

# Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

Albanian Archdiocese - OCA

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Rev. Nicholas Dellermann – Rector (860-861-7468)

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 27**

**12th Sunday after Pentecost**

**Ven. Pimen the Great**

**Saint Phanourius**

**Tone 3  
Troparion  
(Resurrection)**

*Let the heavens rejoice!  
Let the earth be glad!  
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.  
He has trampled down death by death.  
He has become the first born of the dead.  
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,  
and has granted to the world  
great mercy.*

**Tone 8  
Troparion  
(St. Pimen)**

*By a flood of tears thou didst make the desert  
fertile,  
and thy longing for God brought forth fruits in  
abundance.  
By the radiance of miracles thou didst illumine  
the whole universe.  
Our holy Father Pimen, pray to Christ our God to  
save our souls!*

**Tone  
Kontakion  
(Resurrection)**

*On this day Thou didst rise from the tomb, O  
Merciful One,  
leading us from the gates of death.  
On this day Adam exults as Eve rejoices;  
with the Prophets and Patriarchs  
they unceasingly praise the divine majesty of Thy  
power.*

**Tone 4  
Kontakion  
(St. Pimen)**

*The remembrance of thine illustrious struggles  
delights the souls of the devout today,  
O Pimen, our venerable father, wise in God.*

**✠ Prokeimenon ✠**

**Tone 3 (Resurrection)**

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! / Sing praises to our King, sing praises! (Ps. 46:6)

V. Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy! (Ps. 46:1)



## ✧ The Epistle Reading ✧

### **1 Corinthians 15:1-11**

Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you – unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures, and that He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve. After that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain to the present, but some have fallen asleep. After that He was seen by James, then by all the apostles. Then last of all He was seen by me also, as by one born out of due time. For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me. Therefore, whether it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed.

### **I Korinthianëve 15:1-11**

Edhe tani, o vëllezër, ju tregoj ungjillin që ju ungjillëzova, të cilin edhe e morët, në të cilin edhe qëndroni. Me anë të tij edhe shpëtoni, po ta mbani atë, siç jua ungjillëzova, veç në besuat më kot. Sepse ju dhashë më përpara atë që mora edhe unë, se Krishti vdiq për mëkatet tona, sipas Shkrimeve; edhe se u varros, edhe se u ngjall të tretën ditë, sipas Shkrimeve; 5 edhe se iu duk Kefait, pastaj të Dymbëdhjetëve. Pastaj iu duk më tepër se mbi pesëqind vëllezërve njëherësh, prej të cilëve më të shumtët rrojnë deri sot, por disa kanë fjetur. Pastaj iu duk Jakovit, pastaj gjithë apostujve. Edhe më në fund nga të gjithë m'u shfaq edhe mua, si një të dështuari. Sepse unë jam më i vogli i apostujve, edhe s'jam i denjë të quhem apostull, sepse përndoqa Kishën e Perëndisë. Po me hirin e Perëndisë jam ai që jam; edhe hiri i atij që është tek unë nuk u bë i kotë, por u mundova më tepër se ata të gjithë; edhe jo unë, po hiri i Perëndisë që është bashkë me mua. Qoftë unë pra, qoftë ata, kështu predikojmë dhe kështu besuat.

### **1-е Коринфянам 15:1-11**

Напоминаю вам, братия, Евангелие, которое я благовествовал вам, которое вы и приняли, в котором и утвердились, которым и спасаетесь, если преподанное удерживаете так, как я благовествовал вам, если только не тщетно уверовали. Ибо я первоначально преподавал вам, что и [сам] принял, [то] [есть], что Христос умер за грехи наши, по Писанию, и что Он погребен был, и что воскрес в третий день, по Писанию, и что явился Кифе, потом двенадцати; потом явился более нежели пятистам братьев в одно время, из которых большая часть доныне в живых, а некоторые и почили; потом явился Иакову, также всем Апостолам; а после всех явился и мне, как некоему извергу. Ибо я наименьший из Апостолов, и недостойн называться Апостолом, потому что гнал церковь Божию. Но благодатию Божиею есмь то, что есмь; и благодать Его во мне не была тщетна, но я более всех их потрудился: не я, впрочем, а благодать Божия, которая со мною. Итак я ли, они ли, мы так проповедуем, и вы так уверовали.

