

The Scroll

Sunday Services

Matins.....9:00 a.m.
Church School9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy10:00 a.m.

Saturday Services

Confession.....4:30 p.m.
Great Vespers.....5:00 p.m.

Church Contacts

Fr. Aaron Warwick, Pastor
fraaron@stmarywichita.org

Fr. John Baize, Attached
jbaize3@yahoo.com

Frankie Jones Admin. Asst
office@stmarywichita.org

Curt Ratliff, Maintenance
janitor@stmarywichita.org

Phone (316) 264-1576

Facebook
www.facebook.com/stmarywichita

The Scroll
Brett Parrott
parrott.brett.117@gmail.com

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St. Mary Orthodox Christian Church
344 S. Martinson, Wichita, KS 67213
Very Rev. Fr. Aaron Warwick
Website: www.stmarywichita.org

From Metropolitan Saba
YOUR GRACE TRANSFORMS THE UNIVERSE,
PART ONE

August 16th, 2024



The Bible says, "Your spirit renews the face of the earth" (Ps. 104:30). Into what does God transform the world? How does He transform it? What is the nature of this transformation? What is its purpose? These questions and others go to the core of Christian theology, which calls for the salvation of humanity along with the universe and everything in it.

In order to approach this matter from an Orthodox perspective, we must talk a bit about the creation and fall of man, because the concept of fallenness is the point of departure in the theology of transformation—that is, "transfiguration."

To begin with, it must be noted that Orthodox theology prefers to use this term: "the transfiguration of the world." This action is derived from the Transfiguration event, "the Transfiguration of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ on Mount Tabor." The transformation of the world by the Spirit of God means the restoration of the world to the deifying grace of God—the restoration of the world to its original life, which was lost through the Fall, when it lost the divine grace. Restoration of God's grace is the world's transformation into the fullness of divine light, just as happened with Christ on Mount Tabor: "And He was transfigured before them, and His clothes became dazzling white, such as no fuller on earth could bleach them" (Mark 9:2-3).

The Creation of Man

"God created man in His own image and likeness." The image is, in short, that something of God which is present in man. Man is called to develop this image until it reaches its divine likeness.

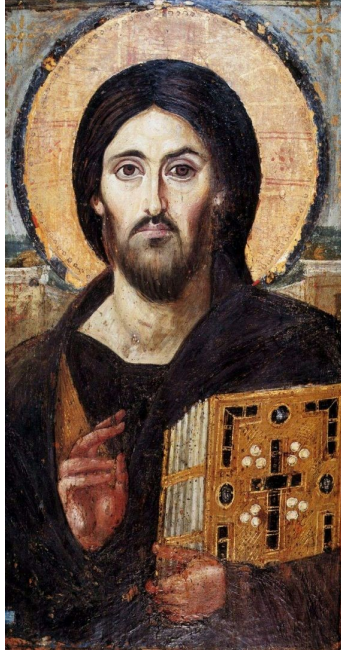
In the Fall, man lost this potential, as the divine image was distorted in him, and consequently the soul of man was darkened and was no longer able, not only to grow spiritually, but also to know God.

Man, according to the Bible, is the king and priest of Creation. Did not God entrust him with the task of naming the animals? Didn't He give him authority over what is in Creation, including the birds of the sky and the fish of the sea? As is often the case when a king is corrupt, corruption spreads throughout his kingdom. Thus, Creation was corrupted by the corruption of man. Harmony has been lost, enmity has spread, and devastation has prevailed. This is in nature. As for man, his passions turned into the opposite of what God wanted.

A terrible schism occurred in man involving a schism within himself, a schism between him and others, and a schism between him and the natural world. God gave him freedom, but he refused it to other human beings. And whereas God gave him power to make the world and give it a new meaning—a new freshness again—he misused it to distort and destroy the world.

Let us take love, for example. Instead of man loving God, he loves himself. Selfishness and the sins and vices it generates have dominated him. Accordingly, man began to use nature and his fellow man for his own benefit. And you all know the countless evils man has caused, and still causes, in this regard.





Salvation in Christ

When a person knows that a loved one has become unable to walk, he himself goes to him. This is what God did to humanity in Christ. Man is no longer able to turn to God, because of his fall, so God Himself came to him. This is what Christian theology has been repeating since the second century: "God became a man so that man might become a god." The Fall made the goal of Creation unattainable, so God came to restore "His image that was lost from ancient times," according to the description of a hymn in the Orthodox funeral service.

In Christ, the possibility of deification was restored again, and the way to the Kingdom was opened. Rather, the Kingdom has become a living reality, from now on, even if it is only "as in a mirror" (1 Corinthians 13:12). The workshop for the reconstruction of the world, so to speak, has started and continues to operate since the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ. And it will continue with Christians until the Last Day. Until then, the world will have a foretaste of the Heavenly Kingdom, hoping to achieve it fully when we meet God face to face, on the Last Day. Then heaven and earth will pass away, because a new heaven and a new earth will succeed them. Until that time, the Church seeks to make the earth and what is on it a divine kingdom as much as possible.

The Beginning of the Journey

Orthodox theology teaches us that this journey must begin with the human being, not any human being but only an immaculate, purified, and holy person—those who seek to restore their passions to their original state, bypassing the effects of the Fall every day, until the Holy Spirit dwells in them, so that they shine with the light of God and radiate it upon the earth and upon everything on it.

In other words, the baptized believer begins to prepare himself, soul and body, to be fit for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. With this, he restores the divine image, reshapes it, develops it, and brings it to the divine ideal, achieving the purpose of his creation.

