

MEN'S FELLOWSHIP

Hello Everyone,

We had a great dinner with Father at the Athenian Restaurant after Vespers last month. Thanks to all who attended!

This month, with all of the work that still needs to be done for the playground, we will be having a breakfast with Father before one of the Saturday workdays.

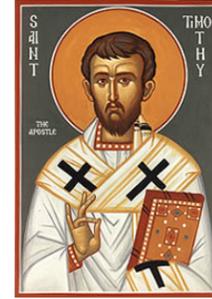
So set your schedules for Breakfast with Father on Saturday, Oct 18—place and exact time to be announced.

Yours in Christ,

Tom

St. Timothy Orthodox Church
4593 Central Way
Fairfield, CA 94534

Postage

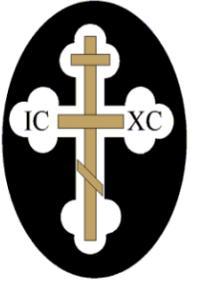


ST TIMOTHY

NEWSLETTER

October, 2014

Volume 2, Issue 9



PASTOR'S NOTES/REFLECTIONS



Some new blisters on our hands

Last Saturday on the 27th of September a team of us St. Timothians gathered at the back lot with shovels, hand tools, a power auger, and a pallet of concrete mix to set posts for our kids playground. We were also blest by Horacio Sevilla, a skilled carpenter, who began with the help of Steve Bishop, to lay out the footprint for the fenced-in playground area. As the holes were being punched in the ground, the rest of the team mixed concrete and set the posts, then the framework was fixed to the posts.

It was a real team effort to be sure. John AbuDawood and Autumn Marti-nelli worked hard with shovels using the Muck Truck mechanical wheelbar-row to collect gravel and add base to some of the drilled holes that needed a slight adjustment in depth. Hard working Johnny was a kick driving that Muck Truck around the project, a kid with his toy.

As the day went on, and significant progress was being made, I was re-minded of the psalmist David's words, "Behold now, what is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity? It is like the oil of Myrrh upon the head, which runneth down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aa-ron, which runneth down to the fringe of his raiment. It is like the dew of

(Continued on page 4)

THE DEACON'S CORNER

A Few Comments about Confession

"For pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us pray to the Lord." (from the litany following the Great Entrance)

Confession is one of the sacraments that our Holy Church offers us. Through par-taking of this aid, we can grow spiritually and avoid negative and harmful behav-ior and ways of thinking. Confession is not a band-aid or magical act, but requires our attention and effort, and most of all, the scouring of our conscience for any-thing that is keeping us from experiencing God's love. The act of scouring our con-science takes place in the most intimate settings, such as during reflection and prayer, and during private conversations with those closest to us. Confession is the act of emptying ourselves of the things in our life that are harmful and we no longer want to carry.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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- > I-Ville to You-Ville Pg 10

EVENTS OF

INTEREST

- > Steve & Clarise Wed . Oct 12
- > Men's Breakfast Oct 18

TREASURER'S

UPDATE

(AUG YTD)

Accounts:

Main	\$ 14,769.54
Rental	\$20,255.03
Bldg/Misc	\$11,303.58
Benevolence	\$ 6,020.01
Bookstore	\$ <u>2,432.20</u>
Total	\$54,780.36

Building Donations this year:

\$8,860.00 (\$1,360.00 for Aug)

Income:

Tithes \$97,803.60

Expenses:

Budgeted \$86,194.35

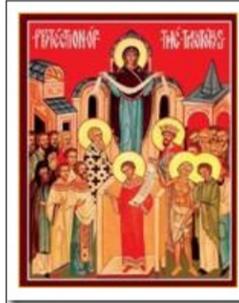
Non-Budgeted:

Renovation \$28,412.35
(paid from existing funds)

Total Net:

Inc - Exp **(\$16,803.10)**

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

**The Protection of Our Most Holy Mother of God**

Oct 1

“Today the Virgin stands in the midst of the Church, and with choirs of Saints she invisibly prays to God for us. Angels and Bishops venerate Her, Apostles and prophets rejoice together, Since for our sake she prays to the Eternal God!”

This miraculous appearance of the Mother of God occurred in the mid-10th century in Constantinople, in the Blachernae church where her robe, veil, and part of her belt were preserved after being transferred from Palestine in the fifth century. On Sunday, October 1, during the All Night Vigil, when the church was overflowing with those at prayer, the Fool-for-Christ St. Andrew lifted up his eyes towards the heavens and beheld our most Holy Lady Theotokos coming through the air, resplendent with heavenly light and surrounded by an assembly of the Saints. St. John the Baptist and the holy Apostle John the Theologian accompanied the Queen of Heaven. On bended knees the Most Holy Virgin tearfully prayed for Christians.

