November 2019

THE BRIDGE

Η ΓΕΦΥΡΑ

“Rejoice, bridge that truly leads us from death to life!” Akathist Hymn

DORMITION of the MOTHER of GOD
GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH
600 South Willard St., Burlington, VT 05401

(802) 862-2155 Fax: 881-0717 www.gocvt.org

CLERGY
His Eminence Metropolitan METHODIOS of Boston

Rev. Presbyter Andreas Papayiannis, Proistamenos
Email: priest@gocvt.org; Emergency: 802.881.9459

Rev. Protopresbyter Robert Athas, Retired

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### Dormition Greek Orthodox Church of Burlington, VT

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**November 2019**

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<td><strong>8th Sunday of Luke</strong></td>
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<td><strong>10:15a Lectionary Study</strong></td>
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<td><strong>[Boston]</strong></td>
<td><strong>5:00p Great Vespers</strong></td>
<td><strong>6:00p Greece Pilgrimage Presentation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Gt-Martyr Katherine</strong></td>
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<td><strong>6:30p Divine Liturgy (Vigil) Archdiocesan Holiday</strong></td>
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**Holy Confession after Saturday Great Vespers by Appointment**

*Orthros Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 am; Parish Office hours on Mon.-Tues. 9:30 am – 11:30 am; unless shaded*

*Rev. Father Andreas M. Papayannis, Proištamenos (Presiding Priest) + 802.862.2155 + www.gocvt.org*
Dormition of the Mother of God presents...

Greece: In the Footsteps of Paul the Apostle

featuring a 3-night Greek Islands & Turkey cruise

11 Days • 20 Meals

9/30/2020 — 10/10/2020

To RSVP, call Father Andreas Papayiannis at (802) 862-2155 or priest@gocvt.org

Wednesday, November 20, 2019 • 6:00 PM

Dormition of the Mother of God

600 S Willard St, Burlington, VT 05401

To RSVP, call Father Andreas Papayiannis at (802) 862-2155 or priest@gocvt.org
The Great Feast (Luke 14)
In the Gospel of Luke we read of the man who planned a great feast and invited many people. When it was time to serve the dinner, they were all too busy — one with his farm, one with his bride, another with his oxen. We can become so busy making a living that we forget to make a life. God gets crowded out of our lives over the most unimportant things.

At the first Christmas when Jesus was born, there was no room at the inn. And today we still have no room for Jesus. We crowd Him out with so many things.

In The Screwtape Letters, C.S. Lewis shows how the devil captures us, not by preventing encounters with God, but by whispering in our ear that we are “just too busy right now. We’ll get to that soon. But just not right now.”

Resetting Our Priorities
Just as we budget our financial resources to reflect our priorities, we can re-set our allocation of time. We are all busy, but not all of that busy time is well-spent. We may need to say no to certain demands on our time, opening our schedule to God’s prompting. We can live each day anticipating the opportunities he places in our path to offer our gift of time.

For Further Reflection…
Are you a contributing member of the body of Christ? Are you actively serving God and sharing Him with others? Are you contributing to peace and unity within His body? Do you worship regularly? Take a moment to evaluate your life in light of these principles.

We are called to apply our gifts, training, abilities, education and skills to the tasks that God places before us. If we do this humbly and prayerfully, the body of Christ will function to its full potential.

The Biblical motivation for giving is grace; giving is an act of worship in response to the generosity of God. You are to give, Paul says, “as God has prospered you.” II Corinthians 8 and 9 teach clearly, “He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” God blesses those who give with generosity.

Giving is a way to thank God for His grace and generosity. The question is not, “How much do I give to stay in the club?” or “What are the dues?” but “How can I thank God for my many blessings?”

Stewardship Ministries
GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AMERICA
DEPARTMENT OF STEWARDSHIP, OUTREACH & EVANGELISM
www.stewardship.goarch.org | stewardship@goarch.org
“Teach us to number our days that we may gain a heart of wisdom.”
Psalm 90:12

The first long-term Orthodox Christian missionary priest from America to East Africa was sent by Archbishop Iakovos in mid-1980s. As he gradually assimilated into the local culture, he found the local concept of time to be a most difficult adjustment, and upon his return to America, liked to quote the Kenyans who loved to tell him, “White men have watches. We have time.”

