

Protection Con't

Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them go away from my icon unheard.”

Saints Andrew and Epiphanius were worthy to see the Mother of God at prayer, and “for a long time observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Most Holy Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but with her departure it also became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation.”

At the Blachernae church, the memory of the miraculous appearance of the Mother of God was remembered. In the fourteenth century, the Russian pilgrim and clerk Alexander, saw in the church an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos praying for the world, depicting Saint Andrew in contemplation of her.

The Primary Chronicle of Saint Nestor reflects that the protective intercession of the Mother of God was needed because an attack of a large pagan Russian fleet under the leadership of Askole and Dir. The feast celebrates the divine destruction of the fleet which threatened Constantinople itself, sometime in the years 864-867 or according to the Russian historian Vasiliev, on June 18, 860. Ironically, this Feast is considered important by the Slavic Churches but not by the Greeks.

The Primary Chronicle of Saint Nestor also notes the miraculous deliverance followed an all-night Vigil and the dipping of the garment of the Mother of God into the waters of the sea at the Blachernae church, but does not mention Saints Andrew and Epiphanius and their vision of the Mother of God at prayer. These latter elements, and the beginnings of the celebrating of the Feast of the Protection, seem to postdate Saint Nestor and the Chronicle. A further historical complication might be noted under (October 2) dating Saint Andrew’s death to the year 936.

The year of death might not be quite reliable, or the assertion that he survived to a ripe old age after the vision of his youth, or that his vision involved some later pagan Russian raid which met with the same fate. The suggestion that Saint Andrew was a

Slav (or a Scythian according to other sources, such as S. V. Bulgakov) is interesting, but not necessarily accurate. The extent of Slavic expansion and repopulation into Greece is the topic of scholarly disputes.

In the PROLOGUE, a Russian book of the twelfth century, a description of the establishment of the special Feast marking this event states, “For when we heard, we realized how wondrous and merciful was the vision... and it transpired that Your holy Protection should not remain without festal celebration, O Ever-Blessed One!”

Therefore, in the festal celebration of the Protection of the Mother of God, the Russian Church sings, “With the choirs of the Angels, O Sovereign Lady, with the venerable and glorious prophets, with the First-Ranked Apostles and with the Hieromartyrs and Hierarchs, pray for us sinners, glorifying the Feast of your Protection in the Russian Land.” Moreover, it would seem that Saint Andrew, contemplating the miraculous vision was a Slav, was taken captive, and became the slave of the local inhabitant of Constantinople named Theognostus.

Churches in honor of the Protection of the Mother of God began to appear in Russia in the twelfth century. Widely known for its architectural merit is the temple of the Protection at Nerl, which was built in the year 1165 by holy Prince Andrew Bogoliubsky. The efforts of this holy prince also established in the Russian Church the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, about the year 1164.

At Novgorod in the twelfth century there was a monastery of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos (the so-called Zverin monastery) In Moscow also under Tsar Ivan the Terrible the cathedral of the Protection of the Mother of God was built at the church of the Holy Trinity (known as the church of Saint Basil the Blessed).

On the Feast of the Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos we implore the defense and assistance of the Queen of Heaven, “Remember us in your prayers, O Lady Virgin Mother of God, that we not perish by the increase of our sins. Protect us from every evil and from grievous woes, for in you do we hope, and venerating the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you.”

Saint Macrina Institute Offers New Spirituality Class

The St. Macrina Institute has announced a new cycle of classes that will begin online to draw in students who lack a local cohort or instructor. The new students will begin near the end of October with the spirituality class, first in the cycle of seven courses, one for each semester. Class sessions will run one every two weeks. Other courses being offered include:

[New Cycle Announcement 9.29.20 Diocesan Spirituality](#)—Fr. Elijah will teach this one starting in October.

Old Testament

New Testament

Church History and Patristics

Dogmatic Theology

Liturgical Theology, Homiletics and Catechetical Practice

Ethics, Canons, Parish and Liturgical Practice

“Spirituality, as we teach it here, is the study of the Orthodox understanding of: who the human being is; what is the life of prayer; how the scriptures are interpreted for both liturgical and prayerful use; and how ascetic teachings apply to human life,” said Archpriest Elijah Mueller, the head of the St. Macrina Institute.

