

## Ads and listings for 19th AAC, FOCA Convention commemorative book now being accepted

Ads and listings for the commemorative book that will be published in conjunction with the [19th All-American Council](#) of the Orthodox Church in America [AAC] and the 92nd National Convention of the [Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America](#) [FOCA] are now being accepted.

The FOCA Convention will open in Saint Louis, MO on July 20, 2018, while the [AAC](#) will gather from July 23 through 27. Both events will share the same venue—the Saint Louis Union Station Hotel.

The [commemorative book advertising order form](#) is now available online. Several options, ranging in price from \$150.00 for a full page ad to \$20.00 for a one-line patron listing, are being offered.

Ads should be submitted as PDF or Word files to [focabook2018@gmail.com](mailto:focabook2018@gmail.com). Checks made payable to the OCA should be mailed to Donna Tesar, 5068 West Sixth Street, Brooklyn Heights, OH 44131. Deadline for all ads and listings is June 1, 2018. Questions and requests for additional information may be directed or texted to John Schultz at 304-479-5071.

### St. Nicholas: A Living Rule of Faith By Father Steven Kostoff

*“God is wonderful in His saints, the God of Israel!”*

As we well know, Saint Nicholas was a bishop who served in Asia Minor in the opening decades of the fourth century. As a hierarch of the Church, he was a man who had authority, meaning that he was someone to be respected and obeyed. This has been a characteristic of the Church’s hierarchy “from the beginning,” as we hear in the Epistle reading appointed for the feasts of Saint Nicholas and other great hierarchs of the Church: “Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to give account” [Hebrews 13:17]. This sacramental, pastoral and administrative authority of the *episcopos* (bishop) was further strengthened by the Apostolic Father, Saint Ignatius of Antioch, writing in the early second century: “Let no one do anything that pertains to the Church apart from the bishop. Let that be considered a valid Eucharist which is under the bishop or one whom he has delegated. Wherever the bishop shall appear, there let the people be; just as wherever Christ Jesus may be, there is the catholic Church” [*To the Smyrnaens*, 8].

These well-known exhortations, many of which became the basis for later Church canons pertaining to the authori-

ty of the hierarchy, could certainly be multiplied from a variety of impressive sources. Yet, it is therefore quite significant that the troparion for Saint Nicholas mentions nothing of the bishop’s authority, but rather stresses his pastoral image and care for his flock: “In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father Nicholas, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved.”

As Father Thomas Hopko has written, this troparion “has become in Orthodox liturgical services the ‘general troparion’ for most canonized bishops of the Church, thus revealing the ‘mind of the Church’ about what a Christian pastor should be” [*The Winter Pascha*, p. 40].

Granting the role of authority that a bishop “inherits” in his consecration to the episcopacy, the Church concentrates on the qualities of a true pastor, of one who will “shepherd” the flock entrusted to him by the Lord that the bishop sacramentally represents to and for his flock. The troparion has nothing to say about “power” or “authority.” Quite the opposite! We hear of humility, abstinence and even poverty. These are Christ-like characteristics that we learn of from the Gospels. Only by manifesting such qualities is the bishop a man who will receive the support, love and obedience of his flock in a spirit of trust and confidence in his leadership. Perhaps we should add that this is also true of the parish priest in his ministry to the flock entrusted to his care. This happens when a bishop leads by example. He then becomes a living “rule of faith” as the troparion opens with, meaning essentially that the bishop is a living, flesh-and-blood realization of the Gospel. Whenever we experience a “crisis of leadership” in the Church, it is precisely such Christ-like characteristics that are so painfully lacking in the Church’s hierarchy. The faithful realize this, and the whole Church then suffers from a lack of trust and confidence in that leadership.

