

CHRIST THE SAVIOR ORTHODOX CHURCH

10315 Carey Road; Berlin, MD 21811
 302-537-6055 (church) / orthodoxdelmarva.org /
 frjohn@orthodoxdelmarva.org

BULLETIN OF MARCH 24, 2019

A Warm Welcome!

We warmly welcome all our visitors! It's good to have you with us!

Baptism of Juliana Antonia Milite

Today, we have the Baptism of Juliana Antonia Milite. We congratulate her, her sponsors, Zachary and Ioana, her parents Gerald and Camelia, and the entire family! May the Lord grant them all many blessed years!



Annunciation – Monday, March 25th

On this day, we celebrate the visit to the Virgin Mary by the Archangel Gabriel. Annunciation is one of the Twelve Great Feasts, for which we seek to be present at the services. In celebration of this great event, we are permitted to eat fish.

Potluck to Follow the 6:00pm Pre-Sanctified Liturgies

Those who wish to bring food are asked to please prepare a light lenten (no meat, dairy, or fish) dish or dessert. Questions? Please see, Nissa Nancy.

Prayer Partners

Everyone is encouraged to take a prayer partner for Great Lent by selecting a name from the basket at the candle stand at the end of today's service. At Pascha, we greet our prayer partners, letting them know that we have been praying for them.



Thinking/Planning Ahead

The entire schedule of Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha is available on our website. Take off work well in advance for the High Holy Days.

The Mysteries of Confession and Communion

should be received by Orthodox Christians on a regular basis and at the very least during the Great Fast. If you have not availed yourself of these life-giving sacraments, please be sure to do so. Also, frequent communicants should confess during lenten periods, and whenever the conscience is burdened.



Did You Know?

Usually children make their first confession around age 7 or 8. If you have any questions about this, please just ask Fr. John.

Budget Facts: Weekly Collection Goal

- According to the 2019 budget, our weekly collection goal is \$2,137.
- March collections were \$1,651, \$1,186 and \$1,163.
- If you are away, please consider making up your offering.
- If you are not supporting the church, please consider starting to.

Parking Lot Expansion

Only \$755 more is needed to finish the 2017 expansion of the parking lot. The funds are required to backfill and grade the areas next to the new parking spaces and exit road. May the Lord bless!



SUNDAY, MARCH 24TH

St. Gregory Palamas

8:40a.m. Pre-Baptismal Prayers

9:00a.m. Baptismal Div. Liturgy;
Coffee Hr.

MONDAY, MARCH 25TH

Annunciation

One of the Twelve Great Feasts

9:00a.m. Vespers & Divine Liturgy

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 27TH

6:00p.m. Presanctified Liturgy;
Potluck

SATURDAY, MARCH 30TH

5:00p.m. Memorial

5:30p.m. Bible Study

6:00p.m. Great Vespers

SUNDAY, MARCH 31ST

Holy, Precious and Life-giving Cross

8:40a.m. Hours

9:00a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hr.

When through self-control we have purified our body, and when through divine love we have fixed our desire on virtue, and when we offer to God our intellect cleansed by prayer, then we will possess and see within ourselves the grace promised to the pure in heart.

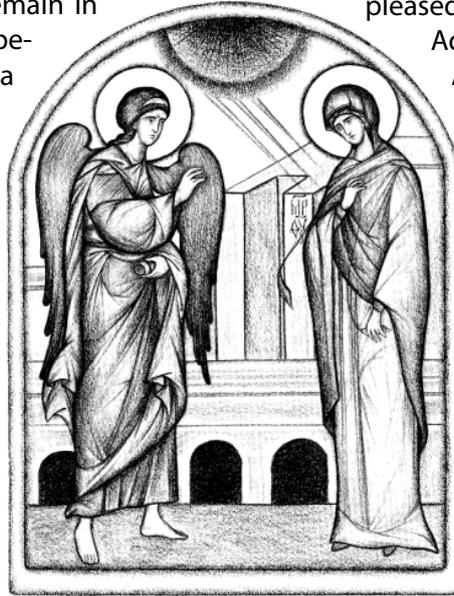
St. Gregory Palamas (+1359)

