

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector

Rectory: (419) 798-4591

Father Peter's cell: (607) 206-5523

E-mail: info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org

Father Peter's email: frpetertomas@yahoo.com

website: www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org



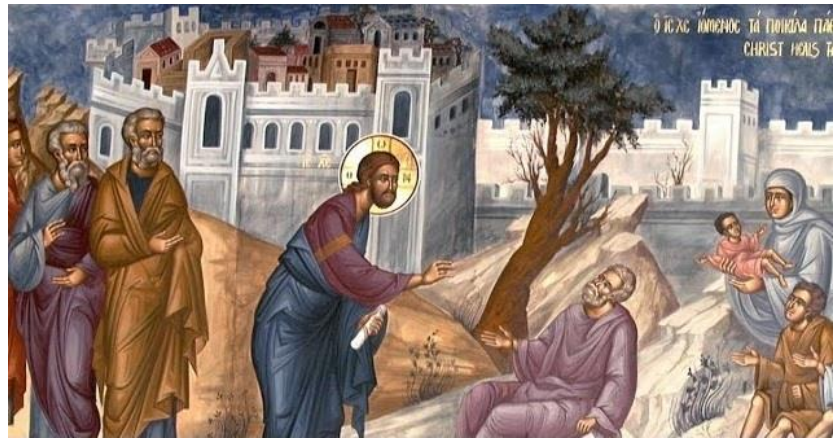
***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

JANUARY 19, 2025

THIRTIETH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: Eph 3:12-16

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



Healing of the blind man at Jericho

GOSPEL: Lk 18:35-43

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

Then Jesus said to him, "Receive your sight; your faith has made you well." And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

MON. Jan 20	Venerable Euthymius the Great; Heb 17:23,27-31, Mk 9:42-10:1
TUE. Jan 21	Venerable Maximus the Confessor; Heb 12:25-26, 13-22-25, Mk 10:2-12
WED. Jan 22	Apostle Timothy of the Seventy; James 1:1-18, Mk 10:11-16
THU. Jan 23	Hieromartyr Clement; James 1:19-27, Mk 10:17-27
FRI. Jan 24	Venerable Xenia of Rome; James 2:1-13, Mk 10:23-32
SAT. Jan 25	Saint Gregory the Theologian; Col 1:1-3-6, Lk 16:10-15
4:00 PM	VESPERS
SUN. Jan 26	31st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, <i>New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, Tone 6</i>
9:10 AM	HOURS
9:30 AM	DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Hour



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Patti Owens, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Subdeacon Roger Pinta**, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Ed & Irene Vangeloff**, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870



JANUARY REPOSED

Andrew Matway (1906) No date provided; William Gratson (1908) No date provided; Eva Hritsko (1908) No date provided; Sara Rose (2005) No date provided; **3-** Mat. Marilyn Federoff (2019); **3-** Larry Naiser (2019); **3-** Elinor Williams (2021); **4-** Margaret Reavley (1965); **4-** Baby Clyde Madison (2020); **5-** Russell (2019) Heidi's relative; **5-** Donald (2019) Waynes Relative; **5-** Maria Semionow (1981); **11-** Anna Tomko (1960); **15-** Archpriest Pavel Soucek (2009) Former Pastor; **21-** Daniel Kowal (2006); **21-** Philip Kobb (2018); **23-** Helen Beadle (1988); **23-** Deborah Pribanic (2020); **25-** Jane (2019) Ron's Aunt; **25-** William "Bill" Alber (2021); **28-** Michael Tarasavage (2021); **29-** Anna Kravetz (1973); **29-** Marjorie Kowal (2003); **29-** Ernest Gresh (2020); **29-** Rick Schlotterer (2020); **30-** Anna Schofield (2021)

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Norb / Greg Twarek / Heidi Golob / Ron & Bobbie Royhab / Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Tom Hileman / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášová / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

Other Requests: Sarah King / Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Catechumen Nickolas Dawenport / Catechumen Joshua Paull / Catechumen Danielle Paull / Catechumen Wrenley Paull / Catechumen Joshua Schulden / Catechumen Ryan Stamp / Matushka Melania / Sharyn Osborne / Christine Zahm

/ Amy / Bill Byrnes / Michael Heffernan / Susanne / Barbara Heffernan / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čižmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



VIGILS FOR JANUARY 12

Susan Guzy 1 Special Intentions

Laura Kovach 3 For health and/or healing of Matushka Melania, Ron R., Betty K., Margaret M., David M., Hannah S., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Kathie J., Jerry P., Ed & Irene V, Heidi & Wayne G., Greg T., and Sarah K.

