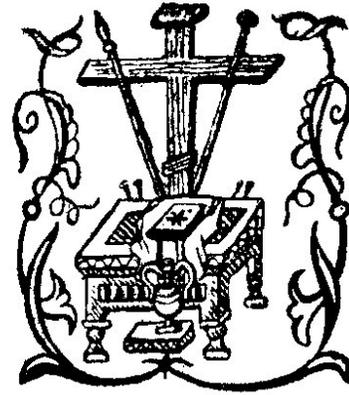


# St. Cyril Orthodox Church

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+ **November 7, 2021** +  
**20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost.**

Holy 33 Martyrs of Melitene (3<sup>rd</sup> cent.).  
Ven. Lazarus the Wonderworker (+1053).



**MANY YEARS** to **Katherine Hall** who celebrated her birthday yesterday; to **Michael Crawford** and **Anthony Afridi** who celebrate their namedays tomorrow (St. Michael the Archangel); to **Ethan and Asher Cupples** who celebrate their namedays on Tuesday (St. Nectarios the Wonderworker) and Thursday (St. Menas of Egypt); and to **John Hendrickson**, who celebrates his birthday on Tuesday.

**THIS WEEK:** **Wednesday** Vespers at 6:30 pm, followed by a Bible Study at 7 pm.  
**Thursday** Divine Liturgy at 8:30 am.

**TREASURER UPDATE** – For October, we received **\$10,344**, including a grant of \$1,667 from the OCA and of \$1,900 from the Diocese of the South. Our expenses were **\$11,805**.

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## **Practical Advice for Families**

**From a talk by Fr. Athanasios  
of Simonopetra Monastery, Mount Athos**

One thing we must pay attention to is family prayer. Do you know what a blessing of God it is for the father, the mother, the grandmother, the grandfather, the grandchildren, the infants, even if they don't understand, even if they cry? Say in the morning: "Blessed is God, who hast granted us, in affliction, the light of day! We are joyous and full of hope to continue our life."

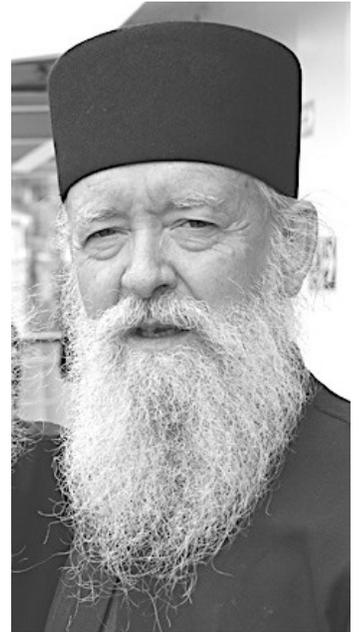
Do you know what a beautiful thing it is at night, before you go to sleep, to gather your little children, to thank the Lord for the day which has passed, and to ask Him that your night be blessed? Do you know how much this unites souls? I wonder if you do this thing. Do you pray with your spouse, with your children? And then many times you complain that your family life does not go well, that you have problems. But how can you not have problems? Without Christ is it possible for us not to have problems? Is it possible for you to kneel together before Christ and for Christ not to hear you? And for Him not to bless your children?

Do you remember what Father Paisios used to say? You must have heard it many times. When parents complained that their children wouldn't listen to them when they spoke about God, Father Paisios used to tell them: "Let the children proceed as they are proceeding. You do your duty. Kneel for children who are not kneeling. Produce callouses on your knees for the children whose knees have fallen down running to the night clubs." Do we do this for our children? What is married life, simply the bed and material goods? What's happening with spiritual goods? How will we acquire those?

I beseech you, accustom yourselves to offering prayer at your table, even if you make a mistake or two. It doesn't matter. God will forgive you. But do family prayer. Try it and you will see how many problems will be solved before you. And when at night, after everything is finished and you go to sleep, until you fall asleep, have a little prayer rope in hand and say, "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me." Say it two, three times. If you manage to say it a fourth or fifth time, you'll be doing well, because usually this prayer "Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me" is the best "sleeping pill." When I am tired, I take a three-hundred knot prayer rope. By the time I get to the seventh or eighth knot, I'm asleep. I don't proceed any further. Try it and you will see how beautiful it is.

But before we sleep, let us think a bit: "How did I proceed in my day? Did I act in a godly way, was I like Christ in my actions, were my actions 'angel-appropriate'? Might I have wounded my Lord with my actions? Might I have wounded my brother with my harshness? My husband or wife with my ugly behavior? My child, whom I ought not to have shouted at? Did I shout at him and in that way place on his little head all my anxiety and stress, and crush him psychologically?" Let's think. And if we should find ourselves at fault, let us not hesitate in the morning to say: "Hey, George, Nick, Vasiliki, forgive me for yesterday. I didn't behave well." Don't be afraid to ask forgiveness.