### **Tone 3**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped; let me never be put to shame! (*Ps. 30:1a*)

V. Be a God of protection for me, a house of refuge in order to save me! (*Ps. 30:2b*)



## 🌀 The Gospel Reading 🌀

### **Matthew 19:16-26**

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.”

### **Mattheut 19:16-26**

Edhe ja tek i erdhi pranë njëri, e i tha: Mësues i mirë, ç’të mirë të bëj që të kem jetë të pasosur? Edhe ai i tha: Pse më thua i mirë? Asnjë s’është i mirë, veç një, Perëndia. Po nëse do të hysh në jetë, ruaj urdhërimet. I thotë: Cilat? Edhe Jisui i tha: “Mos vrit; mos shkel kurorën; mos vidh; mos jep dëshmi të rreme; ndero atin dhe nënën”; edhe “Të duash të afërmin tënd si veten tënde”. Djaloshi i thotë: Të gjitha këto i kam ruajtur që në rininë time, çfarë më mungon tjetër? Jisui i tha: Në do të bëhesh i përsosur, shko e shit pasurinë tënde, edhe jepua të varfërve; edhe do të kesh thesar në qiell, edhe eja e ndiqmë pas. Por djaloshi kur dëgjoi këtë fjalë, iku me keqardhje, sepse kishte shumë prona. Edhe Jisui u tha nxënësve të tij: Me të vërtetë po ju them juve, se një i pasur mezi do të hyjë në mbretërinë e qiejve. Edhe përsëri po ju them juve: Më lehtë është të shkojë gamilja nëpër vrimën e gjilpërës, se të hyjë i pasuri në mbretërinë e Perëndisë. Edhe nxënësit e tij, kur dëgjuan, habiteshin fort e thoshin: Vallë, cili mund të shpëtojë? Po Jisui hodhi sytë mbi ta edhe u tha: Për njerëzit kjo është e pamundur, ndërsa për Perëndinë të gjitha janë të mundshme.

### **От Матфея 19:16-26**

И вот, некто, подойдя, сказал Ему: Учитель благий! что сделать мне доброго, чтобы иметь жизнь вечную? Он же сказал ему: что ты называешь Меня благим? Никто не благ, как только один Бог. Если же хочешь войти в жизнь [вечную], соблюди заповеди. Говорит Ему: какие? Иисус же сказал: не убивай; не прелюбодействуй; не кради; не лжесвидетельствуй; почитай отца и мать; и: люби ближнего твоего, как самого себя. Юноша говорит Ему: всё это сохранил я от юности моей; чего еще недостает мне? Иисус сказал ему: если хочешь быть совершенным, пойди, продай имение твое и раздай нищим; и будешь иметь сокровище на небесах; и приходи и следуй за Мною. Услышав слово сие, юноша отошел с печалью, потому что у него было большое имение. Иисус же сказал ученикам Своим: истинно говорю вам, что трудно богатому войти в Царство Небесное; и еще говорю вам: удобнее верблюду пройти сквозь игольные уши, нежели богатому войти в Царство Божие. Услышав это, ученики Его весьма изумились и сказали: так кто же может спастись? А Иисус, возрев, сказал им: человеку это невозможно, Богу же всё возможно.

### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



PRAYERS	Birthdays, Names-days, & Anniversaries	SCRIPTURE THIS WEEK
<i>For Those Who Have Fallen Asleep</i>		<b>Church Lectionary</b>
<p>Newly Departed Nikoli, Newly Departed Alex, Newly Departed James,</p> <p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the departed]</i> Again we pray for those who have lost their lives because of the war in Ukraine: that the Lord our God may look upon them with mercy, and give them rest where there is neither sickness, or sorrow, but life everlasting.</p>	<p><i>August 27 – September 2</i> Al Antony (B) Daniel Drobish (B) RJ Krimetz (B) Chris Schaeffer (B) Ilia Rubis (B) Janet Neis Drobish (B) David Lane (B)</p>	<p><u>Today</u> 1 Corinthians 15:1-11 Matthew 19:16-26</p>
<i>For Those Who Are Sick And Home-bound</i>	<b>Seven-Day Vigil Candles</b>	<u>Monday</u>
<p>Virginia, Denise, Olvian, Marie, James, Alexandra, Andrew, Christina, Louise, Porter, Alvin, Tracy, Kathy, Andrew, Maria, Helen, John, Nina, Sophia, Jim, Spresha, Kristin, Niko, Spiro, Angeliki, Melod, Olgay, Ruth, Naomi, Terry, Naomi, Annette, Tatiana, Aleena, Lester Jr., Natalia, Otari, Lasha, Fr. Nikolas, Imani, Gabriel, Aaron, Jordany, Nassan, Alqviadhi, Marina, Sophia, Fr. Maxwell,</p>	<p>Llukan Dylgjeri – health Michael Mogilevich - health Niko &amp; Kristin Chochelli – Travel</p> <p>Seven-Day Vigil Candles are used for the Eternal Light that hangs above the Royal Doors and are often placed in front of the icons of Christ or the Birth-giver of God. If you would like to donate a Seven-Day Vigil Candle, Please include the name or names of those for whom the candle is donated, and we will place them in this section for special prayers.</p>	<p>Galatians 5:22-6:2 Luke 6:17-23 2 Corinthians 8:7-15 Mark 3:6-12</p>
<i>Prayers In General</i>		<u>Tuesday</u>
<p>The community of Ss. Peter &amp; Paul Miami, Fr. Dennis and his family, Fr. Ioan, Christian, Michael, Erica, Kaida, DuDash family, Michael, Robert, Ally, Steve, Jake and Amanda and their children, Katherine, Ron, Anthony, Volodymyr, Nick, Sophia, Michael, Rafael, Bob, Barbara, Sandra, Enoch, John, Victoria, Melenie, Grace, Michael, Barbara, Giorgi, Molly, Jim, Chloe, Alma-Anastasia, Marianthi, Marsha, Ann,</p>		<p>Acts 13:25-33 Mark 6:14-30 2 Corinthians 8:16-9:5 Mark 3:13-19</p>
<p><i>[To be inserted after the petition for the living]</i> Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation, for those who are suffering, wounded, grieving, or displaced because of the war in Ukraine.</p>	<b>COFFEE HOUR</b>	<u>Wednesday</u>
<p><i>[Petitions at Augmented Litany]</i> Again we pray for a cessation of the hostilities against Ukraine, and that reconciliation and peace will flourish there, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.</p>	<p><u>August</u> 27 Tina Marlos Tsiadis &amp; Kostandin Memorial</p>	<p>2 Corinthians 9:12-10:7 Mark 3:20-27</p>
<p>We give thanks to You, O Lord our God, Who in Your mercy and providential care, has called forth Archimandrite NIKODHIM to become a shepherd of wisdom and strength for our Albanian Archdiocese. We ask that You Bless Father NIKODHIM as he readies himself to become our future archpastor so he may:</p>	<p><u>September</u> 03 Bacon Memorial 10 Murianka Memorial 17 Douris Memorial 24 Tish Deslogese</p>	<u>Thursday</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• care for our spiritual well-being,</li> <li>• unite us in a zealous confession of our holy faith,</li> <li>• commit us in loving service to one another in bright witness to the glory of Your holy Name.</li> </ul>		<p>2 Corinthians 10:7-18 Mark 3:28-35</p>
<p>Hear us and have mercy.</p>	<p>Coffee Hour is a wonderful chance for us to get together to break bread and spend time with each other, to celebrate those whom we have held memorials for, and to come together as the family of God outside of worship. To sign up, to host a coffee hour, contact Fr. Nicholas or Donna Bacon.</p>	<u>Friday</u>
		<p>Colossians 3:12-16 Matthew 11:27-30 2 Corinthians 11:5-21 Mark 4:1-9</p>
		<u>Saturday</u>
		<p>1 Corinthians 2:6-9 Matthew 22:15-22</p> <p><b><u>Reading the Bible in a Year</u></b></p> <p>Aug 27: Grk Esther 1-4 Aug 28: Grk Esther 5-8 Aug 29: Grk Esther 9-12 Aug 30: Grk Esther 13-16 Aug 31: Wis Sol 1-4 Sept 01: Wis Sol 5-8 Sept 02: Wis Sol 9-12</p>