Safe travels for family & friends

Birthday blessings and good health to Matushka Michelle

Sandy Martin 1 Special Intentions

Darlene Mazurik 1 Prayers for thanksgiving, health, and guidance

Natalie Twarek 8 Birthday blessings for Matushka Michelle (1/16) For health and recovery of Mike & Ruth, Dave & Sandy, For the health Fr Peter & Matushka Michelle, For the health & recovery of Matushka Melania, For the health and recovery on Basil, Ron, Rodney, Betty, Carol, Kayla, Pam, Jim, Heidi, Father Emilian, Barbara Heffernan, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara, and Walter, For the health of Jen, Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, Special intentions

JANUARY CANDLE SPONSORS



Altar Candles: Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš (\$50); **Chandelier:** The Vangeloff family, For the health and healing of Dad, Ed (\$50); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Jean Hileman, In loving memory of Elaine Hileman (\$25); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Jim and Sarah (\$20); **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, Sophie & Chloe (\$20)

READERS LIST



Sunday Jan 19 – Jake

Sunday Jan 26 – Joe

Sunday Feb 2 – Jake

Sunday Feb 9 – Tim

ATTENDANCE



01/11 Vespers, 7 attending; **01/12** Divine Liturgy, **21** attending (10 guests)

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES



13 – Mary Blackford; **13** – Roger & Debby Pinta Anniversary; **16** – Matushka Michelle Tomas; **17** – Kayla Fay

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDAR



- Jan 26th** Potluck followed by Annual Parish Meeting (*Sunday*)
Feb 2nd MEETING OF OUR LORD IN THE TEMPLE (*Sunday*)
Feb 22nd Memorial Saturday (*Saturday*)
Mar 3rd Beginning of the Great Fast (*Monday*)
Apr 13th Palm Sunday (*Sunday*)
Apr 20th HOLY PASCHA (*Sunday*)

SUNDAY OFFERING



Sunday, January 12, 2025

Tithe	\$ 635.00
Donations	\$ 218.00
Candles	\$ 20.00
Vigils	\$ 65.00
Altar Candles	\$ 50.00
Support Priest (OCMC)	<u>\$ 125.00</u>
Total:	<u>\$1,113.00</u>

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!

CHURCH MONTHLY INCOME AND EXPENSES

Month of DECEMBER 2024	
Church Donation income was	\$ 8,861.78
Church Operating Expenses totaled	<u>\$16,114.59</u>
net loss of	- \$ 7,252.81

CHARITY OF THE MONTH



“Support a Priest (OCMC);” is the charity we donate to for the month of January.

CLEANING SCHEDULE



Jan 20, Jean
Jan 27, Stephanie
Feb 3, Sandy
Feb 10, Greg

COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST



Jan 19–	Kolachi
Jan 26–	Pot Luck lunch
Feb 2 –	Danielle & Josh
Feb 9 –	Available

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Our Parish Council meeting will take place next **Tuesday, January 21st** at **6:30 pm** in the social hall. Presence of all the members is requested.



THEOPHANY – THE ANNUAL BLESSING OF HOMES

Between the Feast of Theophany and the beginning of the Great Fast (Lent), it is customary in our Holy Church to have our homes blessed by the parish priest with the Holy Water sanctified on this glorious Feast Day. This is an ancient tradition of the Orthodox Church and through it we extend the “Blessing of Jordan” into our homes and private places.