In relation to Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker, there is a fine passage from the great iconographer, Leonid Ouspensky, who summarizes the Church’s love of this great saint throughout the centuries: “The quite exceptional veneration of Saint Nicholas is well known. He is revered not only by Christians but often also by Muslims. In the weekly liturgical cycle of the Orthodox Church, among the days of the week dedicated to the Savior and to different orders of heavenly and earthly sanctity, only three persons are singled out by name: the Mother of God, John the Forerunner and Saint Nicholas. The reason for the special veneration of this bishop, who left neither theological works nor other writings, is evidently that the Church sees in him the personification of a shepherd – of one who protects and intercedes. According to his *Life*, when Saint Nicholas was raised to the dignity of bishop he said, ‘The office demands a different type of conduct, so that one may live no longer for oneself but for others.’ This ‘life for others’ is his characteristic **Con’t Page 9**

## **Matushka Valerie Katharine Herrick**

Matushka Valerie Katharine [Writer] Herrick, wife of the late [Archpriest Michael Herrick](#), fell asleep in the Lord here on December 5, 2017.

Born in Denver, CO on November 14, 1936, she and her husband were married in 1959. After 27 years ministering as an Episcopalian priest, Father Michael, together with Matushka Valerie, embraced Orthodox Christianity in the mid-1980s. After Father Michael's ordination to the priesthood of the Orthodox Church, the couple served Saint Matthew Mission, Green Bay, WI. Always a caregiver, Matushka Valerie worked as a CNA for many years.

Matushka Valerie is survived by three sons, Michael [Jessica], Grand Junction, CO; Christopher [Susan], Topeka, KS; and Hal [Akemi], Gambrills, MD; two sisters; three grandchildren, Caleb, Katie, and Ethan, and one great-granddaughter, McKinley.

Visitation will begin at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 7, 2017 at the Brennan-Mathena Funeral Home, Topeka, KS. The Trisagion will be sung at 6:30 p.m. The Funeral Service will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. on Friday, December 8, at Saints Peter and Paul Antiochian Orthodox Church, 2516 SW Huntoon, Topeka, KS, followed by interment at Mount Hope Cemetery.

May Matushka Valerie's memory be eternal!

## **Update on St. Barbara Monastery, Santa Paula, CA**

As [reported earlier](#), the nuns of [Saint Barbara Monastery](#) here were evacuated, along with their neighbors, after an explosive brush fire broke out late Monday, December 4, 2017. As widely reported in the media, fires continue to spread and threaten the entire Los Angeles region.

"I learned from Mother Victoria that the monastery buildings still stand, but are not out of danger," reported His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West on Thursday morning, December 7. "The hillside behind the monastery burned and the monastery lavender field charred. So, the fire has come very close."

Mother Victoria and the sisters have not been able to return to the monastery.

"We are all grateful to the firefighters for their efforts to put down this very dangerous fire at the risk of their own lives," Archbishop Benjamin added. "Saint Barbara Monastery is the fourth monastery of our diocese to have escaped the threat of fire in recent years. It would seem fire is to become a regular feature of our lives in California as the climate changes. We ask the clergy and faithful to continue praying for the nuns."

Additional updates will be posted as they are received.



## **Fire threatens St. Barbara Monastery, Santa Paula, CA; nuns evacuated**

The nuns of [Saint Barbara Monastery](#) here were evacuated, along with their neighbors, after an explosive brush fire broke out late Monday, December 4, 2017. By early Tuesday morning, the rapidly moving blaze had spread from about 50 acres to an estimated 31,000 acres, forcing thousands of area residents to flee.

What has been named the "Thomas Fire" began in a canyon near Santa Paula, about 65 miles northwest of downtown Los Angeles. In a predawn announcement issued by local fire officials on Tuesday morning, December 5, it was reported that "the fire remains out of control and structures continue to be threatened throughout the fire area."

"On Monday—the Feast of Saint Barbara—the patronal feast day Divine Liturgy was celebrated for the first time in the monastery's recently consecrated chapel," explained His Eminence, Archbishop Benjamin of San Francisco and the West. "The 25th anniversary of the monastery's establishment also was observed. A few hours later, as Mother Victoria and the sisters were sitting down to dinner, the fire, driven by high winds, broke out within a mile of the monastery, forcing evacuation to surrounding communities.

"It appears that the buildings survived," Archbishop Benjamin reported on Tuesday morning. "But, as no one can actually go to the monastery due to evacuation efforts, we do not know for sure."

