



# The St. Nicholas Navigator

Vol. 2, No. 3 March/April, 2019

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*Never Fear, Lent is Here!*

*Courage*

*St. John's House*

*... and more!*

***Pastoral Epistle: Never fear, Lent is here!***

Lent is coming! We know that when we hear these words at Orthros: "Open to me the doors of repentance, O Life-giver; for my soul goeth early to the temple of Thy holiness, coming in the temple of my body, wholly polluted. But because Thou art compassionate, purify me by the compassion of Thy mercies." This is a hymn that we sing during these pre-Lenten Sundays that lead up to the beginning of the Great Fast. It calls us to the sustained effort of the Lenten journey, it exhorts us to take this season seriously, and it inspires us with hope.

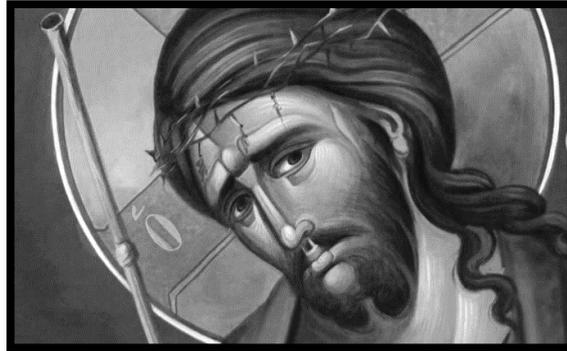
Hope? Really? It sounds so negative, doesn't it? Words like "repentance" and "polluted" sound like put-downs. Why should I consider myself so bad?

Think of this "pollution," though as a synonym of "sickness." Think of your soul, and your body, as affected by the illness of sin and all of the symptoms that come with that illness. Do you ever lose your temper? Do you ever say things you regret later? Do you ever become impatient with other people? Do you ever do anything that makes you feel icky, and then do it again? Is there anything in your life that seems out of control, or anything in your behavior that makes you sad? Then you're

dealing with the sickness of sin, which has symptoms that the holy Fathers call "the passions." These passions come in many shapes and sizes, and they affect us all.

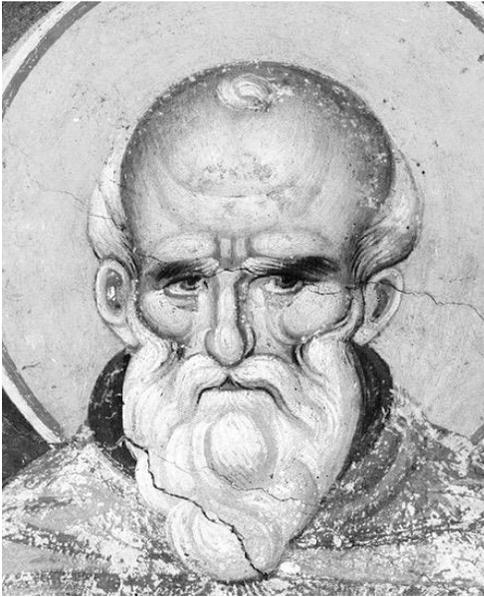
So where is the hope in all this? Our sickness is not the end of the story. In fact, it existed from the beginning of our story. Our first parents, Adam and Eve, accepted the lie of the enemy of mankind, and the result was the contracting of the disease. And they passed it on to their children, who passed it on to their children, and so on, down to us. But, though the disease is passed on to each member of our human race, the cure is also available to everyone. That cure is what Jesus Christ came into the world to give.

And how do we receive that cure? How do we take the medicine? The act of taking the medicine is what we call "repentance." That's not a heavy, negative, judgmental thing. When the doctor says, "you've got the flu," he's not judging you. He's telling you the truth, so you can do what you need to get better. The Church tells us, "you've got this disease...but there's a cure. You need to take this medicine." And what should our response be? Well the normal response to having someone hand us a cure that will save our life is to shout "hooray!" and to do a little dance around the room.



St. Maximus the Confessor says, "The person who truly wishes to be healed is he who does not refuse treatment." When we hear "Open to me the doors of repentance," we are reminded that while Church offers us the treatment we need for our healing the whole year round, Great Lent is coming, bringing with it all the best forms of treatment in very potent doses. More than that, Lent offers us an environment, a spiritual atmosphere, that is especially conducive to the healing we need. So, glory to God! The Lord, who loves us so perfectly and endlessly offers us the cure for our sickness! Rejoice, for all we have to do is to receive it!

