



Sunday, August 30, 2020

Tone 3

Gospel: St. Matthew 19:16-26

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

12th Sunday after Pentecost

Translation of the Relics of Rt. Blv. Great Prince St. Alexander Nevsky

AUGUST Bulletin Sponsor:

Father Andrew in memory of my Aunt, Rose Bartek

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, August 30

9:15 am: Hours & Divine Liturgy / Social outdoors

Tuesday, September 1

LITURGICAL NEW YEAR

Saturday, September 5

4:00 pm: Great Vespers

Sunday, September 6

9:15 am: Hours & Divine Liturgy / Social outdoors

(NOTE): You must let Fr. Andrew know if you want to attend any service or the social. Right now we are allowed 22 people max.

AUGUST SPECIAL COLLECTION



PRAY FOR OUR CATECHUMENS

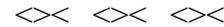
Rachael Adamcio Luke Welch
Lydia Welch Tristen Welch

May God & the Holy Spirit guide them in their journey in the Orthodox Church and the Orthodox way of Life.

110 E Main Street, Marblehead, OH 43440
www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org

PRAYERS

Due to the stressful, unsettled and unforgiving times we currently live in, I believe the following prayers are very much needed in our lives.



Prayer of St. Ephrem

O Lord and Master of my life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle talk. (Full Prostration)

But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience, and love to Thy servant. (Full Prostration)

Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own transgressions, and not to judge my brother, for blessed art Thou, unto ages of ages. Amen. (Full Prostration)

O God, cleanse me, a sinner (12 times). And recite prayer one more time.

The Jesus Prayer

O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God have mercy on me, a sinner.



The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.



Rectory 419-798-4591 / Cell 570-212-8747
info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org

SCHEDULES

WEEDING & WATERING AROUND CHURCH

Week of August 30	Open
Week of Sept 6:	Open
Week of Sept. 13:	Open
Week of Sept. 20:	Open
Week of Sept 27:	Open

TENTATIVE READERS

Sunday, August 30	Natalie
Sunday, Sept. 6:	Joe
Tuesday, Sept 8:	Natalie
Sunday, Sept 13:	Tim
Monday, Sept. 14:	Natalie
Sunday, Sept. 20:	Terri
Sunday, Sept. 27:	Joe

TENTATIVE SINGING

Sunday, August 30:	Natalie & Tim
Sunday, Sept. 6:	Natalie & Susan
Tuesday, Sept. 8:	Natalie & ??
Sunday, Sept 13:	Natalie & Laura
Monday, Sept 14:	Natalie & ??
Sunday, Sept. 20:	Natalie & Fred

NOTE: Anyone that wants to be added to, or subtracted from, any of these lists please let Fr. Andrew know.

BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND

Our 125th Anniversary is coming!

Fund Purpose: To collect funds to pay for the restoration, repair and beautification of the building and parish room. This will avoid using general funds which are earmarked for budgetary items.

Please consider contributing generously to the *Building/Restoration Fund.*



ON-LINE GIVING UPDATE

I am happy to report that our On-Line Giving platform is up and running & already bearing fruit! Glory to God! *(These numbers are not reflected in the "Other Income From August.")*

I encourage all of you to check it out and sign up. It is simple and easy.

Fr. Andrew

Week of August 17-22 : \$447.02

OTHER INCOME FROM AUGUST

Sunday, August 2: \$10 Candles; \$25 Tomb Candles; \$30 vigils; \$25 Eternal Light; \$25 Eternal Light; \$100 special collection; \$688 No Halupki Festival Campaign

Sunday, August 9: \$47 candles; \$115 Vigils; \$200 Eternal Light & Altar Candles; \$25 Food Pantry; \$755 No Halupki Festival Campaign

Sunday, August 16: \$47 Candles; \$85 Vigils; \$15 wine; \$125 Special collection July; \$175 Special Collection August; \$1025 No Halupki Festival Campaign; \$570 Festival assessments

Sunday, August 23: \$22 Candles; \$60 Vigils; \$10 Special collection from May; \$10 special collection from July; \$35 special collection from July; \$10 Food Pantry; \$1,250 No Halupki Festival Campaign

MONTHLY TITHING ONLY AUGUST

Goal Pledged per month: \$4,600

Sunday, August 2:	\$1,770
Sunday, August 9:	\$1,335
Sunday, August 16:	\$1,539
Sunday, August 23:	\$ 813