Therefore, Orthodox theology emphasizes the three degrees of holiness: "purification, illumination, and deification." This emphasis stems from its postulation that the glory of this lost world can only be restored by the light of God. That is why its liturgy constantly and tirelessly emphasizes repentance. For there is no purification without repentance, and no enlightenment without purification. For how would God live in homes that are not suitable for Him?

So the way is to reveal the schism that has happened. In other words, the way is the restoration of unity and communion on the human level—within himself, with his neighbor, and with nature.

Our Salvation and Our Neighbor

Will the world be transfigured while hatred is lurking in our souls? Of course not. For a step towards fellow humans is simultaneously a step towards God and oneself. "Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or a sister is a liar. For whoever does not love his brother and sister, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen" (1 John 4:20).

The circle of St. Dorotheos of Gaza (fourth century) is essential here. The person, represented by a point on the circumference of the circle, walks toward God, represented by the center. The closer each one's path, symbolized by the radius in the circle, approaches God, the more the radii approach each other. Our salvation lies in our neighbors.

The neighbors are the test of our virtues and vices. In them we know the measure of anger or peace, hatred or forgiveness, selfishness or self-sacrifice. Our relationship with them is a reflection of our relationship with God. It is not in vain that Christ asked for love of neighbor as self-love in the second commandment, placing it directly after the first commandment, the love of God.

This teaching was originally printed for the 56th biennial Archdiocese Convention in July of 2023.



From Father Aaron

FOCUS OF THE NEW ECCLESIASTICAL YEAR

Each year on September 1, we celebrate the new ecclesiastical (church) year. This date is obviously quite different from our civil new year on January 1, but dates back to the early centuries of the Church, and corresponds closely as well with the Jewish new year. The last major feast of the church year is the Dormition (Death) of the Mother of God and Her Translation into Heaven, which we just celebrated on August 15. The first major feast of the new year will be our parish feast day, the Mother of God's Nativity, on September 8. We will once again go through the entire life of Christ throughout this ecclesiastical year, beginning with the birth of His Holy Mother.

Just as we tend to make "New Year's Resolutions" on January 1 in our personal lives, I try to do the same related to our church life each year for September 1. This year, I hope to help our parish focus on being actively engaged in the life of the Church. Active engagement in the life of the Church means that a good number of parishioners are attending Divine Services (not only on Sundays), that they are involved in social and charitable activities of the Church, and that they participate in the Sacrament of Confession regularly, and make their best effort to practice the faith at home, at work, and in school. Here, I want to highlight a couple of new things I have planned for our parish in the new ecclesiastical year.

(1) Daily Vespers on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 pm, followed by a Bible Study at 6:30 pm. You will see on the September schedule that Daily Vespers and Bible Study is scheduled for September 4 and 11. On September 18 and 25 I will be out of town on vacation, but we will continue with Daily Vespers and Bible Study most every Wednesday, in October and beyond.

(2) A St Mary Parish Handbook. I am currently working on this Handbook and hope to have it completed and ready for distribution on, or shortly after, September 1. The Handbook is designed to help everyone in our parish to be on the same page and to be aware of our history, our practices/customs, and our expectations for members of our parish. Among other things, the Handbook will cover guidelines for offering holy bread and memorial wheat. It will discuss the fasting seasons and expectations for confession and stewardship. It will also highlight all of our parish's ministry teams. While I plan to distribute this entire Handbook once it is finished, I also intend to go over portions of the Handbook publicly from time to time to ensure all parishioners are intimately aware of its contents.

3) A Model Parish Task Force. In 2017 our parish developed and began implementing a Strategic Plan. We made significant progress towards achieving our objectives and in late 2019 we made plans to work on the objectives still outstanding. Of course, as we all know, in early 2020 we had the unexpected interruption of the Covid-19 pandemic. Frankly, since that time, we have not gotten fully back on track towards implementing those objectives.

At this time, it makes little sense to work on those specific objectives from 2017—our parish has changed since then. Instead, I believe we need a group of parishioners who broadly represent the parish to work as a task force. The goal of this task force will be to review at least five other “model parishes” that we identify, and to interview the clergy and faithful of those parishes. Based upon this research, the Model Parish Task Force, working closely with the Parish Council and other lay leadership, will look towards applying what we learn from these model parishes to our own parish.

The Task Force, which will be approved by the Parish Council and introduced at our Annual Meeting in November, will work with our Statements of Purpose developed in 2017 as part of our Strategic Plan. These Statements of Purpose, I believe, still represent our parish well. I have included them below for everyone to review—and for some of you, perhaps, to see for the first time!

OUR STATEMENT OF WHY

St. Mary Orthodox Christian Church welcomes those seeking holiness and salvation through a loving and nurturing spiritual family that manifests the presence of Christ on earth.

OUR CORE VALUES

- To be a loving, welcoming and inclusive Orthodox Christian community
- To faithfully practice and share the teachings of Christ and His church
- Fiscal responsibility
- Service to the community and the Parish
- Humility
- Worship
- Teamwork

OUR VISION

The Vision of St. Mary Orthodox Christian Church is to reflect the light of Christ as a welcoming community focused on: worship, education, outreach, stewardship, and fellowship.

I hope everyone will review these statements and personally work towards helping our community achieve these purposes. I am excited to see where God leads us in this new ecclesiastical year. My prayer is that through growing together in faith, love, worship, and fellowship, we will better reflect God's love for humanity.