Updates will be posted as they are received. Prayers are requested for the monastic community and all those in the fire's path who have already been affected or who remain threatened by the disaster.

## ***St Nicholas Con't***

feature and is manifested by the great variety of forms of his solicitude for men: his care for their preservation, their protection from the elements, from human injustice, from heresies and so forth. This solicitude was accompanied by numerous miracles both during his life and after his death. Indefatigable intercessor, steadfast uncompromising fighter for Orthodoxy, he was meek and gentle in character and humble in spirit” [Quoted in *Time of the Spirit*, p. 69].

Following Christ faithfully, Saint Nicholas endures as the purest manifestation of authority and leadership in the Church—a living rule of faith, practicing humility, abstinence and voluntary poverty as an example to his flock.

O Bishop Nicholas,  
You have divinely taught all things well,  
And now wearing your unfading crown,  
you intercede for our souls.  
[*Vespers of the Feast of Saint Nicholas*]

### **The Recovery of St. Tikhon's relics in February 1992**

As widely reported, this year—2017—marks the 100th Anniversary of the [Election and Enthronement of Saint Tikhon as Patriarch of Moscow](#) during the All-Russian Church Council. [His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon and a delegation](#) representing the Orthodox Church in America departed for Moscow on Thursday, November 30, 2017 to participate in the celebration of this ever-memorable occasion that directly relates to the life of the Church in Russia and America, inasmuch as Saint Tikhon served as Bishop and later Archbishop of North America from 1898 until 1907, when he returned to his homeland.

This year also marks the 25th Anniversary of the discovery and recovery of the relics of Saint Tikhon, which were secured after his death in Moscow's Donskoy Monastery.

Saint Patriarch Tikhon fell asleep in the Lord on April 8, 1925. He had suffered greatly during the years of turmoil and persecution that followed the Russian Revolution. He was laid to rest in the monastery's small “winter” cathedral. Subsequently the monastery was closed and repurposed, and the relics of Saint Tikhon were moved for safe keeping.

The Donskoy Monastery subsequently was returned to the Church and has been restored. It was on

Saturday, February 22, 1992, that Saint Tikhon's relics were discovered, hidden deep beneath the floor of the small cathedral.

Just weeks before this joyous event, Protopresbyter Daniel Hubiak, together with Matushka Dunia, had arrived in Moscow as the Orthodox Church in America's first Representative to the Russian Orthodox Church. Little did they realize at the time that they would be witnesses to the recovery of Saint Tikhon's relics on that cold February afternoon.

Both Father Daniel and Matushka Dunia wrote first-hand accounts of the discovery of Saint Tikhon's relics, now enshrined in the Donskoy Monastery's main cathedral.

In conjunction with the Anniversary of Saint Tikhon's Enthronement in 1917, we offer the Hubiak's accounts of the discovery of Saint Tikhon's relics.

#### **Account of Matushka Dunia Hubiak**

It is Saturday, February 22, 1992, in Moscow. Father Dan and I are living at the Danilovsky Hotel. We arrived in Moscow a month ago for Father Dan to begin his new assignment as Representative of the Orthodox Church in America to the Russian Orthodox Church (The Moscow Patriarchate).

Because no church was yet designated as our Representation Church, Father Dan would call Father Matfey Stadniuk on Saturday mornings to be told where he was to be for the Vigil and Divine Liturgy that weekend (usually at the Patriarchal Cathedral). This Saturday morning (February 22) Father Matfey could not be reached. Finally, around noon he answered the phone and told Father Dan to be at the Donskoy Monastery for a special service at 2:00 p.m.

The receptionists at the hotel (who were always very helpful) ordered a car and driver for us, and off we were to the Donskoy Monastery. Upon our arrival at the main gate of the monastery, a mass of people, including clergy of all ranks, was gathering. A sense of excitement permeated the scene.

What could all of this mean?

We arrived at the winter church and saw more people, clergy and TV cameras! Father Dan was separated from me to join the clergy – I was left behind. At that time, a month after arriving in Moscow, my linguistic ability was almost nonexistent, so I was unable to ask anyone anything. So I stood there, trying to not get squeezed trying to see. We were standing around what looked like a crypt in the vestibule.