Our brief time on earth is God’s gift. As faithful Christians, we are accountable for our stewardship of this precious gift. The American scientist, Thomas Edison said, “Time is not a commodity that can be stored for future use. It must be invested hour by hour or else it is gone forever.”

“Man is like a breath; his days are like a fleeting shadow.”
Psalm 144:4

Our lifetime is a small bit of eternity, “a fleeting shadow” (Psalm 144), which we receive as stewards. Time is a precious gift that we dare not waste. Like the three stewards in the Parable of the Talents, one day God will call each one of us to give account of how we have used the time entrusted to us.

“A time for every purpose under heaven.”
Ecclesiastes 3:1

There is “a time for every purpose,” as the verse from Ecclesiastes instructs us, “a time to plant, a time to reap…” The challenge is to appropriately allocate our time to the various purposes that make claims on it. The passage teaches us to make the most of God’s great gift of time.

The Gift of Time

“The greatest gift I ever received,” said a young attorney, “was a gift I got one Christmas from my dad. He gave me a small box with a note inside that said, ‘Son, this year I will give you 365 hours, one hour every day after dinner. We’ll talk about what you want to talk about, go where you want to go, play what you want to play.’”

The young attorney continued, “My dad not only kept the promise of his gift, but he renewed it every year – and it’s the greatest gift I ever had in my life. I am the result of his time.”

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The most personal, most appreciated and most unique gift that you can give is the gift of time – your time. That valuable 24 hours a day that only you can spend. Depending on your profession, your time may be worth hundreds of dollars an hour. But the time you give to another person and the Church is priceless.

Our children need our time, helping shape their lives by word and by example. The time we give to our children is an investment in their lives that is not wasted.

Spending Time with God

As Christians it is also important to value the time we spend at church in worship, service and activities. Every member of the Body of Christ plays a role, according to their gifts, in the life of the local church. The church is not a social club, but rather a place where people of faith gather for worship, fellowship and service.

Most importantly, we gather together in worship, praising and thanking God for the blessings in our lives and hearing His Word. Of the 168 hours in every week with which we have been blessed, we offer back the short time we spend in church on Sunday morning and other services, gathered together as the Body of Christ. We are united in prayer and united in Holy Communion. We become His hands and feet carrying out His work in the world. As we offer ourselves and our time as His Church, we are part of something much bigger than we can imagine – much bigger than the project we support, the service we provide, the prayer we offer.
How a Fifteen Year Old Child Martyr Shows Us the Right Path

By Fr. Elias Makos

The New Martyr John who was from Gouves in Monemvasia was a child, just fifteen years old, and his memory is celebrated on October 21st. He was made worthy to be martyred for his faith in God, and in a very tragic way.

His father was an Orthodox priest from Geraki who served with much reverence in the parish of the village of his wife called Gouves, and this is where John was born.

In the year 1770, when John was just a teenager and barely grown up, the hordes of the Albanian Hadji Osman invaded Gouves, and they slaughtered John's father before his very eyes. The young man held him up as being an excellent role model and he loved him, and this event made John grow in maturity even more.

John and his mother were captured and were brought to Larisa.

There John was sold to a Turk, who valued his many gifts and sought to adopt him in order to secure for him a better life, after, of course, he converted to Islam.

John didn't want to even hear about the possibility of becoming a Muslim. He declared he was an Orthodox Christian, who worshiped Jesus Christ as the one true God, just like his parents.

Soon the love of the Turk turned to hatred. And this hatred turned to rage.

This rage manifested itself through torture. After torturing John for not becoming a Muslim, he killed him on 21 October 1773 by driving a knife into his heart. A child of only fifteen showed us the path.
What path is this? It is the path of a genuine life.

It is not enough that we declare ourselves members of the Orthodox Church, and by this we think we have fulfilled our mission.

It is not enough to only have faith but there must also be consistency, and we find this in the person of a boy who did not yet have facial hair.

It is not conceivable to believe correctly and act wrongly. Our lives must be in harmony with our faith and should never be contrary to it.

It is like, for example, a coin with two sides. You cannot have one side without the other.

In order to not get caught up in our imperfections and the lack of a life which practices its faith, we must be people of both right faith and good works.