Yours in Christ,

Fr Aaron



Orthodox News

DOZENS OF EARTHQUAKES ON MT. ATHOS IN THE LAST THREE WEEKS

Mt. Athos, August 9, 2024

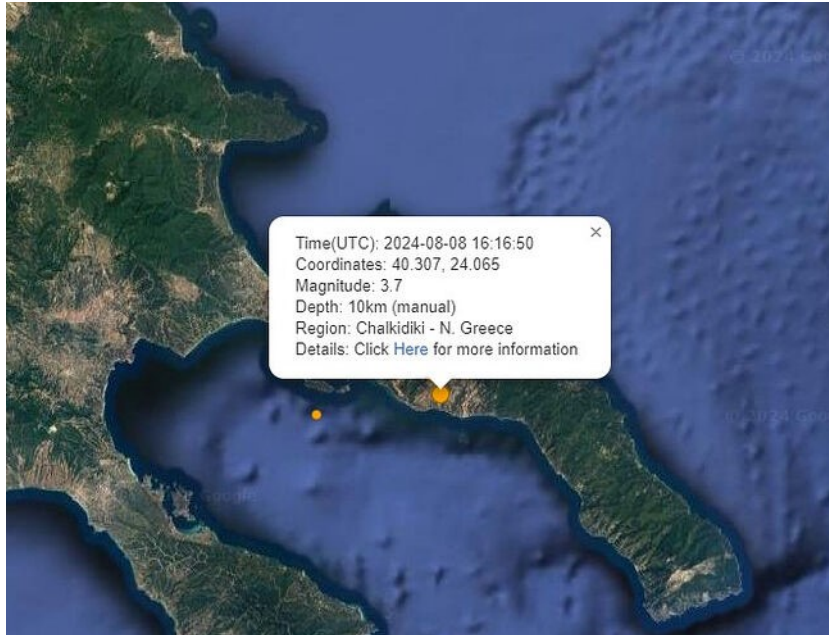


Photo: vimaorthodoxias.gr

More than 50 earthquakes have shaken the Holy Mountain in the past three weeks.

Most recently, two seismic tremors struck just seconds after each other yesterday evening at about 7:15 PM, reports Vima Orthodoxias.

The first earthquake had a magnitude of 3.5 on the Richter scale, the second—3.7.

According to the Seismological Station of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the epicenter of the tremors was located between the areas of Karyes, the capital of Mt. Athos, and Ouranoupolis, near the border of the Holy Mountain. The earthquakes came from the same focal area that had produced tremors in the past weeks. The focal depth of the two earthquakes was 6 miles.

These earthquakes, although not particularly strong, have caused concern due to their frequency and proximity.

The continuous seismic activity may be related to geological changes in the area, such as tectonic plate movements or changes in underground fragmentation. Expert seismologists are closely monitoring the situation, as vigilance is important for prevention and preparedness if seismic activity escalates. - *Orthochristian*



Photo: themaritimeexplorer.ca

Orthodox News

ROMANIA: FIRST CHAPEL DEDICATED TO NEWLY CANONIZED ST. ARSENIE (BOCA)

Sita Buzăului, Covasna County, Romania, August 7, 2024



Icon of St. Arsenie (Boca) of Prislop in the chapel at Sita Buzăului Monastery. Photo: basilica.ro

Yesterday, on the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, a chapel at Romania's Sita Buzăului was entrusted to the Heavenly protection of the newly canonized St. Arsenie (Boca) of Prislop.

Last month, the Holy Synod of the Romanian Orthodox Church canonized 16 ascetics, confessors, and martyrs who suffered under the communist rule of the 20th century, including St. Arsenie, one of Romania's most beloved elders.

According to the Basilica News Agency, the monastery chapel is the first place of worship to be named in honor of St. Arsenie.

The Divine Liturgy for the Transfiguration (the patronal feast of the main monastery church) was celebrated by His Eminence Metropolitan Laurentiu of Transylvania and Their Graces Bishops Andrei of Covasna and Nestor of Deva.

Sita Buzăului Monastery, founded in 1997, is considered one of the most beautiful and significant of the monasteries built after the 1989 revolution in Romania.

Elder Arsenie, who reposed in 1989, was one of the great Romanian spiritual fathers of Communist times, and is revered today as a saint. Thousands go on pilgrimage annually to his grave at Prislop Moanstery in Silvașu de Sus, and images of him are seen as a blessing.

At least one such image, bought at Prislop Moanstery, began miraculously weeping in May 2015. A miracle is known to occur at his grave as well: Even though the temperatures there can be extremely low, often reaching -5 degrees, all of the flowers that have grown on his grave neither wither nor freeze and die by the extreme temperatures but instead remain in full blossom. From winter to summer, the elder's grave remains full with blossomed, multi-colored fragrant flowers.

-Orthochristian

Orthodox News

30 YEARS OF LABOR CULMINATE IN CATHEDRAL CONSECRATION IN NIZHNY NOVGOROD

Dzerzhinsk, Nizhny Novgorod Province, Russia, August 16, 2024



Photo: nne.ru

On Wednesday, 30 years of hard work were finally completed in the Great Consecration of the Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Dzerzhinsk, the main cathedral of the Resurrection Deanery of the Nizhny Novgorod Diocese.

The joyous event saw 10 hierarchs of the Russian Church concelebrating with the local hierarch His Eminence Metropolitan George of Nizhny Novgorod, as well as local and visiting clerics, the Nizhny Novgorod Metropolis reports.