Patriarch Aleksy entered and began the service. More and more people crowded into the space, and again I was pushed to the side, unable to see. However, I could still hear, and to my astonishment I discovered that we were standing at the tomb of the recently **Con't Page 10**

### *St Tikhon's relics Con't*

canonized Saint Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia – in many ways OUR Patriarch whom we commemorate as “the Enlightener of North America.”

The Molieben service began and the coffin was opened. I made my way to a side of the area and found a chair on which I stood. When the reality dawned on me as to what was taking place, I was very much moved and could hardly see because of my tears.

After most of the crowd had pushed and shoved its way to the side, I was able to look down and found the Mantia still intact with the eagles on the shoulders and at the hem.

Father Dan was given a piece of wood from the casket.

Just think! If Father Dan had not reached Father Matfey, who was in his office all of two minutes, we would have missed this once in a lifetime experience!

### **Account of Father Daniel Hubiak**

At the end of the meeting of the Permanent Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church, His Holiness, Patriarch Aleksy was informed that the grave of Saint Tikhon had been found in the smaller Cathedral of Our Lady of the Don in the Donskoy Monastery. The Patriarch immediately went to the site and arranged for the opening of the casket at a special service at 3:00 p.m. on Saturday, February 22, 1992.

The top of the simple wooden casket was removed, revealing the mantia which covered the body of the saint. Two gold brocaded emblems on the mantia were shining as new. His Holiness said that the green patriarchal mantia was special in that it was one of only three made with that material and special style. The stones in the cross of the Saint's miter glistened as camera lights flashed.

A Molieben was sung. Patriarch Aleksy spoke of the significance of this discovery and stated that a crypt will be made for the Saint's relics.

The discovery of the Saint's grave was miraculous. Three different rumors pointed to the improbability of ever finding the remains of the Saint. One version had it that the remains of the Saint had been cremated, another that he was buried in an unmarked grave in one cemetery, another that his remains were in another, unidentified cemetery. The Church had no plans of trying to find the grave.

A fire at the smaller Cathedral of Our Lady of the Don

made it necessary to undertake an extensive renovation of the church. In the process of this renovation, a grave marker was found, but there was no body under the stone. It was thought that perhaps the burial place was to one side or another of the stone. A search of the area proved fruitless. But under the stone was a large heating pipe that appeared to be intact. An archeological expert examined the site and noticed that in fact the pipe, not detectable to the untrained eye, had indeed been disturbed. The pipe was removed and beneath it, covered by earth, was a grave vault. The vault was opened and the casket of Saint Tikhon was discovered there. On the casket was a plaque identifying it as the casket of the Saint. Those who buried the Saint took special pains to keep his body and his burial place secure and safe.

The finding of the Saint's grave was a miracle. The presence of the Representative of the OCA at the opening of the grave was another sign of God's providence. By chance I had called Father Matfey Stadniuk to discuss the schedule of services for the weekend. He was in his office for only for a few minutes – and that was when I called. He told me to be at the Donskoy Monastery for a Molieben. It appears that the person who was to have informed me simply forgot to do so.

An Act of the Opening of the Grave was signed by the Patriarch, the hierarchs, clergy and lay persons present. My name and my wife's name appear on the document. I obtained a piece of wood from the top of the Saint's casket.

O Holy Father Patriarch Tikhon, pray unto God for us!

**Christmas Tree**

B  
 H Y H  
 M R H K O  
 S A I G D G A  
 V G G R E E N H F  
 I W O X R  
 N C B R C E N  
 S A A G N I T B R  
 S U A L C A T N A S N  
 B D X M E I P  
 Y O J Q E M W D S  
 P G U S T N E S E R P  
 A L B G P W T N M K W Q F  
 C H R I S T M A S  
 O M S U N T R E E N W  
 Z N C D E K H D X J O V D  
 B G Z U R R L G I C V W R V F  
 P X M A E I Y Q H K U  
 M R M G W G L H D V K N E  
 X C X R J E N C M A M R R U X  
 B C Z O W V P A E G W F L H S Q I  
 U E V  
 C J A  
 V W D

Angel	Green	Ornaments	Tree
Boughs	Joy	Presents	Twinkle
Christmas	Lights	Santa Claus	Winter
Excitement	Magical	Snow	

## The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most Holy Mother of God

Commemorated on [December 9](#)

Saint Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was the youngest daughter of the priest Nathan from Bethlehem, descended from the tribe of Levi. She married Saint Joachim (September 9), who was a native of Galilee.