This cycle would run until 2023 and the estimated cost is \$500 per student. The instructors are experienced and knowledgeable teachers, approved Diocesan faculty. For more information, please contact Fr. Elijah by email, elijahmueller@sbcglobal.net, or by phone 312.714.9775.

THE FATHERS SPEAK

Completely have trust in God, leave everything in His Hands, and believe that His love will act for your own benefit. Then God will take care of everything, because there is nothing He cannot do; everything is easy for Him. The difficult thing is for man to decide to humble himself and leave everything to God’s providence and love.

St Paisos of Mt Athos

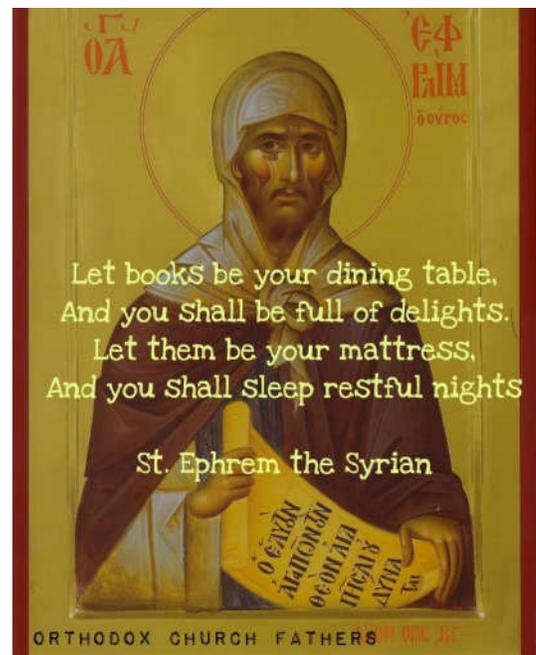
New Testament Course being offered by St. Macrina Institute

The Diocesan St. Macrina Orthodox Institute continues the Chicago Deanery cohort’s curriculum cycle with a course on the New Testament. The course will cover the Old Testament and Second Temple backgrounds of the New Testament including both significant biblical and pseudepigraphic texts, as well continuing into early patristic apostolic and some later authors. The course will show the significant insights that a liturgically informed understanding of the text can bring to a critical and historical reading of the texts of the New Testament.

The course will be taught by Archpriest Elijah Mueller. While this course is being taken by the students in the St. Macrina Chicago Deanery cohort, it can also be taken by those who want to engage in continuing education on the New Testament.

Contact Fr. Elijah Mueller

(elijahmueller@sbcglobal.net, 312-714-9775) if you are interested in participating. The course will cost approximately \$500 and is scheduled to meet once every two weeks on Sunday afternoon or Monday evening, TBA. The course will be online, through Zoom.





Local Archpriest Participates in Veterans Suicide Awareness Event

On September 26, the town of Marblehead, Ohio took the day to honor veterans and to bring awareness to veteran suicide. Volunteers took turns standing in silence in a show of honor and respect for those veterans who have lost their lives to suicide. The Very Reverend Archpriest, Andrew Bartek of Holy Assumption took the first watch from 9 am to 10 am. Organizers hope that this small demonstration of respect will raise awareness for those veterans who struggle with depression and thoughts of suicide.

According to the [Port Clinton News Herald](#) *“Suicide Watch was started by Retired Master Sgt. Tim Chandler, a veteran of the United States Air Force and Ohio Air National Guard. Chandler formed the group in response to the suicide deaths of two veteran friends and his own struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder.*

In the wake of the suicides, he realized there were few resources for hurting veterans, and he wanted to do something to bring awareness to veteran suicide. The first Silent Watch took place in 2009, and this year, Chandler is hoping an event will be take place in every Ohio county.”

If you know a veteran who is struggling, please find information and resources through the [Veterans Crisis Line](#). This connects Service members and Veterans in crisis, as well as their family members and friends, with qualified, caring Department of Veteran’s Affairs (VA) responders through a confidential toll-free hotline, online chat, or text messaging service.

Dial **1-800-273-8255** and **Press 1** to talk to someone or send a text message to 838255 to connect with a VA responder. You can also start a confidential online chat session at veteranscrisisline.net/get-help/chat.