With love in Christ,  
Fr. Daniel



St. Maximus the Confessor

## **Courage**

**By: Fran Presley**

A hymn popular in my youth urged Christians to

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
Ye soldiers of the cross,  
Lift high His royal banner,  
It must not suffer loss.

Christians in my small town had no idea that in the future their own country would no longer be a Christian nation, and to stand up for Jesus would cost them. The hymn seems prophetic.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus,  
The trumpet call obey,  
Forth to the mighty conflict,  
In this, His glorious day;  
Ye that are men now serve Him  
Against unnumbered foes;  
Let courage rise with danger,  
And strength to strength oppose.

Yes, it *is* a mighty conflict, and courage is required. C.S. Lewis writes that "courage is not simply *one* of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality. A chastity or honesty, or mercy, which yields to danger will be chaste or honest or merciful only on conditions. Pilate was merciful until it became risky."

So what good are all the virtues if we fail at the testing point? The Bible is filled with courageous people who did not fail at the testing point. We know who they are. I'll mention two of them whose lives show us the key to unflinching courage: Mary Magdalene and John. They stayed loyal to Jesus when the other disciples deserted Him. And yet if someone had said to them, "How courageous you are!" I think it would have surprised them. They loved Jesus so deeply that it never occurred to them to desert Him. He was their All-in-All. The key to courage is love for the Lord - love so deep that courage becomes a by-product of love.

In past years, I, too, have failed at the testing point. Just like the disciples, Jesus gave me another chance. I have learned that if I do not want to fail at the testing point, I need to stay so close to Jesus that love for Him becomes my joy.

The last two verses of the hymn sum up Christians' instructions:

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, Stand in His strength alone;  
The arm of flesh will fail you, Ye dare not trust your own.  
Put on the gospel armor, Each piece put on with prayer;  
Where duty calls or danger, Be never wanting there.

Stand up, stand up for Jesus, The strife will not be long;  
This day the noise of battle, The next the victor's song.  
To him that overcometh, A crown of life shall be;  
He with the King of glory shall reign eternally.

**Living in Communion  
at Saint John's House  
By: Stephen (Allen) Lawrence**

This past November (2018) four men from St. Nicholas Orthodox Church started living in a community. Our community is called Saint John's House, an idea that came about from Thomas (John) Goddard back in the summer and caught on rather quickly.

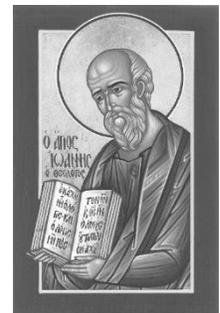
Single Orthodox men living in communion? It sounded like it could work, and after talking with each other and Father Daniel, we began working on repairing and updating the house at 316 Colony Bend: new AC/Heating, floors, 2 ½ bathrooms remodeled and finally (we hope) the hot water heater replaced. Our home was dedicated to St. John the Beloved, apostle and theologian. We have a goal to keep the house as if each man's mother was here watching over us, and in fact our mother the Theotokos is the mother of the house. Our house was blessed by Father Daniel and officially became a brotherhood on Wednesday November 14, 2018. Present for this event were Deacon Nicholas, John Goddard, Nathaniel McCoy

and myself. (Reader Paul John Crichton was at work.)

So far, we are working on having at least one common meal each Sunday, along with evening prayers. Each of us have different schedules: sometimes we see each other in passing and then we all get surprised when all of us are home at the same time. Our idea of the house is to make it like a home for each of us -- not just a rented room, but a brotherhood.

I am honing my skill in the kitchen as our cook, so far so good. I plan the meals with Thomas using the Mediterranean diet as our guide, and we welcome any recipes! Nathaniel McCoy and Reader Paul round out the house, each contributing to the happiness in the home. We are learning to play board games, new music, and other hobbies; but the main goal is to share the Love of Christ Jesus with each other, keep each other in constant prayer, and to make sure someone is looking out for the welfare of each man.

In the future we would like each family to come and join us for a meal on a Sunday evening, so we will get with you soon. Sharing the ministry of Saint John's house is very important to us and to the benefit of Saint Nicholas Orthodox Church here in Shreveport. Saint Nicholas brought us together and we are very much a part of this parish. We look forward to you getting to know St. John's House.