The service was also attended by political, educational, and public figures.

The Liturgy was sung by a male choir and a choir of students from the diocese's Orthodox schools. The Epistle was read by a 5th grade student.

At the end of the service, Met. George consecrated the honey brought by the faithful, as is customary on August 14, the feast of the Procession of the Life-Giving Wood of the Cross.



Photo: nne.ru

Gifts were distributed to all the concelebrating hierarchs, and icons of the Savior to all those present in the church.

The construction plan for the cathedral was blessed by His Eminence Metropolitan Nikolai of Nizhny Novgorod on August 12, 1994, marking the beginning of the spiritual rebirth in the area, as there were no churches in Dzerzhinsk at the time.

Construction began in 1998 and lasted for 26 years. The cathedral was built with donations from individuals and various enterprises and organizations.

The first Liturgy was celebrated in the cathedral in 2008, in the lower Dormition Church. The lower church has three altars that were already consecrated, and two of three altars in the upper church were already consecrated. Now the entire cathedral is consecrated. The two churches will be able to accommodate up to 5,000 people.

The cathedral iconography combines Romanesque, Byzantine, and ancient Russian motifs.

-*OrthoChristian* 8/16/2024

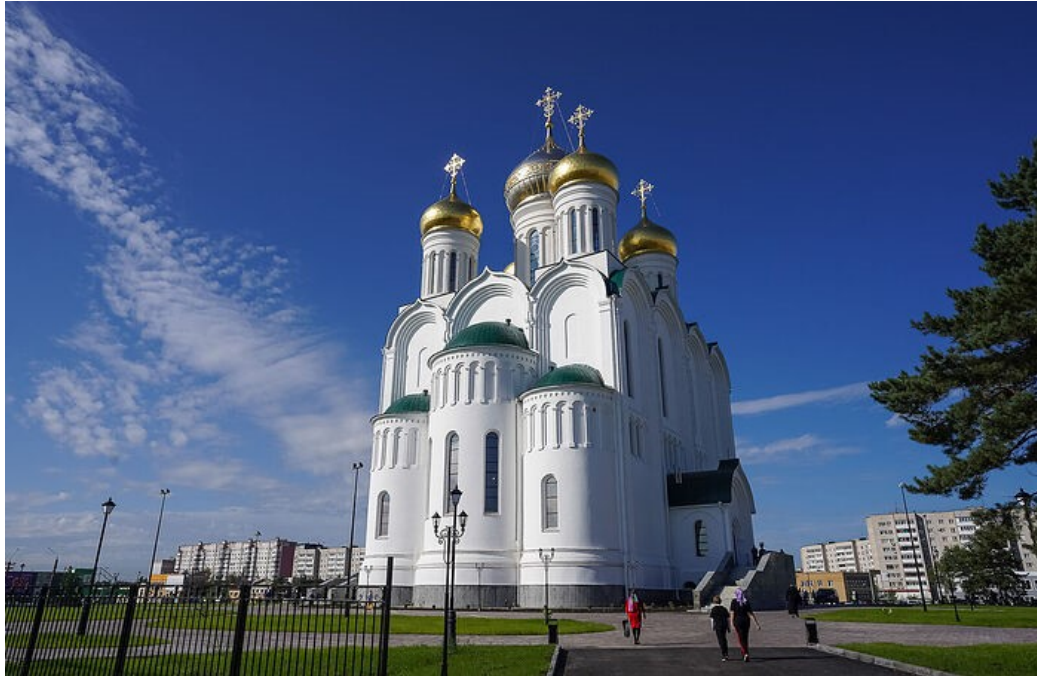


Photo: nne.ru



Photo: nne.ru

Cook's Corner



Beef Stew

Ingredients

- 2 lbs Beef Chuck Roast, cut into 2-inch chunks, excess fat removed
- 1 Tsp Kosher Salt
- ½ Tsp Coarsely Ground Black Pepper
- 2 Tbsp Gluten-free All-Purpose Flour, or Whole Wheat for non-gluten
- 2 Tbsp Olive Oil
- ½ Yellow Onion, Chopped Large
- 4 Garlic Cloves, minced
- 1 Large Carrot, or two small-medium, cut into 2-inch chunks
- 2 Yukon Gold Potatoes, diced into 2-inch pieces
- 2 Cups Beef Broth
- ¼ Cup Tomato Paste
- 1 Tbsp Worcestershire Sauce
- 1 Bay Leaves
- 2 Tsp Fresh Thyme Leaves, to garnish
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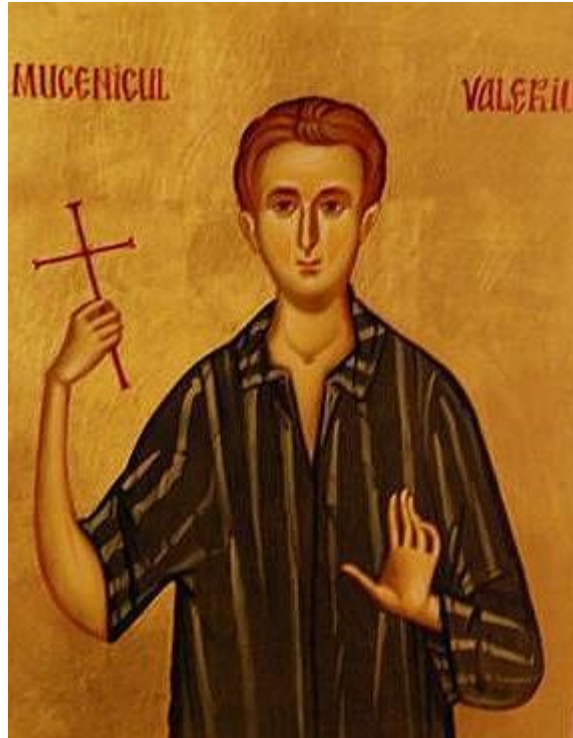