## LIFE HACKS FOR TIRED LAYMEN

Fr. Anthony Rusakevich

How do modern Christians become lukewarm and why is prayer sometimes fruitless?

Many Orthodox readers who have paid attention to the problems of modern spirituality in spiritual literature have probably encountered the discussion of such a phenomenon as clergy burnout. Oddly enough, the problem of professional burnout (chronic stress leading to emotional exhaustion and moral fatigue), which is characteristic of managers and white-collar employees who live in big cities, is experienced by the clergy as well. It is worth noting that in the priestly ministry the issue of burnout is more profound, as it affects certain existential levels and meanings. It is associated with a loss of motivation and a permanent sense of monotonous spiritual routine. Eventually such a spiritual state results in an identity crisis. Naturally, this problem is the subject of separate and detailed discussions, but it leads us to interesting thoughts about the phenomenon of burnout among Orthodox laymen.

An Orthodox Christian who has been confessing his faith for two or three decades may begin to feel the futility of prayer. It may seem to him that the Lord no longer hears him and no longer responds to his requests. Confessing the same sins (which are most often a consequence of a person's character and temperament) for decades can also lead him to a joyless awareness of the absurdity of what happens to him or his inability to truly repent and reform. Thus, the monotonous spiritual routine can affect the degree and meaning of a Christian's faith, resulting in a crisis of faith. If this is not laymen burnout, then what is it? Again, we repeat, it is a profound problem that has no easy and unambiguous solutions. By the way, all spiritual imperfections and shortcomings, sins and passions take a long time strenuous efforts to heal. It is no coincidence that the image of a spiritual ladder associated with a gradual and complex process of ascent is so popular in Patristic ascetic literature.

Thus, since there are no ready-made solutions to this fundamental spiritual problem, at least some preventive measures can be taken that will protect us against a possible crisis of faith, "laymen burnout". These rules are quite simple. Let's call them "life hacks for tired laymen".

First, don't develop only the soul—don't forget about your heart and intellect. Let me remind you about the banal things that the Orthodox Christian tradition is not a mere religion, although it may seem so to some. Orthodoxy is a very rich tradition consisting of theology, worship services, ascetic life, works of mercy, the art of iconography, and a host of other things. However, unfortunately, many modern Orthodox Christians associate our confession with only church services—true, they are beautiful, solemn and otherworldly—but by doing this these Christians denigrate this rich spiritual tradition.

For example, drop in at the church shop of your parish; you will see a minimum of theological and Patristic literature and will mostly find akathists and prayer-books. Meanwhile, back in the 1990s students of secular universities would enjoy reading the very complicated theological prose of St. Maximus the Confessor, or study the early Church from *The History of the Church* by Eusebius of Caesarea. This reading brought them to Christ. It is quite logical that by restricting yourself to attending the Sunday Liturgy and reading the akathist and the canon to your favorite saint privately you will reduce your faith to a monotonous routine. But if on the contrary you start reading commentaries on the Holy Scriptures daily, study beautiful early Church art, do good deeds, and exercise Christian social responsibility, you are very likely to avoid burnout. Nourish both the heart and the mind.