**Lenten Copywork  
By: Shamassy Monica Olsen**

I'd like to give you a tool to help contemplate the Truths presented to us during Great Lent. Ultimately, only humility and repentance and trying to live the Gospel will open our hearts to knowledge, but this little tool can help us consider the ideas the Church give us.

Whereas a child might be given a sentence to copy, the adult chooses a meaningful excerpt from a hymn or prayer of one of the services, or from the spiritual book being read during Lent. Some folks use what they call a “Commonplace Book” – which can be anything from a spiral notebook to a leather journal – a place to keep special words, ones that give us insight or touch us deeply. Other folks call this personal book a florilegium. Wikipedia explains that “in medieval Latin a **florilegium** was a compilation of excerpts from other writings. The word is from the Latin *flos* (flower) and *legere* (to gather): literally a gathering of flowers, or collection of fine extracts from the body of a larger work.” Our collection will be from the larger work of all the services and writings of the Church. Since we refer to Lent as a Lenten Spring, this Latin phrase compliments the idea that the Fast is a time for us to be transformed by God, as we submit to Him and He works within us fresh growth. For the Christian during Great Lent, this personal collection will reflect what you are learning.

How does writing help learning? First, you encounter an idea in the words, an idea that is nourishment for the mind and soul. For the child given the words, he or she gets to spend a few minutes with an idea that is foundational to our Faith. Writing provides time to chew on and digest something from an important hymn or scripture, making this year's Lenten journey a little more meaningful. The same is true for adults. Reading the words once is just an introduction. Writing them down helps you get to know them better.

Second, writing can be an elaborative rehearsal device, a technique that moves information from one's short-term memory to one's long-term memory by providing opportunities to repeat that information and link it to other encounters. In this case, you are linking the encounter of the Church service to the copywork.

Third, writing and speaking the same words uses three of our five senses: we see them

with our eyes, hear them with our own ears, and touch them as we form our lips, tongue and teeth to say them and touch the pencil with our hand. The only senses missing are smell and taste, which you will receive at church with incense, beeswax candles, kissing the icons, and Holy Communion.

Why does it matter to use our senses? Imagine your brain receiving a message from one of your senses; your finger touches something and a little pathway is created from the tip of your finger to your brain. Now, what if more than one sense were traveling down that pathway? You write the word and say it with your mouth and the pathway is made wider, stronger, more like a road to your brain. The more times the path is traveled the stronger it gets. The stronger the pathway, the better you remember.

Taste and see how adding writing to your Lenten struggle can help you and the children in your life blossom this Lenten Spring.

**An Excerpt from the Book  
The Church At Prayer  
By: Elder Aimilianos of Simonopetra**

What is the Liturgy? You will have noticed, on the white screen of the cinema, a small figure or an object, which initially appears in the distance, like a tiny dot on the horizon, and then it is slowly magnified and ultimately revealed in perfect clarity. That is what the Liturgy is like: little by little, before our very eyes, it reveals Christ and his kingdom. During the celebration of the Liturgy, Christ is with us exactly as he was when he was teaching, when he made the lame leap and walk, the blind see, and the dead return to life. And this is not simply having the memory of Christ within our thoughts, but having Christ himself truly and concretely present before us. He is present – He, the teacher, the prophet, the miracle-worker. Christ who was crucified, who was raised from the dead, who ascended into heaven, is now before us! Everything that

we see in church: the great hanging lamps, the clergy, the altar table, the gospel book, the bread and wine, the Little and Great Entry – are all signs of the presence of Christ.

And so, with the Divine Liturgy, we continue the work of Christ, and every time we celebrate it, it's as if we draw Christ himself close to us. This is precisely what one of the prayers says: "You are seated on high with the Father, and invisibly present here with us." You are above the heavens, and at the same time invisibly, truly, here with us. This is why the priest, when he prepares to receive Holy Communion, looks at Christ with the eyes of his soul, and speaks to him in the second person singular: "Make us worthy, by your mighty hand, to receive your pure body and your precious blood." If we have spiritual eyes, we can see that before us stands Christ himself. And what do you do if you happen to be sitting somewhere, and all of a sudden you see someone you love? You get up and you run to them. In the same way, the Liturgy is a movement, a hastening to the beloved, an effort to seize hold of Christ, to take hold of him.