1. Preheat oven to 325° F.
2. Season the beef chunks on all sides with salt and pepper. Sprinkle the flour over and toss the seasoned beef to coat it on all sides
3. Heat the olive oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Brown the beef in batches, on all sides, for 3-4 minutes per batch. Don't worry about cooking the beef all the way through at this stage. Transfer the browned beef to a plate and set aside.
4. Add the onions, garlic, and carrots to the Dutch oven, and cook, stirring occasionally, for 2-3 minutes, or until slightly browned.
5. Add the potatoes, beef broth, tomato paste, bay leaf, thyme, and Worcestershire sauce, and use a wooden spoon to scrape the browned bits from the bottom of the pot.
6. Bring the mixture to a simmer, stirring, and return the beef to the pot. Cover the Dutch oven, and transfer to the preheated oven
7. Cook the stew for 2-2.5 hours, or until the beef is very tender. Remove the bay leaf. Taste the stew and season with additional salt and pepper, if necessary. Serve warm.

Lives of the Saints

CONFESSOR AND MARTYR FOR CHRIST: VALERIU GAFENCU

Commemorated on February 5



Valeriu Gafencu was born on the 24th of December 1921, in the Northern part of Romania, near the Russian border of that time. His parents were both active Orthodox Christians. His father was to be deported to Siberia by the Russians in 1940 for his pro-Romanian activity. When he was in high-school, Valeriu joined an Orthodox youth organization called the Cross Brotherhoods, and, when this became illegal during the second World War, he was arrested and condemned to 25 years of hard labour.

He was only 20 and, at his trial, his fellow students and teachers would come and defend him, pointing out his innocence and wonderful human qualities. At first he was sent to a prison called Aiud.

The first years were a time to reflect upon his Christian legacy. He would soon become engaged in a life of prayer, while avidly reading the Fathers of the Church.

During the war, although Romania had a dictatorial regime, prison life was not so strict and some fundamental human rights were still considered: the prisoners could go to the prison's church, confess to a priest and receive the Holy Communion and also meet with each other and read books of their own choice. So Valeriu read a lot: the Holy Bible, the first 4 volumes of the Philokalia (which were then just being translated into Romanian by another holy figure of the church, Father Dumitru Staniloaie, who would also encounter the communist prisons some years

later) and other Church Fathers.

During the time of the war a lot of priests and monks were arrested for various political reasons (and many more would follow under the communist regime) and the one who wanted to live a religious life had plenty of people to turn to for guidance. Under their guidance, Valeriu thought a lot about salvation in his first years. In a letter from 1942 he says: "In life faith is everything. Without it a man is like dead." He tried to live among his fellow prisoners in humility and practise Christian charity.

As he was followed by the idea of sin, he wanted to enter a monastery when he would be liberated. He would confess often and also pray a lot in his cell. With a group of other dedicated prisoners he made a prayer schedule that would go along uninterrupted day and night. They prayed together, as if in a church, and also separately in their cells.



By his deep Orthodox feeling, kindness and rich life of prayer he managed to influence a huge number of people, many of which he never met, but knew him from stories that were on everybody's lips even before he passed away.

His first 8 years of prison were the learning years when he became stronger in faith (he would need this for what was about to come). When the political regime changed in Romania, the prison conditions also changed dramatically: all the previous facilities were denied and the prisoners started to be persecuted for their faith (as well as for their participation in the Cross Brotherhoods). In this incredible hard period Valeriu's word would be like a burning flame heating and comforting the ones around him.

When he was in Aiud, Valeriu once encountered a poor man and gave him his student jacket. This recalls the life of Saint Martin of Tours, but it wasn't his only generous deed. A priest from Paris (Vasile Boldeanu) remembered years later that when he was transferred to Aiud only in shirt and pants, almost frozen, he was saved by his younger brother of suffering, who gave him his warm coat.

Between the years 1946-1948 Valeriu and other older prisoners were sent to labour in some fields near Galda. There it was a milder regime, the prisoners would work, but they had time for praying and they lived in open spaces, and could meet daily.



Valeriu Gafencu with his mother Elena during his incarceration at Galda, Romania, 1946-47.

In 1948 this working colony was closed, and the prisoners were sent back to Aiud where the communist regime would confront them with its official atheist propaganda. After some time the majority of imprisoned students were sent to a special prison called Pitesti, where they were to be re-educated (here took place the horrific and famous Pitesti experiment). There are many things to be told about this horrific phenomenon, and the remarkable Christian resistance that took place here.

Valeriu was held in Pitesti only for a short period of time because from all the torturing, the cold and terrible hunger he became very sick with tuberculosis (a very contagious disease) and was sent to a penitentiary TBC hospital called Targu Ocna. He saw this as the mercy of God Who saved him from the most abominable tortures that were ever conceived by a human mind and that took place in Pitesti soon after his departure.

An ex colleague of detention remembers about Targu Ocna: "His arrival in this penitentiary hospital was felt by the other prisoners (who knew his reputation) like a miracle. Valeriu would transform this sordid jail living into a truly Christian life. He is the blue-eyed angel who obliges, by his very presence and prayer, to think about repentance and start praying, who would strengthen the ones around him and transform them inside for the rest of their life."