This article appeared on our Diocesan website this past week.

Interview with Archbishop Paul Ahead of 59th Assembly

In anticipation of the upcoming 59th Diocesan Assembly, the Communications Department of the Diocese of the Midwest interviewed His Eminence Archbishop Paul. This gathering will take place online, Thursday, October 8th.

For all of the latest reports visit the [Assembly Page](#).

DOM COMS: Your blessing. Your Eminence, thank you for taking time to talk about the upcoming 59th Assembly of the Midwest Diocese. Given the ongoing pandemic, I have a feeling this year’s meeting will look a little different than the previous fifty-eight!

ABP: The Lord’s blessing be upon you. You are correct when you say that it will be different from years past. Given the global pandemic and the size of the diocese, this year’s assembly will be taking place online. This has become a common format today for running large meetings like this successfully and safely. We will miss our usual format, of course. Even so, I am confident we will be able to conduct the important work of the diocese.

DOM COMS: It’s wonderful that the meeting is able to take place at all. I think people by now are very familiar with the online format. They will be excited to see faces they have not seen for some time. The assembly is scheduled for October 8th at 5 pm CST. What will be covered during the session in that reduced time?

ABP: The Diocesan Assembly in years past has been a three-day event. We have been trying to build on that. This year, of course, is an exceptional year because of issues stemming from the pandemic. We will need therefore to simplify our process. We have set up a page on our diocesan website with all the latest reports and information pertaining to the assembly, as we have done in the past. This year, however, given the online format of the meeting, it will be even more important for participants to familiarize themselves with the material on our website beforehand. Reports will still be given and business conducted, but on the expectation that the delegates will have read the information in advance.

Con’t Next Page

Interview with Archbishop Con't

DOM COMS: Your Eminence, is there anything that is of special interest, or is there a particularly important topic for people to be aware of?

ABP: Yes. We will need to address the transfer of property to be used for a monastery. A generous donor has offered to fund this project, which will be of spiritual benefit for the diocese. Because money and property are involved, our diocesan bylaws stipulate that this needs to be confirmed by the diocesan assembly.

DOM COMS: This sounds like a wonderful blessing. Monasteries play an essential role in the Church. It is wonderful that the diocese has made this a priority.

ABP: Yes. It is a wonderful opportunity to bring monastic life back into the diocese. It orders the life of our diocese on the foundation of ascetical prayer. I support this proposal with great enthusiasm. It is my sincere hope that the Assembly will see how important this is for the life of our diocese and vote to approve this transfer of property.

Note: The following article appeared in the latest Zoe for Life mailing.

THE DIFFICULT TIMES WE LIVE IN

During the past six months, we have all been challenged by the pandemic that has affected nearly every aspect of our lives. Simple tasks have become complex as we deal with a world in crisis, arisen through circumstances beyond our control. We all do the very best we can to protect ourselves and those around us.

Our first act of defense should be prayer. Every day should begin with it; every undertaking protected by it; every evening thankful through it. Prayer is our connection with the Almighty; we can never forget that all is permitted through His benevolent love for us, even though it may not appear to be so at the moment.

All our clergy and church leaders are struggling through the murky waters surrounding the pandemic. Those in authority in government do too. Whether we agree with their directive or

Not, We must still be obedient, and we must lift them up in prayer. They are in authority through God's provision. As Jesus told Pontius Pilate, "*You could have no power at all against Me, unless it had been given to you from above.*" (John 19:11) We must pray for them all continually.

The times are troubling. But how often have we looked back at unhappy situations in our past, and recognized that we were blessed by it? Incidences that appeared devastating at the moment, are transformed by His Grace, into blessings. Haven't we all experienced this?

"Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications prayers intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the Man, Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle—I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying—a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth. I desire therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting." (Timothy 1, 1-8)

Your prayers are powerful. When joined together, they become a very great force for good. Praying for what is right and good becomes grace.

Be His children of the Light, putting your hearts into prayer and fasting; praying that which is right will triumph. We, the faithful, are a force to be reckoned with. Remain steadfast in the fray, and be on guard, to continue to protect all that is right and good.

