

# Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

Parish Council President: Ron Royhab

V. Rev. Archpriest Andrew Bartek, Rector



Sunday, October 31, 2021

Gospel: [St. Luke 8:26-39](#)

Tone 2

Epistle: [2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9](#)

19th Sunday after Pentecost

Hieromartyr Archpriest John Kochurov / Holy Apostles Stakhys, Apellēs, Amplias, Urban, and Nárçissus of the 70. Martyr Epímakhos of Alexandria

## OCTOBER Bulletin Sponsor:

*Fr. Andrew in memory of my Grandfather Steve*

### Liturgical & Events Schedule

**Sunday, October 31**

9:10 am: Hours / Divine Liturgy / Social

**Saturday, Nov. 6**

4:00 pm Great Vespers

**NOTE: Change your clocks-back 1 hr tonight**

**Sunday, Nov. 7**

9:10 am Hours / Divine Liturgy / Social

### 40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

**Oct. 31:** Keith Lehnen / Judy Mazurik

**Nov. 7:** Protoperbyter Lawrence Barringer

**Nov 14:** Patricia

**Nov. 21:** Metropolitan Jonah from Uganda

**Nov. 28:** Regina Lomme

**Dec. 5:** Gordon Schutt / Fr. Maximos Herman

### NOVEMBER BULLETIN CANDLE SPONSORS

**Bulletin:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of his mother Dorothy

**Chandelier:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of his grandmother Mary Billy

**Altar Candles:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of Archbishop David from Alaska

**Candles on the Tomb:** (\$25) Fr. Andrew in memory of his family & friends reposed in November

**Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** (\$25) Fr. Andrew in memory of former Pastors who reposed in November.

**Candles @ the Cross:** (\$15) From Laura & Jim for the health of Betty Kovach

**Candles @ Icon of St Tikhon:** (\$15)

### OCTOBER BULLETIN CANDLE SPONSORS

**Bulletin:** (\$50): Fr. Andrew in memory of my Grandfather Steve

**Chandelier:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of my deceased relatives in October / Beth Lehnen in memory of husband Keith Lehnen

**Altar Candles:** (\$50) From Kolberg family of (Nieces & nephews) James & Rita, Michael & Kathleen, Daniel & Claire & Barbara in memory of Theodore Barniak on his First Ann. Of repose / From Jean in memory of her mother Helen Pipenur / From Basil in memory of his father Anthony

**Candles on the Tomb:** (\$25) Fr. Andrew in memory of His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius and all former pastors of this parish in Oct.

**Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** (\$25) Trudy in memory of Margaret (Mother) & Gori (Father), Fr. Justin Foster. / From Layne in memory of her Father Frank Flaherty

**Candles @ the Cross:** (\$15) Fr. Andrew for the health of Trudy on the occasion of her birthday

**Candles @ Icon of St Tikhon:** (\$15) For the health of Tim, safety of Nicholas, Tikhon and Gleice

### NOVEMBER CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE



Week Of Oct. 31	Laura
Week of Nov. 7	Natalie
Week of Nov. 14	Laura
Week of Nov. 21	Susan
Week of Nov. 28	Laura

110 E Main Street, Marblehead, OH 43440  
[www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org](http://www.holyassumptionmarblehead.org)

Rectory 419-798-4591 / Cell 570-212-8747  
[info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org](mailto:info@holyassumptionmarblehead.org)



- Saturday, December 25- Free Christmas Dinner
- Wednesday, January 5- Theophany Holy Night Supper
- Saturday, January 8- Blessing of the Lake
- Sunday, January 23, 2021 @ 1:00pm - Local March for Life in Port Clinton. The March is about an hour (about a mile) followed by a reception at Knights of Columbus. If one can't walk, prayers will be offered at the Knights until the March is completed
- Sunday, January 30- Annual Church Meeting

## 2 Corinthians 11:31-12:9 (Epistle)

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is blessed forever, knows that I am not lying. In Damascus the governor, under Aretas the king, was guarding the city of the Damascenes with a garrison, desiring to arrest me; but I was let down in a basket through a window in the wall, and escaped from his hands. It is doubtless not profitable for me to boast. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord: I know a man in Christ who fourteen years ago – whether in the body I do not know, or whether out of the body I do not know, God knows – such a one was caught up to the third heaven. And I know such a man – whether in the body or out of the body I do not know, God knows – how he was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter. Of such a one I will boast; yet of myself I will not boast, except in my infirmities. For though I might desire to boast, I will not be a fool; for I will speak the truth. But I refrain, lest anyone should think of me above what he sees me to be or hears from me. And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. And He said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.