PRAYER LIST Updated 8-26

Clergy:

His Beatitude, Metropolitan Theodosius
His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman
John Duranko (Father's home pastor)
James Gleason (Father's Spiritual Father)
Moses Barry
Joseph Gibson
Gregory Grivna
Emilian Hutnyan
Joseph Von Klarr
Vladimir Lecko
Myron Manzuk
Christopher Phillips
Peter Tutko
John Zabinko
Dc. Paul Gansle
Dc. Gregory Krutchek
Dc. Paul Mitchell
Sub-deacon Wylie Meath

Matushkii:

Pani Patricia Duranko
Virginia Lecko
Maura McCartney
Trudi Richter
Snezanna Ruzic
Sonya Tutko
Margaret Zabinko

Parishioners / & their Family:

John Beadle (Elcishko)
Mandy Braccini (Mazurik)
MaryAnn Cook (Cousin to Twarek's)
John Richard Elchisco
Ruthe Flewelling
Debbie Garnek (Roddie's sister)
Michael Glovinsky (Basil's nephew)
Heidi Golob
Shirley Gresh (Wife of Ernest)
Justin Griffith (Soski Son)
Julia Guzy
Joseph Habegger (Laura brother-in-law)
Nancy Hanon (Cassell)
Barb Heffernan
Charisse Hileman
Alice Jackson (Mazurik)
William Jappsen (Diane T.)
Kris Kollar (Fr.'s cousin)
Betty Kovach
Kristen (Cassell's daughter)
Terri Lariccia (Fr.'s cousin)
David LaValle (Fr.'s cousin)
Helen Lis
Greg Mazur

Judy Mazurik (Paul Mazurik's)
Child Stella Miller
Katelyn Pipenur (Niece of Jean)
Earl Rindfleisch
Helen Jean Rofkar (Elchisco)
Joe Rose
Sonya Rose
Ron Royhab
Maryann Royhab
Steven Schirtzinger (Soski)
Christy Schutt (Joe's sister)
Christi Soski
Peter Truta (Jean H's cousin)
Diane Tryon
Greg Tryon Tom Twarek
Bob Whitham (Fr's cousin)
Katie and her baby Bodhi
(Cassell's daughter-in-law)
Sarah and her unborn Child
(Laura's daughter)
Brittany And her unborn baby
(Fr's cousin)

Other Requests:

Alexia
Baby Emma (Cassell)
Barb (Cassell)
Barbara (Mazurik)
Brandon (Cassell)
Brendan (From Norwalk)
Delores Danchisen
Layne Demkosky
Paul Demkosky (Fr's friend)
Betty Dubbert (Kovach)
Marge Dziama
Mary Dziak (Twarek)
John Esposito (Chicago)
Matt Essex
Ben Franklin (Laura friend)
James Geisman (Twarek)
Theodore Geletka
(St. Michael Broadview
Heights' choir director)
Brad George (Christi's friend)
Donald Gresh (Basil)
Janice (Chicago)
Elliot Joy (Police chief's son)
Andrea Joy (Kovach)
Ann Marie Krynock (timko)
Tommy Leonchik (Fr's friend)
Jake Lipstraw (Twarek)
Mark Ludvik (Guzy)
Mark Masica (Kovach)
Pauline Meath (Fr's)

Cole Miller (Cassell)
Doug Millinger (Kovach)
Karen Muzyka (Fr's friend)
Charlie Nowak (Avery's)
Beth Reinhard (Diane friend)
Chris Reinheimer (Bruno's)
Elivis Reyes (Fr.'S friend)
Arby Shenesky (Pastor Bob's sister)
Matthew Sterling (Tyron)
Andrea Szabo (Sonya friend)
Janice Timko
Philip (Andy) Timko
George Timko
Steve Turinsky (Twarek)
Chuck Wiedenhoft (Twarek)
Loren Welch
Rachel (Darlene M.)
Zoland Zile (Fr's Friend)
Mollie & her unborn baby
(Fr.'s friend)

Military:

Craig Cassell, Nathan Brown, Alena Grabavoy, Alex, Jake Ellithorpe

Captives:

Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo)
Archbishop John (Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo)

The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria; Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world

For Your Prayers

Julia Guzy (96 ½ yrs old)
1601 Church Rd
Marblehead, OH 43440

Diane Tryon
109 Joslyn Street
Arcadia, OH 44804

Please remember our shut-ins, especially now during this National crisis.