Secondly, learn to praise the Lord in your prayers, and not to ask for something from Him. Our faith often turns into a monotonous routine because we turn to God mechanically and automatically. Since in the Church service we see a certain instrument of influence on God (we constantly ask for something—that is, prayer becomes a way of deriving benefits), we subconsciously trivialize and simplify the service. The very rich liturgical tradition of Orthodoxy, which includes a huge number of feasts and commemorations of saints and wonderworking icons, poetically reflecting theological depths and consisting of hundreds and thousands of hymns inspired by God, in the mind of an average parishioner is reduced to the morning and the evening prayers and several "effective" akathists. In such a situation, it is very easy to convince yourself that you know everything about Orthodoxy. The world of such an Orthodox Christian revolves around an extremely limited set of rites and prayers, which may subsequently cause a sense of spiritual dissatisfaction.

If you don't try to reflect on the content of Church hymns, but only look for useful patterns of "effective" prayers

and the fulfillment of your prayer requests (for well-being, healing, etc.), then you are more likely to encounter insurmountable temptations of faith.

Thirdly, keep in mind that there is nothing more harmful than spiritual stagnation. Laypeople often turn to the clergy with such a complaint: “When I was a convert, prayer was fervent and sincere, and now, being an experienced Christian, I feel emptiness and the futility of my petitions to God. Why is this happening?” Where is the logic here? After all, a church-going and experienced Christian should be much more skilled in prayer than a neophyte or a nominal Christian. The whole point is that Christianity offers us an endless path of moral and spiritual perfection. There are no prolonged stops and limits on this path. However, damaged human nature often hinders progress on this path, inclining us to make simpler choices rather than the right ones. Why do neophytes get more satisfaction (some emotional, psychophysical “feedback”) from prayer, from fasting for many days, from participating in the sacraments? Because this whole universe of the Orthodox way of life is new to them. Neophytes are in an unusual state of a spiritual challenge and gaining mastery over themselves, that is why they receive such emotional and spiritual reward from prayer, services and fasting.

Meanwhile, experienced Christians have already developed a skill, and many of their actions are stereotyped: the lists of sins that they bring to confession are very repetitive, they choose a nice vegan diet to feel comfortable throughout Lent, etc. And it is not a subjective fault—it’s just our human nature: to simplify, standardize and adapt to the situation—so they lose the effect of novelty and spiritual joy. However, if an experienced church Christian constantly sets himself new tasks in the spiritual sphere (for example, to practice ascetic life; there are many options in this field), then he will avoid the stage of spiritual burnout.

So, dear friends, if you stick to one of the proposed rules (which is not as simple as it initially seems), you greatly reduce the risk of burnout. May God help us!

Fr. Anthony Rusakevich

Translation by Dmitry Lapa

Sretensky Monastery

8/17/2023

<https://orthochristian.com/155483.html>



## **The True Self Versus The False Self**

Reformed theology focuses on forensic justification, whereas the mystical theology of the Orthodox Church focuses on restoration to God through healing of the darkened soul alienated from Him. These are two very different models, but not really equal, because one can have faith in Christ’s sacrifice, but still not be healed and restored.

Our restorative healing is not about some terrible legal “remedy” which requires that God’s righteous wrath, aimed at our depravity, be “satisfied” by the substitutionary death of His Son. Rather, it is about the cleansing of the nous that has been darkened, and thus restoring us to health and wholeness. The nous in communion with God is all about our real self, and is the true seat of our personhood. The ego, which is nothing but the ultimate disconnect from our Creator, is the false self.