## Expanded Joint Meeting of the Holy Synod and Metropolitan Council Concludes in Cleveland, OH

The Holy Synod of Bishops and Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America convened at the Sheraton Cleveland Airport Hotel in Cleveland, OH for their regular Fall Sessions, respectively on October 21 and October 18-19.

On Wednesday and Thursday, October 20-21, the Holy Synod and the Metropolitan Council also met in an expanded joint meeting which included Diocesan Chancellors, representatives from the three OCA Seminaries, and Monastic Superiors.

Due to the pandemic, the Metropolitan Council met in person for the first time in almost two years. His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon opened the meeting with a Moleben on Monday afternoon. During the meeting, reports were received from His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Archpriest Alexander Rentel, Chancellor, Priest Alessandro Margheritino, Secretary, and Mr. Andrew Smith, Treasurer. A number of other reports were received: the OCA Departments, the All-American Council, the Property Committee, Communications, and Pension Plan, amongst others.

The Metropolitan Council continued its discussion on important issues which included the relocation of the Chancery of the Orthodox Church in America, the sale of Westwood, the relocation of the Archives and the proposals received to the Request for Proposals issued in May 2021, and the work of a special Pension Plan subcommittee of the Metropolitan Council.

Two resolutions were unanimously approved by the Metropolitan Council to highlight and acknowledge the important work of the Orthodox Christian Fellowship and the Office of Pastoral Life. In particular, the Metropolitan Council wished to commend the Orthodox Christian Fellowship and note the importance of ministry to and with college students for the building up of the Church of Christ. The Metropolitan Council expressed its gratitude to Archpriest Alexander Cadman, outgoing chairman of the Board, for his leadership. Additionally, the Metropolitan Council wished to also commend the *Con't Page 5*

## LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE

### OCTOBER

**Saturday, 10/2:** 6 attended Vespers

**Sunday, 10/3:** 22 attended Liturgy (7 were guests) /  
13 Communicants

**Sunday, 10/10:** 166 attended liturgy (1 was a guest) /  
11 Communicants

**Saturday, 10/16:** 5 attended Vespers

**Sunday, 10/17:** 14 attended Liturgy / 9  
Communicants

**Saturday, 10/23:** 8 attended Vespers

**Sunday, 10/24:** 21 attended Liturgy (2 of which were  
visitors) / 14 Communicants

### OCTOBER: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY

**Goal Pledged per month: \$4,825**

**Oct. 3:** \$1,538

**Oct 10:** \$1,285

**Oct. 17:** \$ 623

**Oct. 24:** \$ 853

**Monthly Total:** \$4,299

### OCTOBER: OTHER INCOME

**Goal for the month in this category: \$2,670**

**Oct 3:** \$37 Candles; \$175 Vigils; \$11 Anonymous  
\$100 Donations; \$50 Bulletin; \$100 Chandelier;  
\$25 Candles on the Tomb; \$125 Altar Candles

**Oct.10:** \$35 Candles; \$80 Vigils; \$10.05 Donations;  
\$50 Altar Candles

**Oct. 17:** \$12 Candles; \$130 Vigils; \$10 Donations

**Oct. 24:** \$47 Candles; \$40 Donations; \$105 Vigils;  
\$200 Holy Day Donations; \$15 Candles @ Cross

**Monthly Total: \$1,357**

### RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS

#### OCTOBER

**Oct 3:** \$25 Support the Seminarians; \$60 Holiday  
Bureau; \$1,726 for Fr. Richter's Family

**Oct. 10:** \$25 Cemetery; \$100 Holiday Bureau; \$100  
Support our Seminarians

**Oct. 17:** \$360 Building Restoration

## VIGILS- OCTOBER 24

**Dan Elchisco (1)** For health and recovery of Marg

**Susan Guzy (4)** Special intentions

**Laura Kovach(4)** Birthday blessings to Katelyn and  
Kate, For health of Betty K., Ben F., Earl R., Mary  
P., Andrea J., Wendy R., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi  
C., Hattie K., Molly K., David M., Marguerite B.,  
Judy W., Stephanie R., Christi S., Kathie J., Doris  
D., Margi and Joe, Joe Schutt, Gordon Schutt, Safe  
travels for family, Tina & Tony, and Joe &  
Valerie. Memory eternal to my father-in-law, John,  
Uncle Alex, Mel Hurley, and Barry Millinger