+	OPERATING			EARMARKED			ACCOUNTS		READER SCHEDULE	
	THRU 2/28	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR	THRU 2/28	THIS MONTH	THIS YEAR	OPERATING			
INCOME	16,696	3,855	20,551	6,035	145	6,180	3,892		3/24	Rdr. Nicholas Borodulia
EXPENSE	18,522	9,261	27,783	800	0	800	12,564		3/31	Megan Wilkinson
NET	-1,826	-5406	-7,232	+5,235	+145	+5,380	2,000		4/7	Rdr. George Kaloroumakis
							5,000		4/14	Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones

THE ANNUNCIATION – CELEBRATED MARCH 25TH

From the Prologue of St. Nikolai Velimirovich

When the All-Holy Virgin completed the fourteenth year after her birth and was entering her fifteenth year, after having spent eleven years of living and serving in the Temple of Jerusalem, the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could not remain in the Temple but was required to be betrothed and enter into marriage. What a great surprise to the priests was the answer of the All-Holy Virgin that she had dedicated her life to God and that she desired to remain a Virgin until death, not wanting to enter into marriage with anyone! Then, according to Divine Providence, Zacharias, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, under the inspiration of God, and in agreement with the other priests, gathered twelve unwed men from the Tribe of David to betroth the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and to care for her. She was betrothed to Joseph of Nazareth who was her kinsman. In the house of Joseph, the All-Holy Virgin continued to live as she did in the Temple of Solomon, occupying her time in the reading of Sacred Scripture, in prayer, in Godly-thoughts, in fasting and in handiwork. She rarely went anywhere outside the house nor was she interested in worldly things and events. She spoke very little to any-



one, if at all, and never without special need. More frequently she communicated with both of Joseph's daughters. When the fullness of time had come, as prophesied by Daniel the Prophet, and when God was pleased to fulfill His promise to the banished Adam and to the Prophets, the great Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber of the All-Holy Virgin and, as some priestly writers wrote, precisely at that same moment when she held open the book of the Prophet Isaiah and was contemplating his great prophecy: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son!" (Isaiah 7:13). Gabriel appeared in all of his angelic brightness and saluted her: "Rejoice, highly favored one! The Lord is with you" (St. Luke 1:28), and the rest in order as it is written in the Gospel of the saintly Luke. With this angelic annunciation and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Virgin, the salvation of mankind and restoration of all creation began. The history of the New Testament was opened by the words of the Archangel Gabriel: "Rejoice, highly favored one" This is to imply that the New Testament was to signify joy to mankind and to all created things. It is from this that the Annunciation is considered not only a great feast, but a joyful feast as well.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED LENTEN READING:

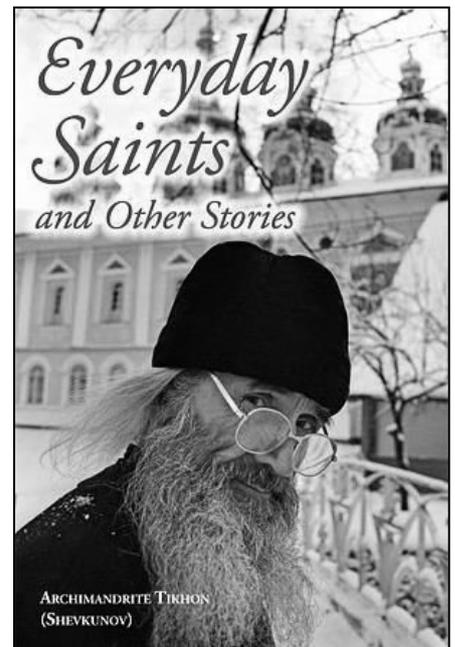
Everyday Saints and Other Stories

By Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov)

In Communist Russia in 1984, five youths from non-religious backgrounds joined a monastery. This is the story of what they experienced and some of the "everyday saints" they met. The author says, "In this book I want to tell you about this beautiful new world of mine, where we live by laws completely different from those in 'normal' worldly life—a world of light and love, full of wondrous discoveries, hope, happiness, trials and triumphs, where even our defeats acquire profound significance: a world in which, above all, we can always sense powerful manifestations of divine strength and comfort."