With love in Christ,

Abbot Tryphon

<https://abbottryphon.com/nous-versus-ego-5/>

## June/July Events

### August

- 20 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 23 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 27 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy (Education Sunday)
- 30 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

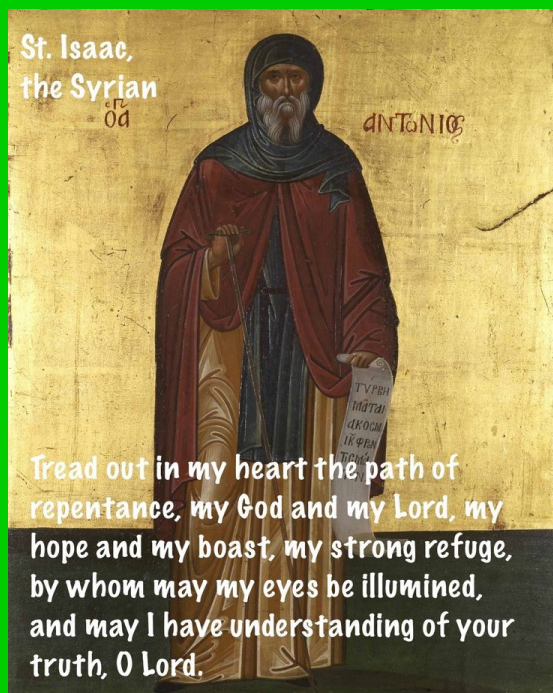
### September

- 03 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 06 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 08 – 9:00am Divine Liturgy  
*Feast of the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos*  
6:00pm Fun Night
- 10 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 13 – 7:00pm Vespers Liturgy  
*Feast of the Exultation of the Precious Cross*
- 17 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy
- 20 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets
- 24 – 10:00am Divine Liturgy (Education Sunday)
- 27 – 7:15pm Bible Study via GoogleMeets

Can't join us in person?

We stream our services on our YouTube Channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@sspeterpaulorthodoxchurch01810>



## **The Time is Now to Get Young Students the Supplies They Need to Learn!**

***WE HAVE REACHED HALF OF OUR \$600 MINIMUM GOAL! THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!***

The upcoming school year is right around the corner, but there is still time for you to join our Back-to-School Backpack and Supply Kit Drive!

So far, 39 parishes across the country have donated over 960 supply kits and 1,960 backpacks so children can have all that they need to be successful in school.

With child poverty rates hovering at about 17% nationwide, chances are that you or your kids cross paths with a child whose family struggles to provide these essential items.

By joining FOCUS North America's Back-to-School Backpack and Supply Kit Drive, you can be the answer to prayer for a young student, but the time to act is now! September 1st is the deadline for making an impact in the life of a child.

Please consider a donation to the FOCUS (Fellowship of Orthodox Christians United to Serve) Back to School Backpack Program. We hope to assist students in the School District of Philadelphia by providing them with new backpacks filled with school supplies. A donation of \$25 will cover the cost of 1 backpack filled with supplies.

You may donate by a check to Ss. Peter and Paul Orthodox Church with "2023 Backpack Program" written on the memo line, or cash, either of which may be given to Tina Tsiadis, kmarlos@me.com or 330-933-6987. Donations will be accepted until September, 2023. Donations can also be made through Venmo, just make sure that they are marked for the Backpack Program.

## **MIRACULOUS HEALING BY HAWAIIAN IVERON ICON AT ST. TIKHON'S MONASTERY**

Waymart, Pennsylvania, August 24, 2023

The Lord Jesus Christ and the Most Holy Theotokos worked an amazing miracle of healing through the myrrh-streaming Hawaiian Iveron Icon of the Mother of God during its visit to St. Tikhon's Monastery in Waymart, Pennsylvania in May. A man named Daniel tells the story of how he suffered from a degenerative brain disease for two years, which caused him his health, his job, and his ability to spend time with his family. He felt he was on the brink of death.

Then his wife suggested that they travel to St. Tikhon's Monastery during its annual Memorial Day Pilgrimage to venerate the wonderworking Hawaiian Iveron Icon that was present for the pilgrimage, thanks to its guardian Fr. Nectarios Yangston.