The people that met him during the horrific re-education, comforting, encouraging, raising spiritually his fellow prisoners, compared him with another Apostle Paul of our days. That is way the sick from other rooms of the sanatorium would gather near his bed and listen to him, and receive strength to bear the powerful ordeal they lived. The power of his love would shine not only in the hours of the programmed extermination but also in the everyday life of the sanatorium, when death was so close to everyone.

Valeriu's power of sacrifice was proverbial: it did not take account of person, ethnic origin, religion or political opinions. At Targu Ocna Valeriu was very ill because of his tuberculosis. In this state, when the sick usually cling to the tiniest hope for survival, he was capable of a supreme gesture. A friend of his was allowed by the wardens to receive some antibiotics for treatment (this kind of medicine was rarely allowed in the hospital, although it was vital for their recovery from TBC), but as he was recovering, he thought to give it to Valeriu who was near his death. But Valeriu donated the medicine to the also dying Richard Wurembrand (a converted Jew who in freedom would become a well known protestant pastor), saying he needed it more. Because of this medicine he recovered and, when liberated, wrote several books in which he gratefully remembers the one who saved his life.

The ones that stood by him along the years remember other extraordinary things about him. For example in Targu Ocna, he was to undertake an appendicitis surgery. When it was finished, Valeriu told the doctor he felt everything, because the anaesthesia did not work. However, he didn't utter a word during the surgery, only his forehead was full of a cold sweat.

Valeriu died on the 18th of February 1952, at Targu Ocna. His last words were: "Don't forget to pray to God that we all meet there! Lord, give me the servitude that sets the soul free and take away the freedom that enslaves my soul!" His grave remains unknown for at that time all the prisoners were buried in a common pit and their head was smashed so that it would be beyond recognition. and if God allows his holy relics may be found.



Valeriu remained in the memory of all who knew him for the rest of their life.

There is not one Christian book that recalls the ordeals of the communist prisons that doesn't mention his name.

His deeds and words were passed on from prisoner to prisoner and helped many to survive the communist hell, until the general liberation in 1964.

Since Romania has become a free country many of its prison saints come to light and are being honoured by the faithful. Valeriu Gafencu is perhaps one of the most representative examples, and many call him the Saint of Prisons (this name was actually give by his fellow prisoners who knew him during his short life).



During the night of his last Christmas, towards dawn, Valeriu testified to his friend Ioan Iano-lide:

"Amazed, I lifted my gaze and at the head my bed I saw the Mother of God, clothed in white, vivid, real. She was without her child. Her presence seemed material to me. The Mother of God was actually beside me. I was happy. I forgot everything. Time seemed endless. Then she said to me:

'I am your love! Don't be afraid. Don't doubt. My Son will be victorious. He has sanctified this place now for future life. The powers of darkness are growing and will frighten the world still more, but they will be scattered. My Son is waiting for people to return to faith. Today, the sons of darkness are bolder than the sons of light. Even though it may seem to you that there is no more faith left on earth, nevertheless, know that deliverance will come, albeit through fire and devastation. The world still has to suffer. Here, however, there is still much faith and I have come to encourage you. Be bold, the world belongs to Christ!'"

WISDOM FROM THE FATHERS

“Some people tell me that they are scandalized because they see many things wrong in the Church. I tell them that if you ask a fly, “Are there any flowers in this area?” it will say, “I don’t know about flowers, but over there in that heap of rubbish you can find all the filth you want.” And it will go on to list all the unclean things it has been to.



Now, if you ask a honeybee, “Have you seen any unclean things in this area?” it will reply, “Unclean things? No, I have not seen any; the place here is full of the most fragrant flowers.” And it will go on to name all the flowers of the garden or the meadow.

You see, the fly only knows where the unclean things are, while the honeybee knows where the beautiful iris or hyacinth is.

As I have come to understand, some people resemble the honeybee and some resemble the fly. Those who resemble the fly seek to find evil in every circumstance and are pre-occupied with it; they see no good anywhere. But those who resemble the honeybee only see the good in everything they see. The stupid person thinks stupidly and takes everything in the wrong way, whereas the person who has good thoughts, no matter what he sees, no matter what you tell him, maintains a positive and good thought.”

-St. Paisios of Mt. Athos, “Good and Evil Thoughts,” Spiritual Counsels III: Spiritual Struggle



FROM THE MINISTRY TEAMS



THE SCROLL

Next Issue

Will Cover -- September/October

Deadline to Submit -- October 19th

On Website -- October 25th

Available in Foyer -- October 27th



Our Mission

Family Promise of Greater Wichita unites hearts and hands to provide compassionate hospitality and empower homeless families with children to achieve sustainable independence.

Our Uniqueness

Our customized case management allows us to walk beside families in life, partnering with them to achieve their goals. This allows high-quality, high-impact care.

There are three phases to our Sustainable Independence Program (SIP):

Phase 1: Support Services

Families are assisted with urgent/crisis needs for homelessness prevention, as we have resources.

Phase 2: Hospitality/Lodging OUR HOST WEEKS

Our Rotation Program, to work towards sustainability. Other programs revolve around this. St. Mary recently completed a week of hosting families. Two families, Two adults and eight children were provided nightly shelter and food for three meals a day. Approximately twenty volunteers came together to provide food, meals, transportation, laundry, or slept over at the church. Our remaining host weeks in 2024 are September 1, October 27, and December 8.