Originally published in Russian, *Everyday Saints* has been translated into ten languages and has sold millions of copies since its publication in late 2011. In September 2012, *Everyday Saints* received the Russian "Book of the Year Award", one of the most prestigious literary awards in Russia. You can now experience in English the grace-filled world that has charmed and blessed so many—believers and atheists alike.

Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov) is a priest-monk of the Moscow Patriarchate. He is the Abbot of the Sretensky Monastery in Moscow, the Executive Secretary of the Patriarchal Cultural Council of the Moscow Patriarchate and a member of the Presidential Council on Culture and the Arts for the Russian Federation.



CONFESSION AS A SOCIAL ACTION

Featured Article on Antiochian.org / By Jim Forest

It is impossible to imagine a healthy marriage or deep friendship without confession and forgiveness. If we have done something that damages a relationship, confession is essential to its restoration. For the sake of that bond, we confess what we've done, we apologize, and we promise not to do it again; then we do everything in our power to keep that promise.

In the context of religious life, confession is what safeguards and renews our relationship with God whenever it is damaged. Confession restores our communion with God and with each other.

It is never easy to admit to doing something we regret and are ashamed of, an act we attempted to keep secret or denied doing or tried to blame on someone else, perhaps arguing—to ourselves as much as to others—that it wasn't actually a sin at all, or wasn't nearly as bad as some people might claim. In the hard labor of growing up, one of the most agonizing tasks is becoming capable of saying, "I'm sorry."

Yet we are designed for confession. Secrets in general are hard to keep, but unconfessed sins not only never go away, but have a way of becoming heavier as time passes—the greater the sin, the heavier the burden. Confession is the only solution.

To understand confession in its sacramental sense, one first has to grapple with a few basic questions: Why is the Church involved in forgiving sins? Is priest-witnessed confession really needed? Why confess at all to any human being? In fact, why bother confessing to God, even without a human witness? If God is all-knowing, then He knows everything about me already. My sins are known before it even crosses my mind to confess them. Why bother telling God what He already knows?

Yes, truly God knows. My confession can never be as complete or revealing as God's knowledge of me and of all that needs repairing in my life.

A related question we need to consider has to do with our basic design as social beings. Why am I so willing to connect with others in every other area of life, yet not in this? Why is it that I look so hard for excuses, even for theological rationales, not to confess? Why do I try so hard to explain away my sins, until I've decided either that they're not so bad, or even that they might be seen as acts of virtue? Why is it that I find it so easy to *commit* sins, yet am so reluctant, in the presence of another, to admit to having done so?

We are social beings. The individual as autonomous unit is a delusion. The Marlboro Man—the person without community, parents, spouse, or children—exists only on billboards. The *individual* is someone who has lost a sense of connection to others or attempts to exist in opposition to others—while the *person* exists in communion with other persons. At a conference of Orthodox Christians in France a few years ago, in a discussion of the problem of individualism, a theologian confessed, "When I am in my car, I am an individual, but when I get out, I am a person again."

We are social beings. The language we speak connects us to those around us. The food I eat was grown by others. The skills passed on to me have slowly been developed in the course of hundreds of generations. The air I breathe and the water I drink is not for my exclusive use, but has been in many bodies before mine. The place I live, the tools I use, and the paper I write on were made by many hands. I am not my own doctor or dentist or banker. To the extent that I disconnect myself from others, I am in danger. Alone, I die, and soon. To be in communion with others is life.

Because we are social beings, confession in church does not take the place of confession to those we have sinned against. An essential element of confession is doing all I can to set right what I did wrong. If I stole something, it must be returned or paid for. If I lied to anyone, I must tell that person the truth. If I was angry without good reason, I must apologize. I must seek forgiveness not only from God, but from those whom I have wronged or harmed.