**The Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet,
Forerunner, and Baptist John
Commemorated on [August 29](#)**

The Beheading of the Prophet, Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist: The Evangelists Matthew (Mt.14:1-12) and Mark (Mark 6:14-29) provide accounts about the martyric end of John the Baptist in the year 32 after the Birth of Christ.

Following the Baptism of the Lord, Saint John the Baptist was locked up in prison by Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch (ruler of one fourth of the Holy Land) and governor of Galilee. (After the death of king Herod the Great, the Romans divided the territory of Palestine into four parts, and put a governor in charge of each part. Herod Antipas received Galilee from the emperor Augustus).

The prophet of God John openly denounced Herod for having left his lawful wife, the daughter of the Arabian king Aretas, and then instead cohabiting with Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip (Luke 3:19-20). On his birthday, Herod made a feast for dignitaries, the elders and a thousand chief citizens. Salome, the daughter of Herod, danced before the guests and charmed Herod. In gratitude to the girl, he swore to give her whatever she would ask, up to half his kingdom.

The vile girl on the advice of her wicked mother Herodias asked that she be given the head of John the Baptist on a platter. Herod became apprehensive, for he feared the wrath of God for the murder of a prophet, whom earlier he had heeded. He also feared the people, who loved the holy Forerunner. But because of the guests and his careless oath, he gave orders to cut off the head of Saint John and to give it to Salome.

According to Tradition, the mouth of the dead preacher of repentance once more opened and proclaimed: "Herod, you should not have the wife of your brother Philip." Salome took the platter with the head of Saint John and gave it to her mother. The frenzied Herodias repeatedly stabbed the tongue of the prophet with a needle and buried his holy head in a unclean place. But the pious Joanna, wife of Herod's steward Chuza, buried the head of John the

Baptist in an earthen vessel on the Mount of Olives, where Herod had a parcel of land. (The Uncovering of the Venerable Head is celebrated February 24). The holy body of John the Baptist was taken that night by his disciples and buried at Sebastia, there where the wicked deed had been done.

After the murder of Saint John the Baptist, Herod continued to govern for a certain time. Pontius Pilate, governor of Judea, later sent Jesus Christ to him, Whom he mocked (Luke 23:7-12).

The judgment of God came upon Herod, Herodias and Salome, even during their earthly life. Salome, crossing the River Sikoris in winter, fell through the ice. The ice gave way in such a way that her body was in the water, but her head was trapped above the ice. It was similar to how she once had danced with her feet upon the ground, but now she flailed helplessly in the icy water. Thus she was trapped until that time when the sharp ice cut through her neck.

Her corpse was not found, but they brought the head to Herod and Herodias, as once they had brought them the head of Saint John the Baptist. The Arab king Aretas, in revenge for the disrespect shown his daughter, made war against Herod. The defeated Herod suffered the wrath of the Roman emperor Caius Caligua (37-41) and was exiled with Herodias first to Gaul, and then to Spain.

The Beheading of Saint John the Baptist, a Feast day established by the Church, is also a strict fast day because of the grief of Christians at the violent death of the saint. In some Orthodox cultures pious people will not eat food from a flat plate, use a knife, or eat food that is round in shape on this day.

Today the Church makes remembrance of Orthodox soldiers killed on the field of battle, as established in 1769 at the time of Russia's war with the Turks and the Poles.

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

September 6: Detective Tanisha from AL

September 13: 9 Marines killed in boating accident

September 27: Tim Nash

September Celebrations

Anniversary	Birthday
30- Fr. Peter & Pani Bernadette Zarynow (August) 3- Frank & Crystal Batura 11- David & Roddie Mazurik, Wayne & Heidi Golob 13- Sam & Angie Dardovski, Fr. Peter Zarynow (priestly anniversary), Tom & Jean Hileman 15- Nikki & Sean Williams 19- Zach & Amber Twarek 24- Mike & Diane Tryon 9-28-1990: Retired Bishop Lazar of Ottawa	31- Sharon LaVallee, 31- Fr. Emilian Hutnyan (August) 1-Denny Bird 2- Julia Guzy 3- Lynn Basala 5-Chico Elcisko 8- Zach Twarek 11- Fr. John Beskid, Brian Lucas 15- Walter Litzie Sr 16- Tommy Leonchik 17- Wyatt Schlotterer 18- Fr. David Lis 19- Cooper Kowal 20- Fr. Matthew Moriak 20- Charisse Hileman 23- Rita Mazur 25- Nikki Twarek, Noah Adamcio 26- Michael Litzie, Jim Basala, Amber Twarek, Greg Twarek 30- Jaxson Monschein, Jack Kovach

NAMESDAY

8-30: Archbishop Alexander of Dallas (August)
 9-9: Retired Metropolitan Theodosius
 9-30: Archbishop Michael of NY & NJ

If there are those names to be added or removed, please contact Fr. Andrew. He would like to list all members of your family Orthodox and non-Orthodox.

