

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church
(Dormition of the Mother of God)**

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Sunday February 11, 2018

Hieromartyr Blaise (Vlassios), Bishop of Sebaste, and the two children and seven women martyred with him (316); Hieromartyr Lucius of Adrianople (348); Righteous Theodora the Iconodule, wife of Emperor Theophilus the Iconoclast; Saint Blaise the Hieromartyr of Acarnania (1006); Saint Calocerus, disciple of St Apollinaris, whom he succeeded as Bishop of Ravenna, Confessor (c. 130); Martyrs of North-West Africa, the 'Guardians of the Holy Scriptures' (303); Martyrs Saturninus, Dativus, Felix, Ampelius, Victoria and Companions (304) (*see also February 12*); Saint Lazarus of Milan, Archbishop, who defended his flock from the Ostrogoths (449); Saints Priscus the Bishop, with Castrensis, Tammarus, Rosius, Heraclius, Secundinus, Adjutor, Mark, Augustus, Elpidius, Canion and Vindonius, priests (5th century); Saint Severinus, Abbot of Agaunum in Switzerland (507); Saint Desideratus (*Désiré*), successor of St Avitus as Bishop of Clermont in Auvergne (6th century); Saint Desiderius, Bishop of Vienne and martyr (608); Saint Cædmon of Whitby, monk of Whitby, Yorkshire, father of English poetry (c. 680); Saint Gonnait, Abbess of Ballyvourney, Cork, Ireland (7th century); Saint Gregory II, Pope of Rome (731); Saint Benedict of Aniane, monastic reformer (821); Saint Gabriel of Pskov (Prince Vsevolod of Pskov), Prince and wonderworker of Pskov (1138); Venerable Demetrius, monk and wonderworker of Priluki Monastery in Vologda (1392); New Martyr George of Kratovo, Serbia, at Sofia, burned at the stake (1515) Venerable Cassian the Barefoot (in the world 'Kosmas'), ascetic of the Joseph-Volokolamsk Monastery (1532); **Other Commemorations:** Uncovering of the relics of Saint Zechariah the Prophet, the father of St. John the Baptist (415) Repose of Archbishop Simon of Shanghai and Peking (1933).

Services for the week of February 11

Saturday, February 17: 6:00 pm Great Vespers

Parish News

WELCOME: to all of our guests today. We are so glad that you have come to enjoy our Orthodox worship. We invite you to come for coffee and sweets in our church hall and to enjoy fellowship with us. May God bless you!

CHEESEFARE WEEK BEGINS TOMORROW! Today is the Sunday of the Last Judgment. It is also called "Meatfare Sunday" as it is the last day on which to eat meat until Holy Pascha. This week dairy products may be eaten *every day* as well as fish and eggs. Next Sunday is *Cheesefare Sunday* after which all animal products should be removed from the Lenten menu. May God strengthen us to fast!

OFFERINGS: February 4: \$552.00

PLEASE REMEMBER Janet Mikel and Martha Smith as well as Marin Sandu (Dr. Alina's stepfather) who are suffering from serious illness. Fr. John Zboyovski who serves in North Carolina and is known by many in our parish is still recovering from a stroke. Please remember him as well. May God continue to bless and strengthen them!

PARISH ASSESSMENTS are now due. This money is paid to the Diocese and not to the parish. Every member over the age of 18 is asked to pay \$75.00 with a check paid to the parish. The memo line should read: Diocesan Assessment. All the assessments will be bundled by our church and sent in a lump sum to the diocese once all are collected. Anyone who might have trouble with this sum is asked to speak to Fr. Mark. He will confidentially assist. According to our Diocesan laws, this act is one of the two things we do to maintain "official membership" in the parish. The other thing we do is to confess and commune during the Great Fast.

HOME BLESSINGS continue this week. Please speak to Fr. Mark if you would like your home blessed. Two weeks remain until homes cannot be blessed as the Great Fast will begin on February 19.

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING will be held after Liturgy on Sunday, February 25 (Sunday of Orthodoxy). Please plan on attending the meeting so as to have an "update" on what is going on in the parish.

REFLECTION

Matter is not evil of itself as certain Christian heretics, i.e., the Manicheans and other philosophers taught. Not only is matter not evil, but matter is not the sole conduit of evil, but in as much as matter is a conduit, so also is the spirit a conduit of evil. Every material thing is melancholic and even fearful because of man's sins, but matter is not evil. Matter is corruptible, weak and nothingness in comparison to the immortal spirit, but it is not evil of itself. And, if it were evil, would our Lord Christ have instituted Holy Communion of Bread and Wine and would He call the Bread and the Wine His Body and His Blood? If matter, by itself, is evil, how then, would men be baptized with water? How would the Apostle James have commanded that the sick be anointed with oil? How would Blessed Water [Holy Water] remain beyond spoiling and have miracle-working properties? How would the Cross of Christ have power? How would the garment of Christ transmit the healing power of the Savior by which the woman with the issue of blood was healed? How would the relics of the saints and icons have performed so many miracles and conveyed so much good to people from the kingdom of Grace? Therefore, how then could good come to man through evil? No, no; matter is never evil of itself alone.

