's teachings about Christ, the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council formulated the first part of the Creed.

The Creed starts by confirming the person of God as Father. The Son of God taught us to pray to God with the following words: "Our Father, who art in heaven ..." (Matthew 6:9). This name of God and character of God was previously unknown to the world of the Old Testament. God was known in the Old Testament as God, Creator, Lord, King and Judge. It is through His Son that we are given this intimate relationship with God.

As it says in today's Gospel, this intimate relationship is confirmed by the words, "Yours they were, and You gave them me" (John 17:6). This confirms that Christ takes men, who were creatures and servants of God that knew God only as their Creator and Judge, making them His own. Through making men His own, Christ makes all men sons of God by adoption. As it says in the Epistle to the Galatians: "To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:5). The second section of the Creed that was developed by the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council confirmed the person of the Son of God. In this portion of the Creed, the Son of God is shown to have both divine and human natures. It also confirmed that the divine nature of Christ was the same as the Father's.

Jesus refers to His divine nature in His prayer from today's Gospel when He says: "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (John 17:5). Through this phrase, we can clearly see that Jesus is no ordinary man or creature of God. Our Lord tell us that He was with the Father before the world's creation, as it says in the beginning of the Gospel of Saint John: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God (John 1:1). And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). Through these words, we should be able to see the errors of Arius' teachings that are still proclaimed to this day.

Saint Nikolaj Velimirovic reminds us that this prayer KEEP THEM is "not only for the apostles ... This prayer ... was also for the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council ... And the Father kept them from the errors of Arius, and inspired, illumined and strengthened them ... to defend and confirm the Orthodox faith. This prayer is for all of us who are baptized in the Apostolic Church who have ... come to know the saving name of Christ the Savior," Jesus.

So, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, my prayer for you is the same as our Lord's, that you may be kept in the Orthodox Catholic faith so that you may be illumined and strengthened like the Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, against all errors that surround you, and that you may worship the one True God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit—the Trinity consubstantial and undivided. Amen.

*SOURCE: [The Saint Gregory Palamas Outreach](http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/62148.htm) <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/62148.htm>*

**Bishop Tikhon (Shevkunov):**  
*Sermon on the Ascension of the Lord*

**In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!**

"I am with you, and no one can be against you," says the Lord to everyone who believes in Him. No sorrows, no temptation, not even the most terrifying catastrophes should break the believer whose faith unites him in spirit with Christ. Here in Sretensky Monastery we have before us the relics of St. Hilarion (Troitsky); most of you here today have read in his Life how he celebrated the Paschal services in Solovki concentration camp. Bereft of basic human rights, tortured and mocked, the threat of death hanging over them at every moment, these prisoners celebrated the triumph of the power of One upon Whom they placed all their hope.

In this world, outward triumph means nothing—most important is inward triumph. Outward triumph will be given to Christ’s Church at the Second Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our example of spiritual, inner victory is the life of our Savior. Outwardly He was defeated, crucified like an evil-doer and thief. But He accomplished the main thing for which He came into the world—His triumph over death; and any other triumph is meaningless in comparison. It was a triumph over the most fearsome and unconquerable evil that exists in the world. *O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?* (1 Cor. 15:5). *This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith* (1 Jn. 5:4). Thus proclaim the Apostles, who beheld with their physical eyes our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ’s ascetical labor of love for the human race.

Forty days after Pascha, on Solovki, where St. Hilarion presided over the Paschal services, the Lord’s Ascension was naturally also celebrated. Of course, the host of imprisoned priests and laymen also sang the great and beautiful words of the Ascension kontakion hymn, “I am with you, and no one can be against you.” Perhaps many of them went to their suffering and death with these words on their lips, firmly believing that the Lord Jesus Christ is with them; they are the victors, and no one can conquer them. “I am with you, and no one can be against you!” They disdained their own flesh, they disdained outward victory so highly prized in this world, for the sake of following the Truth they had found in following Christ.

This, brothers and sisters, is what I would like to say today. But how very different we are from those new martyrs and saints who overcame the world! When we stand before God to repent of our evil and sins, our confession from year to year becomes less and less like a confession and more and more like a faint-hearted cry and complaint against life. The great power of Christianity is forgotten; we have forgotten that we must be conquerors in this world—conquerors of evil. Constant complaints about our neighbors, about our life circumstances, endless depression and despair—these things are woefully conquering the Orthodox Christian today.