Please Note: Parishioners who wish to have their house blessed are asked to fill out the form, which can be found in the vestibule. Each household that requests this blessing will be contacted by phone to schedule the mutual convenient time.



HOLY WATER

You may take some Holy Water home for your private use at any time. Just bring your own container and help yourself. The Holy Water Font is in the church and easily accessible.



ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Annual Parish Meeting of our parish will be held on **Sunday, January 26th**, following the Divine Liturgy. All voting members in good standing are encouraged not only to attend this vitally important meeting, but also to constructively participate. Please mark this on your calendars, and prepare for the meeting by prayer, fasting, and receiving Holy Confession and Holy Communion. This is the third announcement.

To Be a Voting Member in Good Standing

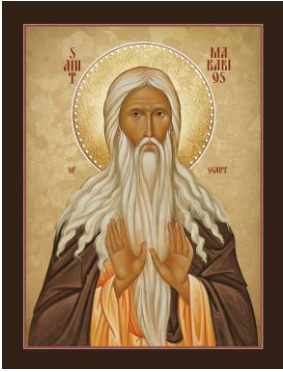
The Parish Bylaws of the Diocese of the Midwest, Orthodox Church in America, defines a "voting member in good standing:"

- a) is a Baptized and Chrismated Orthodox Christian;
- b) is at least 18 years of age;
- c) partakes of the Sacraments of Private Confession and Communion in one's home parish at least once a year;
- d) has been a member of the Parish for a prior consecutive six (6) month period; and
- e) regularly fulfills such financial obligation as established by the All-American Councils, Diocesan Assemblies, and the Parish, which obligations may be adjusted or waived by the Rector in consultation with the Parish Council. (*Article II, Section 2*)

If there is any question regarding your status as a "voting member in good standing," please contact Natalie Twarek and Fr. Peter at your earliest convenience.

We kindly ask that the following reports be prepared and submitted to Fr. Peter about two weeks before the meeting so they can be copied and distributed:

- President's Report (Natalie)
- All Financial Reports including Fundraising (Joe)
- Cemetery and Envelopes Reports (Natalie)
- Baking Report (Tina)



Venerable Macarius the Great of Egypt

Commemorated on January 19

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

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

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

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

Evil people slandered the saint, accusing him of seducing a woman from a nearby village. They dragged him out of his cell and jeered at him. Saint Macarius endured the temptation with great humility. Without a murmur, he sent the money that he got for his baskets for the support of the pregnant woman. The innocence of Saint Macarius was manifested when the woman, who suffered torment for many days, was not able to give birth. She confessed that she had slandered the hermit, and revealed the name of the real father. When her parents found out the truth, they were astonished and intended to go to the saint to ask forgiveness. Though Saint Macarius willingly accepted dishonor, he shunned the praise of men. He fled from that place by night and settled on Mt. Nitria in the Pharan desert.

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

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

When the saint reached the age of forty, he was ordained to the priesthood and made the head of the monks living in the desert of Skete. During these years, Saint Macarius often visited with Saint Anthony the Great, receiving guidance from him in spiritual conversations. Abba Macarius was deemed worthy to be present at the death of Saint Anthony and he received his staff. He also received a double portion

of the Anthony's spiritual power, just as the prophet Elisha once received a double portion of the grace of the prophet Elias, along with the mantle that he dropped from the fiery chariot.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The monk lived until the age of ninety. Shortly before his death, Saints Anthony and Pachomius appeared to him, bringing the joyful message of his departure to eternal life in nine days. After instructing his disciples to preserve the monastic Rule and the traditions of the Fathers, he blessed them and began to prepare for death. Saint Macarius departed to the Lord saying, “Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.”

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

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

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

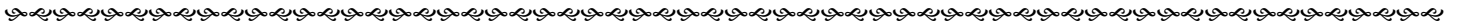
“For those truly believing in Christ, it is necessary to change and transform the soul from its present degraded nature into another, divine nature, and to be fashioned anew by the power of the Holy Spirit.” This is possible, if we truly believe and we truly love God and have observed all His holy commandments. If one betrothed to Christ at Baptism does not seek and receive the divine light of the Holy Spirit in the present life, “then when he departs from the body, he is separated into the regions of darkness on the left side. He does not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but has his end in hell with the devil and his angels” (Homily 30:6).