Matthew 19:16-26 (Gospel)

Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” “The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?” Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. And again I say to you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?” But Jesus looked at them and said to them, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

September Reposed

31- Larry Noon (2014) (August) Michael Onyock (1931) Michael Hritsko (1934) William Rose (1980) 1- His Eminence Bishop Nikon (2019) 2- David Douglas (2015) 4- John Mataleska (1986); 4- Archpriest John Grandziuk (1947) Former Pastor 5- Archpriest Michael Dziama (1944) Former Pastor 6- Anna Dahulich (2017) 14- Archpriest George Breyan (2009) Former Pastor; Mary Kamiotis (2017)	15- Steve Bartek (1962) (Grandfather); Peter Rindfleisch (2006) 16- John George Mazurik (1997) 18- Bernie Labouda (2018); 18- Stephen Sature (2004) 20- Nora Bird (2017) 21- Joseph Mazur (2002) 27- Michael Ittescu (1968); Alison Pickney (2017); Karen Milano (2017) 28- William Felenchak (1977) 30- Bishop John Martin (1984) George Mazur (1937) George Mazurik (1940)
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Praying to the Saints By Fr. Lawrence Farley

When I first began to investigate Orthodoxy, my main stumbling block to conversion was prayer to Mary and the saints. My Protestant formation had trained me (well, brainwashed me actually, for it was long on insistence and short on argument) that it was WRONG to pray to Mary and the saints. Doing so constituted Idolatry (with a capital “I”), which got God very upset. And by the way, the prohibition applied to prayer to angels as well. I remember this last insistence striking me as a bit odd. My guardian angel was, I was taught, right there next to me, so why couldn’t I ask him to pray for me? He obviously could hear me, so what was the problem? I got around the prohibition one night when I was alone and frightened and wanted my guardian angel to pray for me by praying to God and asking Him to tell my angel to pray for me. Even then it seemed to me a very round about way of doing things.

When I seriously began to investigate the legitimacy of prayer to Mary and the saints, I naturally spoke to both my Protestant and Orthodox friends about it. Was it okay, I inquired, to ask Mary and the saints to pray for me? “Obviously it is not okay. What’s wrong with you?”, answered my Protestant friends. “Obviously it is okay. What’s wrong with you?” answered my Orthodox friends. Both groups considered the issue so self-evident as to not require further thought. I was left to my own devices, and to a new examination of Scripture and of church history. Please allow me to share the results of this examination.

Any sensible examination of Scripture begins with the rejection of the Protestant view that the Bible somehow provides the rulebook for what may or may not be done. It is not a set of Ikea instructions for assembling a church, despite Harold “How-to-Live-Like-a-King’s Kid” Hill’s description of the Bible as “the manufacturer’s handbook”. Instead, the New Testament consists largely of a series of occasional documents dating from the first century which dealt with issues that arose within the first generation of Christian converts. Issues relating to later generations (such as whether or not to baptize babies born to the new converts, or how to train candidates for ordination) simply did not arise. This lacuna

included questions like, “May we ask the martyrs to pray for us?” because such a category of martyrs did not exist during the first generation of converts.

The issue of the heavenly life and activity of Christians in heaven is somewhat difficult, because the issue is not directly addressed in the New Testament. It is not hard to see why: when the New Testament was being written, comparatively few Christians had died, and so that the question did not arise. The closest the New Testament comes to addressing the issue is St. Paul’s assertion that those who had died already would not be lost, but that Christ would raise them up and bring them with Him when He returned (1 Thessalonians 4:13f). That tells us nothing about what they might be doing in heaven now.