Faintheartedness instead of courage is becoming a major quality of the soul of modern man. *In your patience possess ye your souls* (Lk. 21:19). Many people, even in the Church, are forgetting about this patience and courage, forgetting that everything on this earth is sent from the Lord, even in these particular circumstances that God has called us to be in; forgetting that we must labor and force ourselves patiently and courageously. People seek a compromise, an easy path and self-justification, and as a result the Christian spirit is lost. However, a fearful Christian is not pleasing to the Lord. The spirit of God departs from such a person and leaves him one on one with his helplessness, his frailty, his terrible despondency, when instead he should be gaining at long last the wisdom to thank the Lord for all the trials He has sent; thank Him, because a true knowledge of God comes only through thanksgiving. Fallen man cannot come to know God in any other way.

Today at the beginning of Divine Liturgy we heard in the antiphonal verses the words of the Psalmist: *God is known in her towers, when He cometh to help* (Ps. 47:3) [in Church Slavonic, the word “tower” is expressed as *tyazhest*, which means, burden, difficulty]. God is known in the trials and difficulties of life. After we have endured these at times long drawn-out trials that nevertheless teach us patience, God manifests His power—*When He cometh to help*. In this is the great mystery of the knowledge of God, the mystery of the Cross, and the meaning of human suffering. *In your patience possess ye your souls*, the Lord commands us.

We can endlessly despond, complain, and distort the very sacrament of confession by judging our neighbors, murmuring against God, and forgetting to judge the one who is most at fault for our problems: ourselves. Such a person becomes a barren fig tree. And it will go on this way until we begin to judge ourselves, give thanks to God for everything He sends us, understanding that every moment of life, every day for an Orthodox Christian is a step leading us to the Lord in the Kingdom of Heaven. It is *these* temptations, sent from God to each one of us, to *our* souls, with *our* illnesses, with our frailties that our souls need to overcome in order to ascend to immortality.

There once lived a monk in a monastery, where thirty brothers liked him but three did not, and the latter constantly insulted and hurt him. Out of faintheartedness that monk decided to leave the monastery, hoping to find a better situation. He moved into another monastery, but there he found twenty brothers who liked him, and five who treated him with contempt. Again he could not bear it and moved to another monastery. In this new monastery there were three brothers on his side, and twenty against him. And so on... When he had completely run out of strength and finally

understood the peril of this fruitless cycle, he stopped at the door of the first monastery that he found on his path, took a piece of parchment and wrote on it: “Stay here in this monastery and endure everything.”

So it happened there that several brothers received him happily and peacefully, while several others, at the instigation of the devil, simply hated him. Each time he was faced with temptation from them he would take out his scroll and read it until he felt at peace, and then resolve to endure to the end everything that should come his way. The brothers who felt suspicious of him went to the father superior and said, “Abba, that new monk is a sorcerer. He has a magic spell written on a piece of parchment. We have to kick him out of the monastery.” Now, the Abba was a wise man. He came to the brother one evening while he slept, and because he was invested with authority as the father superior, he opened the scroll and read it, only to find those words encouraging patience.

The next day the father superior called the monk and the other brothers who were against him and said, “What do you have to say against this brother?” They said, “He is a sorcerer.” The Abba asked the brother, “What do you have to say about this?” “Forgive me, brothers!” said the now patient monk, bowing to their feet. “Throw him out! He has admitted it!” said his accusers. The Abba again asked the monk, “Now what do you have to say?” The monk again said, “Forgive me, fathers and brothers. As you decide, Abba, so shall it be.” Then the father superior said, “Take his scroll and read it, then do with him whatever you wish.” The brothers took the parchment and read, “Stay in this monastery, and no matter what happens, endure it all.” Then the brothers were ashamed and asked forgiveness of the Abba. The Abba said, “Why are you asking my forgiveness? Ask God for forgiveness for yourselves and for your souls, and ask it also of this brother.”

We cannot call ourselves Christians and remain fainthearted. We cannot hope to be together with Christ in the Kingdom of Heaven, whence he ascended on this fortieth day of Pascha, without being, according to our strength, His co-strugglers on the way of the cross—the way of our Lord, who was incarnate, was crucified and ascended for the sake of each of our souls.

May the Lord grant that on this feast of the Ascension our souls might ascend to a joyful life in this world, to true Christian courage, to patience that triumphs over evil and despondency, and endurance of all trials and sorrows, just as the Holy Hieromartyr Hilarion endured. It is audacious and sinful before God to be depressed in this beautiful and wondrous world, which the Lord created for us and through which He leads us to an even more beautiful and wondrous world—the Kingdom of Heaven. Amen. <http://www.pravoslavie.ru/english/53746.htm>