In the teaching of Saint Macarius, the inner action of the Christian determines the extent of his perception of divine truth and love. Each of us acquires salvation through grace and the divine gift of the Holy Spirit, but to attain a perfect measure of virtue, which is necessary for the soul’s assimilation

of this divine gift, is possible only “by faith and by love with the strengthening of free will.” Thus, the Christian inherits eternal life “as much by grace, as by truth.”

Salvation is a divine-human action, and we attain complete spiritual success “not only by divine power and grace, but also by the accomplishing of the proper labors.” On the other hand, it is not just within “the measure of freedom and purity” that we arrive at the proper solicitude, it is not without “the cooperation of the hand of God above.” The participation of man determines the actual condition of his soul, thus inclining him to good or evil. “If a soul still in the world does not possess in itself the sanctity of the Spirit for great faith and for prayer, and does not strive for the oneness of divine communion, then it is unfit for the heavenly kingdom.”

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



Treasures of Church Literature: Didache *by Reader John Malov*

The Didache or The Lord’s Teaching through the Twelve Apostles to the Nations is one of the oldest monuments of Christian literature, dating from the second half or the end of the 1st century. The Didache contains unique information about the moral and church life of the first generations of Christians. The authority of the Didache in the early Church was so great that some theologians (for example, Clement of Alexandria) considered it part of Holy Scripture. What was

this book about and is it worth reading today?

Content and General Characteristics

The text consists of 16 chapters, which can be conventionally divided into 4 sections. Chapters 1-6 are devoted to moral teaching. Chapters 7-15 contain rules governing liturgical life and preaching, as well as information about church ranks and services. The final chapter is a short version of the Apocalypse. Stylistically, the Didache resembles the Proverbs and the Wisdom of Solomon, but it is not as abundant in allegories and strives for maximum clarity of presentation. Unlike many monuments of ancient literature, the text uses a simple language, which will be easy to comprehend for an unprepared reader. Even with the slowest and most thoughtful manner of reading, one can cover the whole text in less than thirty minutes.

Such brevity is balanced by the fullness of the contents. Many pericopes of the Didache are paraphrases of the biblical commandments and teachings: “Abstain from fleshly and worldly lusts. If someone gives you a blow upon your right cheek, turn to him the other also, and you shall be perfect. If someone impresses you for one mile, go with him two. If someone takes away your cloak, give him also your coat. If someone takes from you what is yours, ask it not back, for indeed you are not able” (1:4).

Moral Doctrine

The entire moral teaching of the Didache is based on the principle of the two ways: “There are two ways, one of life and one of death; but a great difference between the two ways” (1:1). This teaching is rooted in the Holy Scriptures: “...This is what the Lord says: See, I am setting before you the way of life and the way of death” (Jer. 21:8).

Man has no middle path other than a choice between God and godlessness. The path of life consists in fulfilling the commandments and avoiding sin, following the call to Love God and neighbor. At the same

time, according to the Didache, achieving Salvation requires not so much perfection in all spiritual deeds, as a sincere desire and devotion in following the path of life (6:2).

The description of the way of life in the first chapter is built entirely on the words of Christ's sermon. This chapter (as well as some others) contains an agraph, i.e. a saying of Jesus Christ not recorded in the canonical Gospel. It concerns caution in giving alms: "May your alms sweat in your hands before you know to whom you give it".

The "benchmark" of following the path of life is contained in the words of the Sermon on the Mount, which are phrased as follows: "The way of life, then, is this: First, you shall love God who made you; second, your neighbor as yourself; and all things whatsoever you would should not occur to you, do not also do to another" (1:2).