**Sandy Martin (2)** In loving memory of my dad, For  
health and recovery of Marg

**Royhab (2)** for health of Stephanie Royhab and  
Marguerite

**Twarek (10)** In loving memory of mom, birthday  
10/28, In loving memory of Sloane, In loving  
memory of Judy, For the health and recovery of  
Zach, Health and recovery of Marguerite, Health  
and recovery of Jamie Philpot, Health and recovery  
of Joe Schutt and his dad, God's blessing & strength  
to Sarah, Mat and family, Health and recovery  
of Jim, Bobbie and Stephanie, Ron, Ezra, Health  
of David, Helen Lis and Tina's dad, Earl, Matt,  
Tom, Loren, Joe, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty,  
Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Chuck, Bohdi, Diane,  
Stella, Jake, Cheryl

### BUILDING / RESTORATION FUND

Our 125<sup>th</sup> 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.*



## PRAYER LIST- UPDATED OCTOBER 28

**HIERARCH'S / CLERGY:** His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman; Archbishop Benjamin from San Fransico; John Duranko (Father's home pastor); James Gleason (Father's Spiritual Father); Moses Berry; Gregory Grivna; Emilian Hutnyan; Joseph Von Klarr; Michael Kuzara; Michael Macura; Basil Stoyka, Peter Tutko; Andrew Yarvonitsky; John Zabinko / Deacon Paul Gansle, Deacon Peter Rentsch, / Sub-deacon Wylie Meath

**MATUSHKII:** Pani Patricia Duranko; Virginia Lecko; Maura McCarntey; Trudi Richter; Margaret Zabinko

**PARISHIONERS & THEIR FAMILIES:** James Bargdill (Schutt); John Beadle (Elchisco); James Billy (Fr.); Kristen (Cassell); Marguerite Bird; Maryann Cook (Twarek); Michael Glovinsky; Shirley Gresh (Glovinsky); Ben Grosik (Hritsko); Joseph Habegger (Kovach); Ellie Hritsko; Charisse (Hileman); Betty Kovach; David LaValle (Fr); Helen Lis; Child Stephanos (Loizos); Scott Lucas (Fr); David Mazurik; Child Stella Miller (Elchisco); Nancy Naiser (Royhab); Earl Rindfleisch; Helen Jean Rofkar (Elchisco); Joe Rose; Sonya Rose; Ron Royhab; Maryann Royhab; Stephanie Royhab; Christi Soski; Joe Schutt; Valerie Schutt; Steven Schirtzinger (Soski); Dacia Snider (Hileman); Doris Toth (Hritsko); Diane Tryon; Greg Tyron; Tom Twarek; Tim; the child Bodhi (Cassell); Elinor Williams (Golob); Kathryn Tryon & her unborn baby

**OTHER REQUESTS:** Child Ezra; Mark Britton (Hritsko); Ernest Cornwell (Hritsko); James Crane (Hritsko); Layne Demkosky (Fr); Paul Demkosky (Fr); Baby Finn (Cassell); Marge Dziama; Ruthe Flewelling; Ben Franklin (Kovach); Donald Gresh (Glovinsky); Andrea Joy (Kovach); Ann Marie Krynock (Timko); Maria (ABP); Jake Lipstraw (Twarek); Mark Ludvik (Guzy); Mark Masica (Kovach); Pauline Meath (Fr); Karen Muzyka (fr); Michal Richter (ABL); Sara Richter (ABL); Anika Richter (ABL); William Romanchak (Fr); Sandy Scafaria (Hileman); Janice Timko; George Timko; Loren Welch (Fr); Chuck Wiedenhof (Twarek); Sara (Jake); Chris Quotap (Fr)

**MILITARY:** Alex, Nathan Brown, Craig Cassell, Jake Ellithorpe, Jordan Fulton, Alena Grabavoy, Nicholas & Tikhon

**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



**NOTE:** ABL (Archbishop's request) / Please let FR. Andrew know who can come off the list or be put on.

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### **CATASTROPHIC RELIEF FUND**

Purpose of fund: To provide some small financial assistance to a parishioner, family member or community member who has suffered a catastrophic event.