Phase 3: Mentoring/Aftercare

For families who have participated in/graduated from our Rotation Program.

Please contact Vicki Jones, 650-0658, if you have questions or would like more information.

Did you know? 92% of graduate families are stably housed! (Family Promise of Greater Wichita)



GREETER MINISTRY TEAM

The primary purpose of the Greeter Ministry Team is to make all of our visitors to St. Mary feel welcome in our parish home. To welcome the stranger is not just a nice or courteous thing to do, but is in fact one of the things mentioned by our Lord by which we will be judged: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." To welcome the stranger is a great blessing to them and to us; the Greeter Ministry Team strives to fulfill this scriptural command together with our parish family. One responsibility of greeters is to greet visitors before Liturgy. This includes giving them a bulletin and visitor packet, asking them to sign the visitor book, and invite them to coffee hour. After Liturgy, greeters will seek out the visitors and introduce to at least one other person in church, introduce them to Fr. Aaron and offer to give a tour of the facility, and show them the rack of educational pamphlets in the foyer. During the following week, the greeter will complete a New Visitor Note Card that will be mailed to the visitor. There are currently six active members of the Greeters Team. There is a need for more members of the team. If you wish more information on this Ministry Team, contact Dee Ann Bragg at dee.ann.stults@gmail.com

MEAL TRAIN



The St Mary Meal Train ministry was formed in 2016 to serve the families in our parish immediately following the birth of a child. After the birth of a child, what to eat for dinner is not usually at the forefront of new parents' minds. Instead, new parents are focused on the new life they have created and finding their new normal between dirty diapers, seemingly near-constant cries, and many feedings. Our goal is to provide the evening meal every day for a week. The meals have been a mixture of home cooked, frozen, and store-bought meals as well as restaurant gift cards. We also provide a supply of paper products such as plates, napkins, cutlery, and cups to reduce the workload of the family. Being part of this ministry does not mean that you have to be involved every time a request is sent out. Each of us has our own commitments and are sometimes unable to help. Any help at all is much appreciated by the families we are serving. If you would like to be part of this ministry, please contact Jessica Lessman (Miriam121406@live.com) to get on the mailing list.



THE LORD'S DINER

The Lord's Diner exists to combat hunger in the community. The Diner's singular mission is to serve a nutritious meal with dignity and respect to anyone who is hungry. The Lord's Diner serves an evening meal 365 days a year. Meals are served at two dining facilities (one in downtown Wichita and one in south Wichita) and three food trucks (one in northwest Wichita, one in southeast Wichita, one in northeast Wichita) to any guest who needs a nutritious meal, 60 percent of which are families. In January of 2024 TLD will returned to its original dine in model. St. Mary volunteers serve at The Lord's Diner on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We are partnered with volunteers from St. George Cathedral. We gather at the downtown location, Central and Broadway, at 5:15 p.m. We are finished by 7:45 PM. Contact Vicki Jones, 650-0658 if you'd like to volunteer. NOTE: A food handler's card is no longer required.



Celebrations



BIRTHDAYS

JULY

4 Cheryl Jantz
5 Sonia Laham
6 Kirby Jantz
14 Ryan Royle
15 Katherine Oller
17 Lucia Hernandez
18 Elisabeth Shippy
18 Steven Shippy
19 Virginia Rosenbaum
22 Darren Minks
23 Laura Oller

AUGUST

2 Lille Nightingale
3 Brendan Wagner
5 Thomas Wallace
6 Susan Almy-Hernandez
9 Luke Gilstrap
9 EJ Lessman
10 Nadia Abdelmaseh
11 Iris Binkley
12 Mary Ann Khoury
15 Zared Salome
17 Deacon James Kallail
21 Justine Nightingale
23 Karl Beal
24 Roy Clark
31 Judith Shippy



Celebrations



BIRTHDAYS

SEPTEMBER

9 Elanor Wagner
11 Tana Salome
15 Marina Grubb
18 Joan Ferris
18 Pam Haratsis
22 Tony Abdayem
25 Bruce Ferris
25 Jay Haratsis
26 Claire Dannenbert
27 David Shippy
28 Photinos Kambiotis

OCTOBER

2 Randa Kambiotis
5 Michael Shaheen
6 Osama Nikoula
7 Rex Casner
8 Connor Shippy
10 Michelle Shaheen
14 Colin Eaton
16 Joan Aboud
18 Sophia Salome
19
19 Jesse Nightingale
19 Dottie Voth
21 Al Busada
21 Cassie Royle
22
22 Helen Stitt
23 Donna Namee
26 Emmelia Warwick
27 Connie Stevens
28 Elham Laham



ANNIVERSARIES

JULY

Eric & Tracy Namee	07/05
Duane & Virginia Rosenbaum	07/23
Mike & Paula Zarich	07/23
Joseph & Tana Salome	07/31

AUGUST

Rick & Tanya Hussleman	08/16
Alex & Jessica Lessman	08/25

SEPTEMBER

Jay & Pam Haratsis	09/19
Brett & Alexis Parrott	09/23

OCTOBER

Cliff and Dee Ann Bragg	10/14
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BITS AND PIECES

Justine Nightingale receiving honors for two decades of service as Church School Director.



Lydia Hernandez and Elanor Wagner receiving honors for finishing 3rd in their age category for the Diocese's Creative Arts Festival.