The author repeatedly urges the reader to adhere to the path of life and makes a clear emphasis on this. He also gives a short yet meaningful description of the path of death: "And the way of death is this: First of all it is evil and full of curse: murders, adulteries, lusts, fornications, thefts, idolatries [...] persecutors of the good, hating truth, loving a lie, not knowing a reward for righteousness [...]" (5:1,2)

Liturgical Life and Church Ranks

The information contained in this section is of particular importance to the history of the Church. The Didache was lost and rediscovered only at the end of the 19th century. Some of the information was not known before the Didache, while some well-known church traditions turned out to be much older than we had thought.

For example, it is known that in the early centuries there were still prophets in the Church – a separate rank of preachers, often living nomadically (Rom. 12:6, 1 Cor. 12:28-30, 14:1,29,31,39). From the Didache we learn, for example, that they could celebrate the Eucharist (10:7).

It is known that the custom of fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays comes from Christian antiquity. However, the exact origin of this practice was unknown, which is why it was given a later theological interpretation: we are fasting on Wednesday, since on this day Judas betrayed Christ; and we are fasting on Friday, since Christ was crucified on Friday. The Didache revealed both the antiquity of this custom and its original interpretation: "But let not your fasts be with the hypocrites; (i. e. with Jews and Pharisees, A/N) for they fast on the second and fifth day of the week. But fast on the fourth day and the Preparation (Friday)" (8:1).

The most notable pericopes that shed light on the liturgical life of the first Christians describe the order of the Sacrament of Baptism (ch. 7), the practice of prayer and fasting (ch. 8), the practice of celebrating the Eucharist (ch. 9, ch. 14), the Eucharistic prayer (9:2-3) and the prayer of thanksgiving after Communion (10:1-6).

The church ranks in the Didache correspond to the ranks described by the Apostle Paul (1 Corinthians 12:28-30). The only passage in this section of the Didache that may be relevant to the modern reader teaches us to distinguish between a false prophet and a true prophet (11:5-12).

Apocalypse

The topic of the end of the world appears in the text quite unexpectedly. This allowed some researchers to put forward theories about the gradual development of the text of the Didache and about the original existence of the Didache in oral form.

This passage does indeed look somewhat unnatural in the text, but it is quite consistent with the apocalyptic mood of the first Christians, which is clearly expressed at the very beginning of the passage: "Watch for your life's sake. Let not your lamps be quenched, nor your loins unloosed; but be ready, for you know not the hour in which our Lord comes" (16:1).

The passage is a simplified presentation of the Small (Synoptic) Apocalypse (Mt.24; Mk.13; Lk.21:5-36). The distinctive feature of this passage is that it does not say anything about the Kingdom of Heaven. The key event, which ends the story, is the second coming of the Lord into the world (16:1).

Why is the Didache worth reading?

- simple and intelligible presentation
- many valuable instructions and information about the life of the first Christians
- small volume
- the first section of the Didache contains the quintessence of the moral teaching of Scripture, suitable both for daily reading and for those who want to refresh their memory of this part of Christian teaching

Conclusion

A must read for every Christian, especially for those interested in the history of the Church. The undeniable spiritual benefits will be enormously higher than the time spent on this incredible short read.



THANK YOU, CARD, RECEIVED

Our parish received this Thank you card from Danbury Holiday Bureau for our charitable donation of \$675.00. Thank you for your generosity!

Dear Father Thomas and Holy Assumption Orthodox Church Parishioners,
I thank you so much for your very generous donation of \$675 to the Danbury Unit of the Ottawa County Holiday Bureau and for your very nice note acknowledging the work the Holiday Bureau does. Through donations from you and other generous members of our community, the Danbury Unit was able to help over 75 families this year, many with children, have a more comfortable Christmas Season. The Christmas season is a wonderful time of year for many, but for families struggling it can be a difficult time. Please know that your donations had a direct impact on families facing financial challenges in our Danbury community this Christmas Season. Thank you for your donation!



Celebrate the season with hope, happiness and peace

your continued generosity to the Danbury Holiday Bureau is a blessing to our efforts to help families in need during the Christmas season!

Thank you,
Judy Dmoch and the Danbury Unit of the Ottawa County Holiday Bureau