Funds will be offered at the discretion & blessing of the Rector and the discretion of the Board.

This money can also be used for outreach programs in the parish.

Thank you and God bless!



### **CATASTROPHIC RELIEF FUND UPDATE**

Currently two (2) people have received support from this fund. One (1) person from the Diocese and one (1) person from the Village.

The fund needs replenishment. Please prayerfully consider helping to achieve that goal.

Thank You and God Bless your generosity. Thank you for all those who have contributed in the past.

## *Con't from Pg 2 Metropolitan Council*

Synaxis Program organized by the Office of Pastoral Life and thanked the Office for creating this innovative effort during the stressful times of the pandemic.

On Tuesday, October 19, at the beginning of the second day of the Fall Session of the Metropolitan Council of the Orthodox Church in America that is currently taking place in Cleveland, OH, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon intoned "Memory Eternal!" on the first anniversary of the falling asleep of His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius.

The members of the Metropolitan Council were joined by the other participants of the expanded joint meeting on Tuesday night for an evening of fellowship. The 65 attendees rejoiced in the opportunity to gather together after a long hiatus due to the pandemic. Many remarked the critical importance of gathering together in fellowship in a spirit of brotherly Christian love. All look forward to the even greater fellowship which is to take place in Baltimore, MD at the 20th All-American Council on July 18-22, 2022.

On Tuesday night, Archpriest Thomas Soroka, Product Manager for the Departments of the OCA, hosted His Beatitude, Archpriest Alexander, and a few other participants of the joint meeting, at his weekly live show Ancient Faith Today Live to discuss "The Church Working in Council."

On Wednesday morning, October 20, the Divine Liturgy was served at Saint Mary Romanian Cathedral with the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nathaniel. Archpriest Kirill Sokolov, member of the Metropolitan Council and Director of the Diaconal Vocation Program, and Deacon Peter Ilchuk, Council Manager, served the Divine Liturgy with the blessing of Metropolitan Tikhon.

The participants of the joint meeting enjoyed the warm hospitality of the Saint Mary's parish community and the Cathedral Dean, the Very Reverend Remus Grama. Following the Divine Liturgy, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon delivered an address which was also made available via Facebook Live.

Following Metropolitan Tikhon's address, the

joint meeting began its work in a workshop format. Along with fellowship, this joint meeting was intended to be a platform for the leadership of the Church to discuss and prepare for the upcoming 20th All-American Council. The participants were divided into 8 groups, each with a facilitator. Each group was assigned a topic to discuss over three sessions. The topics and related questions were considered and discussed within the framework of vocation and, particularly, along the theme of the upcoming 20th All-American Council, "Becoming Vessels of Grace." Several of the topics were inspired by data that is received every year in the Diocesan Reports. The topics were the following: Clerical Vocation, Changing Parish Demographics, Compliance and Implementation, The Place of our Seminaries, Musical Vocation, Youth Ministry, The Diocese of Alaska, and Monastic Vocation.

The groups were tasked with assessing the state of affairs of each vocation but also with finding solutions to the challenges presented by each topic. More specifically, the groups were to discuss what the All-American Council can do to support each vocation.

On Thursday morning, October 21, after three working sessions, each group was asked to present a summary of their discussion to the whole group and address questions that other joint meeting participants may have had. At the end of the session, Priest Alessandro Margheritino, Secretary of the Orthodox Church in America, thanked the entire group on behalf of Metropolitan Tikhon for the hard and diligent work during the workshop.

Inspired by the presentation on the unique reality and challenges of our mother Diocese, the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska, His Beatitude blessed a collection that raised directly from the meeting participants over \$7,000 in support of vocations in Alaska.

The expanded joint meeting concluded at noon in a spirit of gratitude and enthusiasm, giving thanks to God for the opportunity to come together and discuss various important aspects of the life of the Orthodox Church in America.