For a long time Saint Anna was childless, but after twenty years, through the fervent prayer of both spouses, an angel of the Lord announced to them that they would be the parents of a daughter, Who would bring blessings to the whole human race.

The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was exempted from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.) at the moment of her conception by virtue of the future merits of Her Son. Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless, as Saint Ambrose of Milan teaches in Chapter Two of his Commentary on Luke. The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in Her mortality, and in being subject to temptation, although She committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If this were the case, She would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from Her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not truly share our human nature, then the possibility of our salvation is in doubt.

The Conception of the Virgin Mary by Saint Anna took place at Jerusalem. The many icons depicting the Conception by Saint Anna show the Most Holy Theotokos trampling the serpent underfoot.

“In the icon Saints Joachim and Anna are usually depicted with hands folded in prayer; their eyes are also directed upward and they contemplate the Mother of God, Who stands in the air with outstretched hands; under Her feet is an orb encircled by a serpent (symbolizing the devil), which strives to conquer all the universe by its power.”

There are also icons in which Saint Anna holds the Most Holy Virgin on her left arm as an infant. On Saint Anna’s face is a look of reverence. A large ancient icon, painted on canvas, is located in the village of Minkovetsa in the Dubensk district of Volhynia diocese. From ancient times this Feast was especially venerated by pregnant women in Russia.

## Holy Assumption Women Meet Last Sunday

Last Sunday we had a wonderful meeting of women who are organizing a women’s ministry at Holy Assumption. Fr. Andrew suggested the formation of the group and Roberta Royhab, who led the discussion with Fr. Andrew, volunteered to head the effort. Seven women attended. The following committees for 2018, headed by one or two women, were discussed. (Work by some of these groups are already being done within the parish.) The committees are: assisting the parish and Fr. Andrew in preparations for feast days, priests’/ministerial meetings at Holy Assumption, etc.; sunshine/visitation; hospitality; charitable outreach; religious talks/retreats; kitchen/hall upkeep; social. Several women volunteered to chair or co-chair committees or suggested others who may be interested in serving as chairs. The organization, open to all women in the parish, Orthodox or non-Orthodox, will report to parish council. At the annual meeting Jan. 21 women will have the opportunity to volunteer to serve on committees they are interested in.—Roberta Royhab

## Martyr Menas of Alexandria

Commemorated on [December 10](#)

The Holy Martyrs Menas, Hermogenes, and Eugephus suffered for their faith in Christ under the emperor Maximian (305-313).

Saint Menas was sent by the emperor from Athens to Alexandria to suppress the riots that had arisen between the Christians and the pagans. Distinguished for his gift of eloquence, Menas instead openly began to preach the Christian Faith and he converted many pagans to Christ. Learning of this, Maximian sent Hermogenes to Alexandria to place the saints on trial. Moreover, he gave orders to purge the city of Christians.

Hermogenes, although he was a pagan, was distinguished by his reverent bearing. And struck by the endurance of Saint Menas under torture and by his miraculous healing after the cruel torments, he also came to believe in Christ. Maximian himself then arrived in Alexandria. Neither the astonishing stoic endurance of Saints Menas and Hermogenes under torture, nor even the miracles manifested by God in this city, mollified the emperor. Instead, they vexed him all the more. The emperor personally stabbed Saint Eugephus, the secretary of Saint Menas, and then gave orders to behead the holy Martyrs Menas and Hermogenes.

The relics of the holy martyrs, cast into the sea in an iron chest, were afterwards found (see February 17) and transferred to Constantinople in the ninth century. The emperor Justinian built a church in the name of the holy Martyr Menas of Alexandria. Saint Joseph the Hymnographer (April 4) composed a Canon in honor of these holy martyrs.