You see, in monasteries if we see that we are at fault towards our brother in something, we are not allowed to go to sleep at night if we don't go and tell him, "Bless! Bless! (That is, Forgive! Forgive!) I said something I shouldn't have . . . ." "God forgive you," he replies, and the matter is finished. We go to sleep just fine. Many times – I have seen it here and it made an impression on me – you hold grudges. You tell me: "But Father, I had such and such family matters, you know, and inheritance matters. I argued with my brother, my sister, etc., and now I have a difficult time speaking to him." Well, since you are having a difficult time speaking with your brother, how will God speak to you in your heart? What do we expect to do then? What spiritual life can we have? Even if the Archangel Gabriel himself descended to shout a thousand sermons to you here, he would not be able to do anything for you, if you don't help yourself with these very slight spiritual disciplines.



*Fr. Athanasios*

Our habits become second nature. It is difficult to cast them off. But when they are good habits, what a beautiful thing it is! If you don't pray one day, when you don't pray constantly, you will have a difficult time. If you don't read the Psalter one day, you will have a difficult time. If you don't do the prostrations that your spiritual father appointed to you for one day, you will have a difficult time. Neglecting our prayer becomes second nature. Just as evil and virtue become a habit, so ascetical struggle in Christ does also. I wish you would acquire such a blessed habit daily. Spiritually you will have "birth pangs" to bear Christ, and you will give birth to Him spiritually. You will feel so much joy, so much rejoicing, and you will want to shout to all the ends of the world: "Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God, for the Lord is good!" The Lord is full of sweetness. Let us not have Him merely in icons. It's good for us to have Him in icons, both in churches and in the prayer corner in our homes, but let us also place Him here, inside our heart. If we don't place Christ in our soul, after all these things we've said, we don't do anything. We will go up to the Apostle Peter and he will tell us, "I don't see the seal of Jesus in your heart. You gave your heart elsewhere. You said you had life, but you are dead."

I pray, my beloved brothers and sisters, that you will live in a spiritual way; in other words, that you will live in the Holy Spirit, that you will be imitators of the Saints, and that we may be granted all together to be found in Heaven. If you do these things, you will shout like Abba Ephraim the Syrian: "My Christ, hold back the waves of Your grace, because they are so great and cover me, I cannot bear them!" Would that you be always thus, and may the Lord grant you to rejoice in your souls with the water of the Holy Spirit.

*An excerpt from the homily "The Spiritual Life in Christ" by Hieromonk Athanasios of Simonopetra Monastery, from the book Burning of the Heart, published in Cyprus. Translated by Fr. Nicholas Pails.*

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**That a small Christian child is wiser than philosophers has been shown by experience.** This experience is repeated sometimes today, but in earlier times it was everywhere. For example, during the period of martyrdom, small children discoursed on Christ the Savior, on the folly of idol-worship, on the future life, and the like; this was because their mother or father had explained these things to them in simple conversations. These truths had then become close to the heart, which began to treasure them all the way to readiness to die for them.

*- St. Theophan the Recluse*

**We have seen that in this life anyone, even our closest of kin, can abandon us.** We all have our weaknesses and often hurt the people closest to us. They can turn their backs on us because of our rudeness, or they can forgive us but still be hurt. But the Lord and His Most Holy Mother ... Oh, how many times have we insulted God and the Most Holy Theotokos, but when we repent and turn to them in our hearts, they forgive us everything, never remembering our sins and evil deeds!

*- Elder Thaddeus of Serbia*

## Part 5: Thoughts about Our Thoughts from Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica

From the book *Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives*

(29) “St. Isaac the Syrian says, ‘Preserve your inner peace at all costs and do not trade it for anything in this world.’”

(30) “We should say the words of the prayers knowing that the Lord sees us and that He is listening to us. When something ‘moves’ in the heart while we are at prayer, we should hold on to it and try to preserve that feeling.”

(31) “Death, the Judgment, heaven, and hell. We must have a remembrance of these things all the time. As for our attention, it must be focused on the words of the prayer.”

(32) “When God’s all-encompassing love manifests itself in us, we see no difference between people – everyone is good, everyone is our brother, and we consider ourselves to be the worst of men, servants of every created thing. In this kind of love we are humbled; our soul is at peace and in humility. And humility is the perfection of the Christian life. It is not in the raising of the dead or in working miracles that Christian perfection lies, but in extreme humility. When we are illumined by the grace of the Holy Spirit in the fullness of Divine love, then we want to serve everyone and help everyone. Even when we see a little ant struggling, we want to help him. Thus, love is sacrifice. Love sacrifices itself for its neighbor.”

(33) “Let us fall down before the Lord with an innocent heart, using our own words in addition to the prayer rule that we all adhere to and which we very much need (for if we have no prayer rule, then the evil one will give us his own rule – all kinds of thoughts). That’s why we need prayer, no matter how short. As soon as we are out of bed, let us give thanks to God for having allowed us to live through the night. When evening comes, let us give thanks for everything, for the Lord is the Giver of life and the Giver of all things.”

(34) “If we turn toward the Fountain of Life – God – then He will give us the strength to become rooted in good thoughts – quiet, peaceful, and kind thoughts, full of love. Our sincere repentance will shine through, for good thoughts, good wishes, and feelings of love radiate peace and give comfort to every being.... Repentance is a complete turning of one’s heart toward Absolute Goodness, and not only of the heart but also of the mind, the feelings, the body, and one’s whole being. Repentance is the unbreakable union of love with our Father and Creator.”