The Holy Synod of Bishops began its 2021 Fall Session on Thursday, October 21 at the conclusion of the joint meeting. Twelve out of the fourteen bishops of the Orthodox Church in America were able to attend in person. The Holy Synod will continue the Fall Session via teleconference over the next few weeks. A photo gallery can be viewed on the OCA website and Facebook page.

## NOVEMBER Celebrations

ANNIVERSARIES	BIRTHDAYS
Oct. 31- Paul & Layne Demkosky 11-1-2008: Retired Metropolitan Jonah (Consecration) 11-12-2008: Retired Metropolitan Jonah (Elected Primate) 11-13-2012: The Most Blessed Tikhon (Elected as Primate) 4- Fr. Matthew Moriak priestly ordination 11-15-1980: Archbishop Nathaniel of Detroit <p style="text-align: center;"><b>NAMESDAY</b></p> 11-6: Bishop Paul of Chicago 11-25: Retired Bishop Lazar of Ottawa 11-30: His Grace Andrei of Cleveland	31- Fr. Peter Zarynow 1- AP Fr. ohn Zdinak 7-Philip Sokolov 11- Amanda Kovach 16- Valerie Schutt 16- Madelyn (Laura's grand-daughter) 17- Cole Heffernan 17- Roddie Mazurik 18- Angie Kukay 19- Fr. Andrew Groom 19- Kristen Cassell 19- Mollie Demkosky 23- Cheyanne Welch 23- Joe Samilenko 28- Darryl Whitham 30- Kristen Basala

### READERS

**For Your Prayers**  
**Diane Tryon**  
 109 Joslyn Street  
 Arcadia, OH 44804



Sunday, Oct 31	Tim
Sunday, Nov. 7	Ron
Sunday, Nov. 14	Tim
Sunday, Nov. 21	Ron
Sunday, Nov. 28	Tim

## NOVEMBER Reposed

Oct. 31- Margaret Basala (2002) Oct. 31- George Rusincovitch (1994) 1-Peter Felenchak (1974) 2- Donald Sennich (1994) 3- Marian Glovinsky (2001) 5- Margaret Pietropolo (2009) 6- Joseph Guzy (1974) 6- William Rentz (2018) 6- Michael Chemorov (2019) 7- Desiree Flaherty ((1960) 8- Ann G Stretchberry (2003) 8- Anne Catherine Glovinsky (2004) 9- Ann Golob 10- Mary Billy (1934) (Grandmother) 11- Dorothy Bartek (2005) 11- Protodeacon Dennis Lucak (2018) 11- Matushka Helen Lucak (2018) 18- Archpriest George Timko (2000) Former Pastor 19- Evelyn Biecheler (2002) 19- Fr. John Dolhy (2006)	19- Frances (Nancy B. mom) 2019 19- Orestes Mihaly 21- Ann S. Ratica (1991) 21- Fr. Joseph Mihaly (1975) 22- Joann Carender 23- George Michael Elchisco (2016) 23- Serge Mihaly (2019) 25- Luba Johnson (2020) 26- Janet Elchisko (2018) 28- Anna Grabonsky (1972) 29-Alexander Mazur (2003) 29- His Eminence Archbishop David from Alaska Michael Guzy (1927) Mary Lou Hobson (2015) Mary Hritsko (1948)-Nov Anna Holodnak (1951)Nov John Danchisen
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## March for Life / Washington, DC January 20-22, 2022

**Sign up NOW!**

Jan. 20- Bus leaves Port Clinton and Sandusky early

Jan. 21- March for Life

Jan. 22- Return w/ special stop along the way home to St. Anthony's Chapel in Pittsburgh, PA

This trip is sponsored by the Respect Life Ministry of St. Joe's & Immaculate Conception. Reminder: Fr. Andrew is Orthodox representative.

Total Price: \$240 before 12-11 / \$290 after  
Single room: \$360 before 12-11 / \$410 after  
75% refund for cancellations before Jan. 1 / No refund after. See Fr. Andrew for additional info.