Otherwise as we get to know ourselves it will be revealed how our soul is suffering and our conscience is wounded.

Source: Translated by John Sanidopoulos.
EDUCATE yourselves and others about the dangers of emails and phone scams.

YOUR PARISH PRIEST should never reach out via personal email to request immediate financial assistance. Be vigilant if you do receive an email that fits this description! Here are some do's and do not's to guide you:

**DO NOT...**
- reply to the message
- click on any links
- download any attachments
- use the contact information provided in the email
- share personal or financial data via email or phone

**DO...FOLLOW THE 3 V’S**
- **VIGILENCE** requires that you should question every email that comes in
- **VERIFY** the email by contacting your parish
- **VERY OFTEN** change your passwords

REPORT CYBER CRIME IMMEDIATELY to the following Federal agencies and to the Archdiocese:
- Federal Trade Commission: ftc.gov/complaint
- FBI: fbi.gov/tips
- Archdiocese Technical Support: techsupport.goarch.org

LEARN MORE by visiting blogs.goarch.org/internet-ministries by contacting the Departments of Internet Ministries and Information Technology with your questions at techsupport.goarch.org.
St. Joseph the Hesychast


His Legacy

Our Holy Elder Joseph was a poor hermit who lived in caves far from society, yet he became one of the Church’s most influential figures of the twentieth century by kindling a revival of the Jesus prayer—a prayer he recommended for both monastics and laymen. He was not interested in cleaning the outside of the cup (cf. Mt 23:25 & Lk 11:39) but worked at the internal cleansing of his heart. Geronda ploughed deeply with his labors and ascesis. He sowed plentifully with unceasing prayer and theoria. He watered abundantly through streams of sweat and floods of tears. And he didn’t despair waiting for the harvest, but patiently endured all his internal and external trials.

However, the fruit of his labors appeared primarily after his repose. Except a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (Jn 12:24). In other words, after he died his labors began to blossom. What was this blossoming? His spiritual children. Geronda tilled, sowed, and watered, and we, his children, have entered into his labors. We are merely harvesting the fruits of that heavenly man. His disciples inherited abundant grace, which attracted many people to them.

When Geronda went to the Holy Mountain in 1921, there were 5,500 monks there. When he reposed in 1959, there were only half as many. Not only was the population decreasing dramatically, but also the average age was significantly higher. In other words, the few monks remaining were decrepit old men for the most part. Young monks were not coming, and the old ones were dying off. Thus in 1971, there were only 1,145 monks left—a mere fifth of what the population had been just fifty years earlier. The situation had become so alarming that many people thought that monasticism would soon disappear from the Holy Mountain.

Things started turning around when Geronda’s disciples began repopulating the monasteries of the Holy Mountain. Many well-educated young men, yearning for noetic prayer, gathered around Geronda’s disciples and formed large brotherhoods. Because of the large size and good reputation of these brotherhoods, they were asked to move into the monasteries, which had only a few old monks living in them. Thus the brotherhood of Papa-Haralambos repopulated Dionysiou Monastery, the brotherhood of Fr. Joseph the Cypriot repopulated Vatopedi Monastery, and my disciples repopulated the monasteries of Philotheou, Xeropotamou, Konstantinou, and Karakallou. [Note: Elder Ephraim was also asked by the Governing Council of the Holy Mountain to repopulate the monastery of the Great Lavra, but he declined.] Moreover, Geronda’s disciples have repopulated and established dozens of women’s monasteries with hundreds of monastics throughout Greece, Cyprus, the United States, and Canada. Meanwhile, the laymen who are grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and great-great-grandchildren of “Pappou” Joseph number in the thousands.

What is even more amazing is that Geronda himself foresaw this renewal. Once, when we were still at the Small Skete of St. Anne, a layman from Ouranoupolis, named John Bitsios, came to visit him. He loved Geronda very much, because Geronda had helped him. After speaking briefly with Geronda, he saw his three disciples working (Fr. Joseph the Cypriot, Papa-Haralambos, and me) and asked: “How nice! Geronda, are these young monks your disciples?” Geronda paused for a moment. Then he smiled and replied with a twinkle in his eye: “You see these young monks? They will take over the Holy Mountain! He foresaw our future, and that is why he told us to separate after his death so that each one of us could form our own large brotherhood. [Note: Elder Sophrony, who came to the Holy Mountain a decade after Elder Joseph did, witnessed the same decline and wrote: “Noetic work, which constitutes the core of genuine monastic life, is now at an extreme low.”].