We therefore need to read the Biblical texts closely to discern from them the underlying presuppositions that the Christians inherited from Judaism. And when we do this, we see that the Judaism of the time assumed that those in heaven had knowledge of what was happening on earth and were praying for them. Thus, for example, we read in 2 Maccabees 15:12f that the martyred high priest Onias “was praying with outstretched hands for the whole body of the Jews”. Moreover, he was joined in his intercession by a man “distinguished by his gray hair and dignity and marvellous majesty and authority”. Onias revealed in the vision that “This is a man who loves the brethren and prays much for the people and the holy city, Jeremiah the prophet of God”.

We see the same conviction that those in heaven prayed for those on earth in the *Book of Enoch*, a composite work dating from the first century. Thus in Enoch 9:3 we read, “To you, the holy ones of heaven, the souls of men make their suit, saying, ‘Bring our cause before the Most High’”. Later on, in Enoch 39:5 we find the same idea that those in heaven were praying for those on earth: “My eyes saw the dwellings [of the holy] with His holy angels and they petitioned and interceded and prayed for the children of men”. In Enoch 99:3, the righteous on earth are told to “raise your prayers as a memorial, and place them as a testimony before the angels, that they may place the sin of the sinner for a memorial before the Most High”. In Enoch 104:1 we read that “in heaven the angels remember you for good before the glory of the Great One”. These texts reveal that at least some Jews in the first century believed that the angels in heaven were praying for those on earth and presenting their prayers to God. Those in heaven **Con’t next Page**

Fr. Lawrence Con't

Onias, Jeremiah, and the angels—were intimately involved in what was happening on earth.

This assumption clearly lies behind our Lord's words that those in heaven rejoice over the repentance of a single sinner on earth (Luke 15:7), for how else could they know of the sinner's repentance unless earth somehow lay open to the gaze of those in heaven? The same assumption also undergirds the image found in Hebrews 12:1, which uses an athletic race to portray the Christian struggle. We on earth are running the race of faith, cheered on by a "great cloud of witnesses" observing us from the heavenly stands.

And then there is the Book of Revelation. This text must be used carefully, with a full recognition of its special genre. It does not offer a literal behind-the-scenes peek at what is going on in heaven, like a journalist allowed to wander around backstage behind the curtain. But it does reveal the assumptions held by the Church at the time regarding the state of those in heaven. From this we learn that the angels brought the prayers of those on earth to God (Revelation 8:3-4)—exactly as the *Book of Enoch* said. Regarding the departed Christians, we learn that they are with Christ and are being comforted by Him for their struggles on earth (Revelation 7:13f). We also learn that they seem to know what is happening on earth: in Revelation 6:9-11 they clamour impatiently for judgment to be poured out on their oppressors, and in Revelation 16:4-7 they exult after the judgment has been poured out. It is clear from this that they know what is happening on earth while they are in heaven.

We may conclude from this close reading of the texts of the time that it was part of the Church's faith in the first century that those in heaven interceded for those on earth.

This intimate unity of the saints in heaven with the saints still on earth found increased strength through the Resurrection of Christ, for by His Resurrection He abolished death (2 Timothy 1:10). This not only means that death cannot separate us from Christ; it also means that death can no longer separate Christians from one another. If the living and departed are both united to Christ, they are by virtue of this union also united to one another. Even while on earth all

Christians are united in a bond of mutual prayer and intercession (Ephesians 6:18)—how much more will our departed brethren pray for us when they are closer to Christ in heaven? Salvation consists of sharing the glory of Christ, and becoming by grace what He is by nature (Romans 8:29). This means that we not only share His sonship, but also His heavenly glory, being continually transformed from one degree of glory to another (2 Corinthians 3:18). If we share His glory in this life, how much more in the next, when righteous men are made perfect? (Hebrews 12:23)

In summary, the New Testament lays the foundation for the invocation of saints, witnessing to the union of heaven with earth, and teaching Christians will share the heavenly glory of Christ in the next life.

Thus it is not surprising that when Christians began to be regularly martyred in the second century the Church should instantly have venerated them and asked for their prayers. If a person was known to be in heaven—as the martyrs, the apostles, and the Mother of God surely were—then the Church would naturally ask for their prayers.

In fact, prayers to the martyrs and the saints such as the Mother of God began to be offered early. The earliest extant Christian documents testify to the Church's veneration of the saints and of Mary—and the Church's reliance upon the prayers of both.