### Why go to the March for Life?

As our voice grows stronger, abortion advocates are changing the narrative and the tools to kill baby humans with:

-Abortion pills by mail

-Removing the Hyde amendment from national legislation allowing taxpayers dollars to pay for abortions

-H.R. 3755, the so called Women's Health Protection act (which would allow abortions through all 9 months of pregnancy and cripple state heartbeat and other pro-life laws) has passed the U.S. House of representatives and is

### Archbishop Paul's Travel Schedule: October 25-November 15

**Convocation at Notre Dame, South Bend, IN,**  
Thursday October 28th, 5 PM ET

**Visitation of Patriarch Bartholomew**

**St Nicholas, Pella, IA,** October 29th to 31st

**St. Elizabeth the New Martyr, St. Paul, MINN,**  
November 6th to 8th

Elevation of the Priest Richard Flom to Archpriest

## Join Three Virtual Events with the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America

The National Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America will be hosting three upcoming virtual events:

A Virtual National Youth Retreat and Tour of Saint Tikhon's Monastery, November 26, 2021, hosted by Archimandrite Sergius and the Monastery Brotherhood.

A Virtual Saint Andrew's Day Celebration, November 30, 2021, hosted by Saint Nicholas Church, Mogadore, OH.

A Virtual Tour of Bethlehem, December 12, 2021, hosted by Archpriest Ilya Gotlinsky. All proceeds from this charitable event will be donated to the Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America's United fund.

All 3 Fliers are posted on Bulletin Board Downstairs with additional information.



I am available 24/7. I do not keep formal "office hours."

Please do not sit alone while your loved one endures surgery or a medical procedure. I am happy to sit with you for as long (or as little) time as you wish.

Are you concerned about a friend or family member that is struggling during a difficult time in life? Call me! I am happy to visit with them (and/or you) for spiritual consolation and prayer.

Do you need to be anointed before any procedure or surgery.

However, I can't do any of this unless someone lets me know of the need. Call me. Please.

**Biblical Women: Esther**  
**by Father Lawrence Farley**

If ever a Biblical story cried out to be made into a Hollywood movie, it would be the story of Esther. The story has everything that Hollywood values in a movie: rags-to-riches, gorgeous scenery, sex, intrigue, a creepy villain, attempted murder, violence, plot twists, a cast of thousands, and a happy ending. It even centers upon a strong female character, a kind of proto-feminist, someone who is both strong and feminine, vulnerable but courageous. It almost seems too good to be true. Cecil B. DeMille definitely missed his chance with this one

In fact, many scholars wonder if it is completely true, and there are certainly enough details in the story to raise the eyebrows of an historical detective. Consider the following: the text (or the script) says that the king's first queen was named "Vashti", whereas history knows her as "Amestris" (Herodotus' Histories 7.61). The text also says that the king ruled over 127 satrapies, when in fact Persia contained about 20 of them. Also, Esther was chosen from other participants in a beauty pageant, when history informs us that the queen was chosen (unsurprisingly) from one of the seven noble families of Persia. Also, the text dates Mordecai from the exile of 597 B.C., which would make him about 120 years old at the time of the events related in the story.

Other improbabilities abound. Is it really likely that a queen would be chosen without inquiry about her race, immediate family, or past history (2:20)? Or that an order would go out across the empire decreeing that a wife must respect her husband (1:22)? Or that a king would appoint a commission before issuing this order (1:15f), but issue an order for an empire-wide genocide on the basis of a whim and a bribe? And that one would offer a bribe totaling about two-thirds of the revenue of the empire (3:8-9)? Or that when the king discovered his queen was Jewish, instead of simply rescinding the order, his response would be to issue another order telling the Jews that they could defend themselves, as if they wouldn't have done that anyway (8:11)? Or that the slaughter of Persians by the Jews totaled 75,000, and that the king would accept this slaughter with equanimity (9:16)? The sum total of such historical errors and improbabilities is why many scholars regard

the genre as historical romance (or political satire), and not history—though it might have been inspired by a local and limited Persian pogrom. (Or, as they say in Hollywood, "This story was inspired by true events".)

The point, of course, is not the specific genre or the historicity, but the story itself. In this story, the Jewish heroine Esther finds herself caught up in the king's project of finding himself a new wife to replace Vashti, his old wife whom he demoted and divorced. By royal decree young girls were gathered together from throughout the empire to take part in what was essentially a Persian beauty pageant, and the girl who best pleased the king would be the new queen. At length Esther was chosen as the new queen, though no one inquired about or knew her Jewish lineage or her personal history.