Furthermore, there has also been a spiritual reawakening due to Elder Joseph. In his days, a spiritual drought prevailed; no one was interested in noetic prayer. Nowadays, though, so many people come to us, his disciples, and say: “We read the letters of Elder Joseph and were deeply moved. Tell us about noetic prayer. Teach us how to pray.” Thus, Geronda continues to inspire people around the world through his letters that have been translated into almost a dozen different languages.

I can say authoritatively that if it weren’t for Geronda, almost no one on the Holy Mountain today would be oc-
occupying himself with noetic prayer. As my spiritual brother, Fr. Joseph the Cypriot, said:

The spiritual renewal on the Holy Mountain—may that indeed Jesu Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Heb 13:8).

Papa-Ephraim of Katounakia had this to say about Geronda: Elder Joseph is an exceptional phenomenon in these contemporary days of spiritual poverty, and his life emits the fragrance of sanctity. The providence of God arranges that there will be such heroes in every generation so that there will always be inspiring examples. Although reading the lives of saints who lived centuries ago is also a source of inspiration, having a contemporary example is much more inspiring.

People sometimes wonder: “Is it possible to live the gospel in modern times? Is it really possible today to live a lofty spiritual life?” They sometimes think that the answer to these questions is “no,” and they become discouraged. After all, times are constantly changing, and living a pure life is becoming more and more difficult. But thanks to God’s providence, spiritual giants like Elder Joseph confirm that indeed Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

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Papa-Ephraim of Katounakia had this to say about Geronda: Elder Joseph was a spiritual giant and a teacher of noetic prayer taught by God. His love for our dear Panagia was unmatched. For her sake he patiently endured everything, and it was from her that he received the great charisma of prayer of the heart. He was counted worthy of seeing her many times in his temporal but angelic life. Alas! Where are people like him nowadays to tell you heavenly words full of grace? His pure heart said the prayer without ceasing: Lord Jesus Christ; have mercy on me, and the Holy Spirit was upon his head.

I believe that Elder Joseph reached higher levels than St. Silouan the Athonite—much higher, in fact.
Nowadays there are no figures like him anymore; he was the last one.

People have told me to write to the Ecumenical Patriarch that Elder Joseph was a saint. I told them, “We shall not do that. God will do that, through the prayers of holy Elder Joseph.” Other people will recommend that the Church examine whether these signs of sanctity are indeed divine signs that he was a saint and should be canonized and celebrated. We won’t make this suggestion ourselves, since they might consider us biased as his spiritual children.

Nevertheless, our conscience tells us that he is a saint. Not only does our conscience say this, but so does the conscience of pious people throughout the world. This is manifest in the faith with which they invoke his prayers, as well as in the demand for his written counsels. It can also be seen in the numerous icons of him that people everywhere have painted. My spiritual brother, Fr. Joseph the Cypriot, has already prepared a service for our Venerable and God-bearing Father, Joseph the hesychast.

Likewise, several others have also composed troparia for him.

In Heaven

Now that Geronda is up in Heaven with the angels, he sees things very clearly. He sees the beauty of heaven that surpasses description, and he knows what hell is. He is probably saying, “I wonder what my spiritual grandchildren are doing?” and he is looking down to see. He was never idle in this life, so he is not about to be idle now. He comes and observes how we are working out our salvation. He provides for us; he helps us; he prays for us; he visits our monasteries; and he is constantly interceding with God so that we do not fail. That is why the demons scream: “Joseph turned into a ghost and goes to the monasteries to help them!”

He entreats God to take special care of us because he knows that we don’t have his ascesis and aren’t at his spiritual level. He sees the dangers we face; he sees our mistakes; he sees our passions. He sees everything and begs God’s mercy for us.

For his prayers to be more effective, all we need is reverence towards this great man. He left this life, yet he is alive and grants us life and grace by visiting us and delivering us—without our seeing him—from many evils that the demons want to inflict on us. His prayers and his presence rescue us miraculously from great harm, even though we don’t realize where this help comes from. For example, once in my sleep I saw three demons disguised as monks, and they were approaching me in order to harm me. One of them was about to kill me, but then Geronda stepped in front and drove them away. When I woke up, I said to myself, “This is Geronda’s protection.”