The cult of the martyrs emerged in the mid-second century—i.e. as soon as Christians began to be martyred. Thus we read of the martyrdom of St. Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna in 156 A.D.: after his martyrdom the Christians "took up his bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and deposited them in a suitable place. There, when we gather together as we are able, with joy and gladness, the Lord will permit us to celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom in commemoration of those who have already fought in the contest and also for the training and preparation of those who will do so in the future" (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, chapter 18). During these regular commemorations, the story of Polycarp's martyrdom was read and his prayers invoked. Just as the Maccabean Jews believed that Onias and Jeremiah were praying for them, so the Christians of the second century believed that martyrs such as Polycarp were praying for them as well. *Con't Next Page*

Fr Lawrence Con't

We see this early reliance upon the prayers of the saints in heaven as a fruit of the unity of the Church in many of the early Fathers. Thus Clement of Alexandria (d. ca. 215) wrote that the true Christian “prays in the society of angels, as being already of angelic rank, and he is never out of their holy keeping, and though he pray alone, he has the choir of the saints standing with him” (*Miscellanies* 7.12). Origen (d. ca. 253) in his work *On Prayer* wrote, “Not only does the High Priest [i.e. Christ] pray with those who pray genuinely, but so do the angels...So do the souls of the saints who have already fallen asleep” (chapter 11:1). St. Cyprian of Carthage (d. 258) assumed that the saints in heaven continued to pray for those on earth in the same unity of faith. In a letter to another bishop he wrote, “Let us remember one another in concord; let us on both sides always pray for one another...that if one of us shall go hence first, our love may continue in the presence of the Lord and our prayers for our brothers and sister not cease in the presence of the Father’s mercy” (*Letter* 56.5).

The earliest patristic references in the second century to Mary are also significant. Mary is compared to Eve, and second century Fathers such as Justin Martyr and Irenaeus say that just as death came through Eve, so life came through Mary. This Eve-Mary contrast, coming independently from different Fathers, witnesses to the Church’s early interest in the Mother of Christ as a figure of some importance. The Church knew from its Judaic inheritance that all those in heaven prayed for those on earth, and it was clear that Christ’s Mother was among those in heaven as a powerful intercessor.

Thus it is not surprising that the Church early began to ask for Mary’s intercession. An example of such prayer is the so-called *sub tuum*, a prayer dated to the third century. The prayer runs: “Beneath your compassion, we take refuge, O Theotokos. Do not despise our petitions in time of trouble, but rescue us from dangers, O only pure, only blessed one.” Such a fervent prayer showing such bold confidence in Mary’s intercession could not have arisen in a vacuum in which Mary was ignored. Its existence witnesses to an even earlier devotion to Mary (we note that the *Protoevangelium*, offering

legendary details of Mary’s childhood, dates from the mid-second century). We note too that such Marian devotion could owe nothing to pagan influence, since in the third century the Church was still being battered by pagan persecution, and the Christians would hardly have been open to religious influences from the pagans determined to destroy them.

We have seen that both Scripture and early Church history alike witness to the Church’s practice of asking the departed saints to pray for us. This was the universal practice of the Church in both the east and the west until the time of the Reformation, when Protestant hostility to all things Catholic jettisoned it from the daily devotional life of Christians. This rejection can find no Biblical support, nor resonance in the history of the early martyric Church. The oft-cited 1 Timothy 2:5 which asserts that Christ is the only mediator between God and men is irrelevant to this discussion, for Mary and the saints are not *mediators*, but *intercessors*. A mediator is one who reconciles estranged parties (as Christ reconciled us to God from whom our sins had estranged us); an intercessor is merely one who prays for another, and that is all the Church asserts that Mary and the saints are doing. The venerable allergy of Protestants to the invocation of saints is solely the result of reactionary anti-Catholic teaching (i.e. prejudice), and of emotional unfamiliarity with the practice.

The Church has always venerated and prayed to Mary and the saints. The real issue is this: is the Church reliable and trustworthy or not? In the Creed we confess that we believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. Do we really believe this? Do we believe that her teaching is reliable, and that Christ’s promises to lead her into all truth so that the gates of hell will not prevail against her (John 16:13, Matthew 16:18) are being fulfilled? Do we believe that the Church is the pillar and bulwark of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15)? That is the real question. Early on I decided to prefer the wisdom of the Church spread throughout the world and throughout two millennia to my own little store of wisdom. God had promised to guide the Church, since it is the Body of Christ. He made no such promise to me. I therefore chose to trust the Church.