Esther had been looked after by her uncle Mordecai, who managed to insult and antagonize a high official in the king's court by the name of Haman. Haman was filled with rage at this insult, and so rather than simply dispose of Mordecai, he decided to get rid of him by having all the Jews killed throughout the Persian empire. He suggested this genocidal policy to the king, offering him a bribe of ten thousand talents of silver to seal the deal, and the king immediately agreed to give the order, to be carried out in a year's time. When Mordecai learned of the order, he immediately went into mourning, and asked Esther to convince the king to rescind the order. The problem was that Esther did not have access to the king unbidden, and if she dared to approach unbidden, she might be killed. But she decided to risk her life by approaching the king anyway.

Eventually she approached the king, who agreed to grant her access and not have her killed for her daring approach. After a day or so of feasting and buttering him up, she put before him her plight: she would soon be killed along with her people. Asked who would dare to harm the queen, she accused Haman. Immediately the king had Haman killed by hanging him on the gallows he had constructed for Mordecai.

But the king could still not rescind the order, and so he issued another one: the Jews were allowed to defend themselves, and in response to the attack they slaughtered 75,000 Persians, including Persians in the royal capital. In the end, Mordecai was exalted to a position of authority and the Jews everywhere rejoiced and kept the anniversary of the day as a *Con't Next Page*

## *Con't from previous Pg Biblical Women*

special feast—the feast of Purim. The story itself is of course more exciting and dramatic than this brief summary, and its ten chapters should be read to see why it is a perennial favourite. The Book of Esther's difficulty in finding even a late place in the Biblical canon should not be allowed to detract from its dramatic power.

What can we learn from the story's heroine and from the story generally? I suggest three things.

First of all, Esther is an example of loyalty to her people. Given her unforeseen and rapid advancement from unknown exile and immigrant to queen consort, it would have been easy for her to simply forget all about her unknown and politically inconvenient past. She would not have been the first person to ignore and deliberately lose contact with those who knew them before their meteoric rise to fame and influence. Yet despite the risk associated with her being a Jew, she maintained contact with her uncle, and continued to be guided by his advice. She exulted in her newfound status as Esther the Persian, but she never forgot that she was also Hadassah the Jew (2:7). For Esther, her membership in God's people superseded everything else. It dictated her fundamental identity and guided her actions.

Secondly, we see Esther's willingness to do the right thing regardless of the personal cost. She knew that she did not enjoy immediate access to the king, and that approaching him unbidden was against the law. She had not been summoned within the past month (4:11), and so it was unlikely therefore that she would be summoned in the immediate future. Bursting in unannounced might well result not just in loss of privilege and position, but also in loss of her life. Nonetheless, she said, "I will go to the king, though it is against the law, and if I perish, I perish" (4:16). Her determined willingness to sacrifice her position and possibly even her life in the service of her people sets an example of courage for us all.

Finally, the story of Esther reveals that God will protect His chosen people in all circumstances, no matter how dire things become. Though Esther is heroine of the tale, God remains the invisible

protagonist behind the scenes. He works through the plots of the ungodly and the courage of the pious to fulfill His will for the protection and survival of His people. The story of Esther is ultimately not about the fate and courage of one woman or about the necessity of piety. In fact, there is very little show of piety found in the narrative: the Name of God is not mentioned, no one is seen praying, even when doom threatens (see 4:1-3). The moral therefore is not, "Piety will be rewarded", but rather, "God's people will survive, since God protects them"—see 6:13, where even Haman's wife and friends seem to know this.

This has relevance for the Church as well, since the Church is the Messianic commonwealth of Israel. No weapon forged against the Church will ultimately prosper (Isaiah 54:17), and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. The Church is the anvil which has worn out many hammers, and it will remain until the Coming of the Lord. The story of Esther contains the promise that God will watch over His Church until the end. God will always preserve His people. The only question for us is: will we show courage in the hour of danger or not? Like Esther, let us resolve to do the right thing no matter what: if we perish, we perish. We must remember who we are and do our duty.