We are blessed to have such a contemporary intercessor in Heaven. It is a great honor for us, a tremendous benefaction from God. We are unworthy of this, and especially I, who knew him first-hand. God counted me worthy of burying him. It is a great blessing for a disciple to be counted worthy of burying his elder, because in this manner he becomes his successor. It is an honor for us to be blessed to have a patristic inheritance from this man.

Now Geronda is in Heaven, in the sea of God’s Love, and he is enjoying the reward of the labors of his ascetical life and is receiving the consolation for his tears. He shed rivers of tears not just for his own sins but also for the sins of many people. He also shed tears of immense and unbounded love for God our Father.

† † †

So this is my portrayal of my blessed elder. Geronda told us many things about his life so that we would ponder them and continually benefit from them. He left these true stories to us as a spiritual inheritance from his labors, and now I have passed them on to you. We must now take all these examples from his life and make them our own as much as we can. We must try to resemble him in his love for God and man, and in his ascesis—primarily in terms of his spiritual ascesis: through vigil, prayer, and chastity with a spiritually enlightened mind. For since we have a spiritual kinship with him, we have a sacred duty to follow in his footsteps as much as we can. Geronda will be delighted if we try to imitate him; even in a plain and simple manner.

We firmly believe that he has great boldness before God. God took him so that he would intercede for us and prepare a place for us. Let us invoke his prayers. Let us entreat him to make us, too, experience a small part of the spiritual states he had when he was in this life. May we also know God as he knew Him. For this is our goal in life: to know God and to be united with Him. It’s not just a matter of believing in Him the way we do now, but we need to see Him in another way—to see Him through the lens that only people who have contact with Him can.

May Geronda’s intercessions help us to struggle alongside him and have a little bit of his bravery and peace of conscience so that we may depart from this life to the next life painlessly and peacefully. He is waiting for us!

Cry out the prayer without ceasing. May God grant you a blessed beginning! May it not abandon you, or rather, may you not abandon the prayer—the life of the soul, the breath of the heart, the sweet-scented springtime which creates a spiritual spring in the struggling soul.

My children, prayer and humility are the all-powerful weapons which we must keep continuously in our hands with sleepless attentiveness, because these, with God’s help, will give us the victory against the demons.

From “Counsels from the Holy Mountain”

The Letters and Homilies of Elder Ephraim
Philoctochos News and Announcements

The Philoptochos Society is the official philanthropic organization of the Greek Orthodox Church in America. Come and join us in doing the charity of our Orthodox Christian faith in this place. All women of our parish are invited to become members.

Philoctochos means “friend of the poor.”

In April we support the Vermont Foodbank. May Alzheimer’s June The Northern Vermont Chapter of the American Red Cross. The above are all local charities.

Nov 3 Artoclasia by the Contis family. Patriarchate tray

Mon the 4th - 9:30 am Bake Sale prep

Tues the 5th - 9:30 am Bake Sale Baking

Fri the 8th - 10 a.m. Bake Sale Set Up

Sat 9 - Bake Sale and Take out Dinner 10 a.m. - 7 pm

Nov 17 - 12:15 p.m. Philoptochos Meeting

Mission Statement

The Greek Orthodox Ladies Philoptochos Society, Inc., is the duly accredited women's philanthropic society of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America. The mission of the Society shall be:

- To help the poor, the destitute, the hungry, the aged, the sick, the unemployed, the orphaned, the imprisoned, the widowed, the handicapped, the victims of disasters, to undertake the burial of impoverished persons and to offer assistance to anyone who may need the help of the Church through fund raising efforts; and

- To promote the charitable, benevolent, and philanthropic purposes of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America, through instructional programs, presentations, lectures, seminars and other educational resources;

- To preserve and perpetuate Orthodox Christian concepts and the Orthodox Christian Family, and through them, to promote the Greek Orthodox Faith and traditions, in accordance with its doctrines, canons, discipline, divine worship, usages and customs;

- To promote participation in the activities of the Greek Orthodox community, with the cooperation of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council.

The charitable work of the Society shall be performed with discretion, courtesy and kindness.