Do you remember Mary Magdalene? When she realized that she had Christ standing before her, she called him "Rabboni, which means teacher," and sought to touch his garments, his body (Jn. 20:16-17). Do you remember the woman with an issue of blood? Even though there were so many people pressing around Christ, she attempted to touch him in faith and with reverence (Lk 8:42-48). Remember Thomas? He placed his hands in Christ's wounds and cried out: "My Lord and my God!" (Jn 20: 27-28). This is what we do at the time of the Liturgy! And then some of us ask where Christ is! Here he is! He's standing in front of us, he's with us, next to us. "The Master is here and is calling for you" (Jn 11:28), they said to Mary, as she wept over the dead Lazarus, her brother. In the Liturgy, the Master, Christ, is present and calls us each by name. The eyes of those who feel this sparkle with light, and they experience the joy of

Christ. Everything is filled with joy. Everything is filled with light. Everything glorifies Christ.

And so when you come to the Liturgy, you should come with the thought that you are meeting Christ, along with the desire to touch him, as St. Methodius says: "I purify myself for you, O Bridegroom, and bearing brightly-glowing candles, I come forth to meet you." O Bridegroom Christ, I keep myself pure and spotless for you, and I hold bright candles in my hands to welcome you. This is how we should come to the Divine Liturgy, which is the very presence of Christ and his kingdom.

### **On the Annunciation From The Prologue From Ochrid, by St. Nikolai Velimirovich**

When the most holy Virgin had lived and served in the Temple at Jerusalem for eleven years, and was by then fourteen years old - when, that is, she was entering on her fifteenth year – the priests informed her that, according to the Law, she could no longer remain in the Temple but must be betrothed and marry. But, to the great surprise of all the priests, the most holy Virgin replied that she had dedicated herself to God and wished to remain a maiden till death and enter into wedlock with no one. Then, by God's providence and under His inspiration, Zachariah, the high priest and father of the Forerunner, in consultation with the other priests, chose twelve unmarried men from the tribe of David so that they might entrust the Virgin Mary to one of them to preserve her virginity and care for her. She was thus entrusted to Joseph, an old man from Nazareth and a kinsman of hers. In his house, the most holy Virgin continued to live in the same manner as in the Temple of Solomon, passing her time in the reading of the sacred Scriptures, in prayer, in pondering on the words of God, in fasting and in handiwork. She scarcely ever left the house, nor took an interest in worldly matters or events. She generally conversed very little with anyone, and never without a particular need. She was

intimate only with the two daughters of Joseph. But when the time prophesied by the prophet Daniel had come and when God was pleased to fulfill the promise made to Adam when He drove him out of Paradise, and to the prophets, the mighty Archangel Gabriel appeared in the chamber of the most holy Virgin, at the precise moment (as some priestly writers have related) that she was holding open on her lap the book of the Prophet Isaiah and pondering on his great prophecy: "Behold a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son." Gabriel appeared to her in angelic light and said to her: "Rejoice thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee!" and so forth, just as is related in the Gospel of the divine Luke. With this angelic greeting and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the salvation of the mankind and the renewal of creation were set in motion. The Archangel turned the first page of the story of the New Testament with the word "Rejoice!" to show by this the joy that the New Testament signifies for mankind and for all things created. And therefore the Annunciation is looked upon as a joyous, as well as a great, feast.

### Antiochian Women's Month

March is Antiochian Women's Month. Our Archdiocese highlights the year-round labors of our ladies who carry out vital ministries at the heart of the life of the Church. We give thanks to God for our women and girls and pray His strength be with them in their struggles for salvation and for His glory! Here is one great woman Saint you may not have heard of, who is commemorated on March 3: St. Piama of Egypt.

St. Piama lived in asceticism in her mother's home not far from Alexandria. She only ate food at the end of the day. After prayer, she spun flax. St. Piama was granted the gift of insight. The people of a nearby village who were blinded with greed planned to destroy the small village where St. Piama lived in order to

divert water to their own fields when the Nile overflowed its banks. St. Piama realized their wickedness and reported it to the village elders. The elders fell on their knees before Piama, and asked that she go to the neighboring village to stop them from their evil deeds.