We are also verbal beings. Words provide a way of communicating, not only with others, but even with ourselves. The fact that confession is witnessed forces me to put into words all those ways, minor and major, in which I live as if there were no God and no commandment to love. A thought concealed has great power over us.

Confessing sins, or even temptations, makes us better able to resist. The underlying principle is described in one of the collections of sayings of the Desert Fathers:

If impure thoughts trouble you, do not hide them, but tell them at once to your spiritual father and condemn them. The more a person conceals his thoughts, the more they multiply and gain strength. But an evil thought, when revealed, is immediately destroyed. If you hide things, they have great power over you, but if



you could only speak of them before God, in the presence of another, then they will often wither away, and lose their power.

Confessing to anyone, even a stranger, renews rather than contracts my humanity, even if all I get in return for my confession is the well-worn remark, "Oh, that's not so bad. After all, you're only human." But if I can confess to anyone anywhere, why confess in church in the presence of a priest? It's not a small question in societies in which the phrase "institutionalized religion" is so often used, the implicit message being that religious institutions necessarily undermine spiritual life.

Confession is a Christian ritual with a communal character. Confession in the church differs from confession in your living room in the same way that getting married in church differs from simply living together. The communal aspect of the event safeguards it, solidifies it, and calls everyone to account—those doing the ritual, and those witnessing it.

In the social structure of the Church, a huge network of local communities is held together in unity, each community helping the others and all sharing a common task, while each provides a specific place to recognize and bless the main events in life, from birth to burial. Confession is an essential part of that continuum. My confession is an act of reconnection with God and with all the people who depend on me and have been harmed by my failings, and from whom I have distanced myself through acts of non-communication. The community is represented by the person hearing my confession, an ordained priest delegated to serve as Christ's witness, who provides guidance and wisdom that helps each penitent overcome attitudes and habits that take us off course, who declares forgiveness and restores us to communion. In this way our repentance is brought into the community that has been damaged by our sins—a private event in a public context.

"It's a fact," writes Fr. Thomas Hopko, rector of St. Vladimir's Seminary, "that we cannot see the true ugliness and hideousness of our sins until we see them in the mind and heart of the other to whom we have confessed."

A Communion-Centered Life

Attending the liturgy and receiving Communion on Sundays and principal feast days has always been at the

heart of Christian life, the event that gives life a eucharistic dimension and center point. But Communion—receiving Christ into ourselves—can never be routine, never something we deserve, no matter what the condition of our life may be. For example, Christ solemnly warns us against approaching the altar if we are in a state of enmity with anyone. He tells us, "Leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift" (Matt 5:24). In one of the parables, He describes a person who is ejected from the wedding feast because he isn't wearing a wedding garment. Tattered clothing is a metaphor for living a life that reduces conscience to rags (Matt ch. 22).

Receiving Christ in Communion during the liturgy is the keystone of *living* in communion—with God, with people, and with creation.

Christ teaches us that love of God and love of neighbor sum up the Law. One way of describing a serious sin is to say it is any act which breaks our communion with God and with our neighbor.

It is for this reason that examination of conscience—if necessary, going to confession—is part of preparation for Communion. This is an ongoing process of trying to see my life and actions with clarity and honesty—to look at myself, my choices, and my direction as

known by God. The examination of conscience is an occasion to recall not only any serious sins committed since my last confession, but even the beginnings of sins.

Conscience is an inner faculty that guides us in making choices that align us with God's will, and that accuses us when we break communion with God and with our neighbor. Conscience is a reflection of the divine image at the core of each person. In *The Sacred Gift of Life*, Fr. John Breck points out that "the education of conscience is acquired in large measure through immersing ourselves in the ascetic tradition of the Church: its life of prayer, sacramental and liturgical celebration, and scripture study. The education of our conscience also depends upon our acquiring wisdom from those who are more advanced than we are in faith, love, and knowledge of God."

Conscience is God's whispering voice in us calling us to a way of life that reveals God's presence and urges us to refuse actions that destroy community and communion.