BITS AND PIECES

Teen SOYO KC Trip

First of all, I thank God for Father Aaron, Tracy, Deacon James and Shamassy Rosemary, Sophie, Colin, Xochitl and Kelly. Your support, prayers, and chaperoning/driving were a true blessing!

Thursday afternoon at Oceans of Fun was typical. Kids stayed together, we all made it back to the parking lot, and only two kids didn't come back when they were supposed to because they got in line for ride after I said come back within 15 minutes. So, the two kids who came back on time went to get the two kids who got on the ride and 5 minutes later the late kids finally came back. Those two wanted to leave to go find the other two who were sent to look for them. This whole situation provided amusement for the folks sitting next to us. It's not a true Youth trip if all the kids listen to instructions...

We made our way to Dn James and Sh Rosemary's home for dinner. We were spoiled with a feast!

The boys especially enjoyed themselves in the game room. I don't believe anything was broken except for a ping pong ball. Around 9 p.m. the girls (who were staying overnight) wanted us to take the boys to the motel so they could use the ping pong table.

We had so much fun visiting we forgot to take pictures! I highly recommend the Kallail Bed and Breakfast.





On Friday morning, July 19, we made our way to Thelma's Kitchen, part of Reconciliation Services, for our servant event. Mike, the Volunteer Coordinator gave us an orientation with the history of RS and the importance of Troost Avenue. Thelma's Kitchen was closed for COVID and has been under reconstruction for the last couple of years. Thelma's had been providing box lunches for the past 4 years and were ready to get back to providing hot meals.



Father Justin was able to spend some time with us, telling us about Mother Maria of Paris. We were able to see The Chapel of St. Maria of Paris, which is beautiful and inspiring. We want to come back in the future and see it completed! We were all moved by Father Justin's talk and encouragement.



Thelma's staff was preparing for Monday, July 22, and needed our help in preparing for Monday's grand re-opening. We folded take-out boxes, our teens cut up cabbage and onions. As for the pork butt we let Xochitl and Kelly handle that. We baked cookies, put cookies in wrappers, measured out turkey and cheese for sandwiches, cooked broccoli, washed and dried dishes, carted water bottles upstairs, mopped floors and cleaned the dining area, picked up trash outside.

I think we had lunch at some point.

We so enjoyed working with the kitchen staff: Chef Tasha, Chef Isha, and "Uncle J," who noted the girls were easier to work with than the boys. They made us feel at home in their kitchen. Mike told us how pleased he was with our work. He had a huge "to do" list for Friday, and appreciated that we helped him get everything done by 3 p.m.



I urge everyone to go to Reconciliation Services website: rs3101.org/mission and learn about this wonderful ministry. If you'd like to join us next summer to volunteer, please do so!



PARISH COUNCIL

Paula Zarich **Chairman**

Tracy Namee **Vice-Chairman**

Darren Minks **Treasurer**

Helen Stitt **Secretary**

Dee Ann Bragg

Ken Dannenberg

Judith Shippy

Laura Stanley

Blaise Webster

PARISH MINISTRY TEAMS

Belles of St. Mary
Choir
Digital Library
Education
Family Promise
Greeters
Humanitarian
Interiors
Kitchen
Major Fund Raisers
Matthew 5:4
Membership / Stewardship
Meal Train
Missions/Spiritual Growth
Pre-Teens
Prison Ministry Team
Properties
Public Relations/Website
Purchasing
Teen SOYO
The Scroll
The Treehouse
Visitations

MINISTRY TEAM CHAIR

Robbie Namee
Jason Ewertt
Steven Shippy
Anna Ewertt
Vicki Jones
Dee Ann Bragg
Joan Ferris
Tracy Namee
Robbie Namee
Tracy Namee
Cathy Fairbanks
Fr. Aaron
Jessica Lessman
Tracy Namee
Anna Ewertt
Fr. Aaron
TC Wallace
Justine Nightingale
Robbie Namee
Laura Stanley
Brett Parrott
Darren Minks
Rick Husselman



The Scroll Production Schedule – 2024

Issue: January/February, 2024

Deadline: February 17

On Website – February 24

In Foyer – February 26

Issue: March/April, 2024

Deadline: April 22

On Website – April 28

In Foyer – April 30

Issue: May/June, 2024

Deadline: June 17

On Website – June 23

In Foyer – June 25

Issue: July/August, 2024

Deadline: August 17

On Website – August 23

In Foyer – August 25

Issue: September/October, 2024

Deadline: October 19

On Website – October 25

In Foyer – October 27

Issue: November/December, 2024

Deadline: December 22

On Website – December 29

In Foyer – December 31

Send news to: parrott.brett.117@gmail.com

About The Scroll

The Scroll is the news magazine of St. Mary Orthodox Christian Church, 344 S. Martinson, KS, 67213. It was first published in March of 1974 as a newsletter and has evolved to its present magazine-style format. **The Scroll** includes information about our Orthodox Christian faith as well as news of our parish community. Deadline dates for publication are listed in each issue of **The Scroll** and also in the weekly church bulletins. Inquiries and news items should be sent to parrott.brett.117@gmail.com or to the above church address C/O **The Scroll**.

All news must be received by the announced deadline dates. Submitted material may be edited for content and space limitations. All submitted items should include the name of the person sending the material as well as identifying the original source of previously published pieces.

The Scroll Ministry Team

Brett Parrott



LOOKING AHEAD

September 1st
Church New Year

September 8th
Nativity of the Theotokos

September 15th
Church School Begins

October 20th
Fall Festival