Daniel's beautiful story was posted by St. Tikhon's Monastery:

*In May of 2023, my wife suggested that we visit St. Tikhon's Monastery to see the Iveron Icon of the Mother of God of Hawaii. I had been sick for two years with an as yet undiagnosed degenerative brain disease, and she had heard stories of miraculous healings associated with this icon.*



*Truth be told, I wasn't expecting what happened that day. For two long years, I prayed and prayed for deliverance from my illness only for my symptoms to worsen. It began in the spring of 2021, when I began to have strange incidents. It started with memory issues, which grew to the point where I wouldn't recognize the faces of people I've known my whole life. My heart rhythm became dysregulated, and my body grew weak. I lost consciousness on the job in March of 2022, and lost the career around which I had planned my future. From there, my mental health spiraled out of control. I echoed the words of Job in his misery and cursed the very day of my birth. Several times I tried to return to my labor union, and each time I was met with the report that I was too much of a liability risk. I took to drinking, which only served to worsen my mental and physical anguish.*

*Finally, after a long year of dead ends and hospital visits and the deaf ears of my doctor, I had found a cocktail of medications and supplements that seemed to keep me upright. I had convinced the union to let me return to work and in November of 2022 I was working for an electrical contractor again. But by January, I noticed that the medications and the supplements were no longer working. I could go to work, but as time wore on I was barely making it through the day and I had nothing left to give my family when I*

*came home. New symptoms were arising too. My speech was becoming impaired, as was my ability to form conscious thought. I transferred to a much less physical job, assuming it was just the workload of a construction site that was getting to me. But even behind a desk, my symptoms progressed at an increasingly rapid rate. At church, I was unable to stand or even make the sign of the cross most Sundays. On more than one occasion, I was unable to walk to the chalice to receive the Body and Blood of our Lord. On one particularly bad episode, I needed to be carted down to the church undercroft in a wheelchair for coffee hour.*

*So it was that in the springtime of 2023, I had been through the loss of my career and my health twice over. By this point, I was resigned to being a stay-at-home Dad, though I began to pass out and fall with greater frequency and was ultimately unable to do even that. I was unable to even eat enough because I couldn't tell when I was hungry and I couldn't remember when it was time to do so. I was certain I was going to die. Suddenly the loss of my career seemed trivial, because what awaited me was the dread judgment seat of Christ, before which I was certain I had no defense. My only thought was how I would be able to sufficiently repent in time for my death. The anxiety was alleviated on the feast of Christ's Ascension, when after the Liturgy I was struck with a profound and very near awareness of our Lord's love for us, including even me. I felt ready to go to my death with peace. My heart then echoed the words of St. Porphyrios of Kavsokalyvia: "Whatever You want, my Lord, whatever Your love desires; place me wherever Your love wishes. I abandon myself to Your love. If You want to place me in hell, then do so, only don't let me lose Your love."*

*We arrived at St. Tikhon's Monastery around midday. I don't recall much of the drive down, or the service itself, because my memory was so rapidly deteriorating. What I do remember was the massive crowd of people, all of us bringing our diseases and afflictions to the Lord. I thought this must have been what it was like to be in the crowds surrounding Jesus as He walked from town to town, all of us hoping to just touch the fringe of His garment in the hope that we might receive His blessing. My strength was waning with every step I took towards the icon of our beloved Theotokos. I almost gave up, and likely would have if not for the kindness of a seminarian named Theodore who helped me press on. I venerated the icon of our Lady, in awe at the miracle of the myrrh streaming from the image, then turned to my Archbishop to receive the anointing. As soon as he made the sign of the cross on my head with the holy myrrh, I was changed. My first thought was that I was desperately hungry. This was noteworthy to me, because I had been for months unable to feel hungry or remember to eat. I walked away still leaning on my cane, because I was not expecting to have my body restored, but the cane was more of a hindrance than a help because my legs were walking properly. By the time we arrived back home, my mind was clear and I carried my cane in one hand and my daughter in the other into the house. I felt like I was 18 again. Over the next week, I felt my body get stronger and stronger. I haven't touched the cane since. I haven't needed any of my medications since.*

*I was dying, and I have been given a new life. Christ is risen and is truly in our midst. Glory to Him forever!*

*Daniel*