St. Piama did not go to meet the villagers, as she shunned contact with people. She spent all night in prayer. The next morning, the people of the neighboring village armed themselves and set off to destroy St. Piama's village. They suddenly froze in their tracks and were not able to proceed. The Lord revealed to them that the prayers of St. Piama were holding them back. The villagers immediately repented of their sins. They sent messengers to the village with a request for peace and said, "Thanks be to God, Who through the prayers of the maiden Piama has delivered us." The saint peacefully fell asleep in the Lord in the year 337.

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### Parish News & Announcements

- **Save the date - A Lenten Retreat with Fr. Stephen DeYoung on "Revelation: An Orthodox Perspective on the Apocalypse,"** will be held at St. Nicholas on Saturday, April 6, from 9am to 2pm. Please remember to get with Fr. Daniel to confirm a time for home blessing.
- This Great Lent, we'll have a **Lenten Study on Contemporary Holy Lives.** Rather than a single book, we'll have a series of readings about sanctified people who lived in recent times. The readings will be provided by Fr. Daniel each week for the following week.

- The **Ladies of St. Nicholas** will be **collecting funds during Lent for flowers** to decorate for Holy Week and Pascha. Please give donations to Denise Busada or Sh. Monica Olsen.
- **It's time to order Holy Week books** for anyone who wishes to purchase one for this year. They are \$35 each. Contact Peter Filipek or Fr. Daniel if you wish to order one.
- There will be **Liturgy in Texarkana** at St. Patrick Chapel in Lewisville, AR on **Saturday, Mar. 23**. All are welcome to join. For directions, please ask Fr. Daniel or Rdr. John Carter.
- The **Parish Life Conference**, hosted by **St. Peter in Fort Worth, TX** is just around the corner. The Conference will run from June 19-22. To register and for more information, visit: [www.dowamapl.org](http://www.dowamapl.org).
- Also the **Antiochian Archdiocese Convention in Grand Rapids, MI** is July 21-28. To register, visit: [ac2019gr.org](http://ac2019gr.org).
- Please consider donating to the **St. Daniel of Pereyaslavl Burial Fund**, which has been established to provide a decent and holy burial for those who lack the means. To contribute to the fund, you can send a check or drop it in the offering basket with the earmark "Burial Fund."

**Contact Us! Let us know what you'd like to see in the newsletter! (This can include articles or events in your life that you'd like to share with the parish community.) Call, text, or email us at:**

tel: (903) 949-1239  
 email: [jones.c4@gmail.com](mailto:jones.c4@gmail.com)

### March Birthdays

- Mar. 4 – Carter Jones
- Mar. 5 – Caroline Richey
- Mar. 7 – Katie Jones
- Mar. 9 – Lisa Aboufaycal
- Mar. 10 – Henry Berry
- Mar. 11 – Jeremy Frank, Shereen Moufarrej, Ella Stewart
- Mar. 12 – Gary Galloway
- Mar. 15 – Mary Brou, Leah Freeman
- Mar. 16 – William Casten
- Mar. 19 – Ronnie Edmiston
- Mar. 21 – Kalil Busada
- Mar. 22 – Sophia Meighan
- Mar. 23 – Jacquelyn Marty, Whitney Busada, Gayle Hearne
- Mar. 24 – Anna Stewart

### March Name Days

- Mar. 10 – Galina Mikhaylova
- Mar. 14 – Matilda Nagim

### April Birthdays

- Apr. 1 – Annelisa Davis
- Apr. 4 – Rachel Edmiston
- Apr. 7 – Zac Williams
- Apr. 8 – Bobby Booras
- Apr. 9 – Elizabeth Filipek, Galina Mikhaylova
- Apr. 10 – Elizabeth Olsen, Joe & Maya Aboufaycal
- Apr. 11 – Philip Johnson, Lynda Delo
- Apr. 14 – Thomas John Filipek
- Apr. 15 – Nicole Baker
- Apr. 22 – Ted Casten
- Apr. 24 – Matthew Berry, Gabriel Floyd
- Apr. 25 – Denise Busada
- Apr. 26 – Devon Floyd
- Apr. 27 – Nikolai Filipek
- Apr. 28 – Michaela Filipek
- Apr. 30 – Vela Busada

### April Name Days

- Apr. 8 – Larissa Williams
- Apr. 12 – Annelisa (Athanasia) Davis



*The*  
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**Navigator**

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