### **Searching the Scriptures, featuring Met. Hilarion Alfeyev**

Fri, 11/12/2021 - 08:00

In-Person and Online Event

This November, St. Vladimir's Seminary welcomes Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev and top biblical scholars to campus for a free, public event centered on Holy Scripture. Join us for the event, Searching the Scriptures, in celebration of Metropolitan Hilarion's monumental series Jesus Christ: His Life and Teaching (SVS Press).

Attendance is free, but you must register beforehand if you plan on joining whether in person or online. In-person attendance will be limited due to pandemic-related restrictions.

\*NOTE: Met. Hilarion's Keynote Lecture on November 11 is online-only. All talks scheduled November 12 may be attended online or in person. **Con't Next PG**

## ***Con't from Previous Page Searching the Scriptures***

\*\*A hotel option near campus is the Hampton Inn & Suites, 559 Tuckahoe Road, Yonkers, NY.

NOTE: You can register on-line under national OCA website. ([www.oca.org](http://www.oca.org))

This unique event brings together noted scholars from theological schools such as St. Vladimir's, Hellenic College-Holy Cross, Yale Divinity School, Asbury Theological Seminary, and others to present their latest research (learn more below). The event will kick off with a keynote lecture by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion. (Three volumes of his six-volume Jesus Christ series are available for purchase through SVS Press, with the fourth volume expected to release later this year.)

### **Schedule:**

#### **Thursday, November 11**

7:30 p.m. EST - Keynote Lecture by His Eminence, Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev (Online Only)

#### **Friday, November 12**

8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. EST – Academic Conference Lectures, Panel Discussions, Q&A, and Concluding Reception (Attend In Person or Online)

\*Meals will be served throughout the day.

\*\*A detailed schedule will be made available to registrants.

### **ABOUT THE JESUS CHRIST SERIES**

This six-volume series of books on the life and message of Jesus, in ongoing publication by St. Vladimir's Seminary (SVS) Press, has been lauded by well-known scholars including Pope Benedict XVI, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware, Craig S. Keener, and many others. It is not so much for those Christians who are rooted in holy tradition as it is for non-believers, those who doubt and who are hesitant. In the first instance, it may give some answers to those who believe that Jesus never even existed. Secondly, it is for those who believe that Jesus existed but do not believe that he is God. Thirdly, it is for those who perhaps consider themselves Christians but relate to the Gospel narratives skeptically or view the Gospels

through the prism of the criticism to which it was subjected in the works of Western specialists in the New Testament in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Ultimately, it attempts to answer the main question of what Jesus has brought to people and why he is necessary for people today.

### **ABOUT METROPOLITAN HILARION ALFEYEV**

Metropolitan Hilarion Alfeyev is the chairman of the Department of External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate. He has authored numerous works on theology and church history, and is an internationally recognized composer of liturgical music. Several of his works are available through SVS Press, including his landmark Orthodox Christianity series and Christ the Conqueror of Hell.

### **ABOUT THE ACADEMIC CONFERENCE SCHOLARS**

Garwood P. Anderson, Ph.D., is dean and professor of New Testament at Nashotah House Theological Seminary in Nashotah, WI. He has also taught as a visiting professor at Bethel Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Reformed Theological Seminary, and the West African Theological Seminary in Lagos, Nigeria. A committed teacher and frequent retreat speaker, Anderson was recognized with Asbury Theological Seminary's 2006-2007 Excellence in Teaching and Learning Award. His research interests center especially on narrative approaches to reading the gospels, the parables of Jesus, Pauline soteriology, and the theological appropriation of the New Testament.

John Barnet, Ph.D., is associate professor of New Testament at St. Vladimir's Orthodox Theological Seminary in Yonkers, NY, where he also teaches courses in biblical Greek. He completed his doctoral studies at Duke University under the direction of Professor Dan O. Via. Barnet's published writings include "Paul's Reception of the Gift from Philippi" (St. Vladimir's Theological Quarterly, 2006); Not the Righteous but Sinners: M. M. Bakhtin's Theory of Aesthetics and the Problem of Reader-Character Interaction in Matthew's Gospel (2003); and "Stewardship and the New Testament" (Good and Faithful Servant: Stewardship in the Orthodox Tradition, 2003).  
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