After completing her prayer, she took her veil and spread it over the people in the church, protecting them from enemies both visible and invisible. She was resplendent with heavenly glory, and the protecting veil in her hands gleamed “more than the rays of the sun.” St. Andrew gazed trembling at the miraculous vision, and he asked his disciple, the blessed Epiphanius standing beside him, “Do you see, brother, the Holy Theotokos, praying for all the world?” Epiphanius answered, “I do see, holy Father, and I am in awe.” The Ever-Blessed Mother of God implored the Lord Jesus Christ to accept the prayers of all the people calling on His Most Holy Name, and to respond speedily to her intercession, “O Heavenly King, accept all those who pray to You and call on my name for help. Do not let them not go away from my icon unheard.” Ss. Andrew and Epiphanius were worthy to see the Mother of God at prayer, and “for a long time observed the Protecting Veil spread over the people and shining with flashes of glory. As long as the Theotokos was there, the Protecting Veil was also visible, but when she departed it became invisible. After taking it with her, she left behind the grace of her visitation.”

The memory of the miraculous appearance of the Mother of God was recalled at this same church hundreds of years later. In the 14th century, the Russian pilgrim Alexander saw an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos praying for the world, depicting St. Andrew in contemplation of her. On this feast, we implore the defense and assistance of the Queen of Heaven, “Remember us in your prayers, O Lady Virgin Mother of God, that we not perish by the increase of our sins. Protect us from every evil and from grievous woes, for in you do we hope, and venerating the Feast of your Protection, we magnify you.”

Troparion—Tone 4

*Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy
illuminated by your coming, O Mother of God.*

Beholding your pure image we fervently cry to you:

“Encompass us beneath the precious veil of your protection; deliver us from every form of evil by entreating Christ, your Son and our God that He may save our souls.”

Kontakion—Tone 3

*Today the Virgin stands in the midst of the Church
and with choirs of saints she invisibly prays to God for us. Angels and bishops worship,
apostles and prophets rejoice together,
since for our sake she prays to the pre-eternal God.*

BOOK REPORT Debbie Bishop

Do What Is Right Without Hope of Reward, and Trust God for a Blessing

“It’s better to help someone because we want to, not because we expect something in return. The reward is in God’s hands. He’ll reward us another time, when we’re not even expecting it.... When you do something good, do it in a good way. Don’t expect something in return.” (Pages 67, 69)

Lessons in Prayer

Stubborn’s First Prayer: “Help me to know You better.” This is a great start!

“As he walked on he thought about God, and he talked with Him every minute of the way.” (Page 76)

“You knew I couldn’t go on, and You sent help. Now I understand that without You we can do nothing.” (Page 76)

“So he took refuge in prayer, talking with God as if He were right there next to him, and asking for His help. The conversation brought Stubborn peace....” (Page 89)

“Talking with Him banishes sadness. We cry in front of Him, and it soothes our pain.” (Page 106)

“He always listens. All we have to do is remember Him and talk to Him. Then we’ll be amazed with everything we’ll see happening!” (Page 115)

When God Allows Something Bad to Happen, Something Good Comes of It

“We know that in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)

Have Discernment and Good Intentions, and God Will Guide You

“‘Discernment’ means to know yourself well. If we have a pure heart and good thoughts, God will enlighten us. Then, in every situation, we can make judgments and act in the right way.... Be good-willed and have good intentions, and God won’t leave you. Put Him first, and follow His lead.” (Pages 81-82)

Giving is Better than Receiving

“When you receive something, you feel a human happiness. But then you give, especially when you don’t have much, then you feel a divine joy.” (Page 84)

Remember Good Deeds Done to You, But Forget Good Deeds You Do for Others

“It’s good to remember when people are kind to us. But when we do something good for someone else, let’s try to forget it. If we say, ‘I did this or that good thing,’ then, even though we don’t realize it, our ego gets bigger and causes us trouble.” (Page 85)

Try to Remember to Say, “If God Wills...” or “With God’s Help...”

This helps you be more humble, and reminds you that all of our plans and intentions are ultimately subject to God’s Will, which we can fully trust. Try to memorize James 4:13-16. Verse 15 reads: “Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.”

Do What We Can and Trust God to Help

“We have to do what we can... When we’ve done everything humanly possible, and there’s still no result, then we can expect God to step in – if we’ve asked Him, of course.” (Page 92)

We Worry Too Much

“The bad thing about people is that most times we fret and worry about things that may never happen.... I’m not saying that life doesn’t have its difficulties. It’s just that we have to face them with God by our side.” (Pages 93, 95)

Other Miscellaneous Principles from the Book

Love is the “weapon” that “beats” people from I-Ville.

It’s good to put a limit on our wishes so we appreciate what we have.

Try to listen to and follow the “little voice” in your heart. This is your conscience.

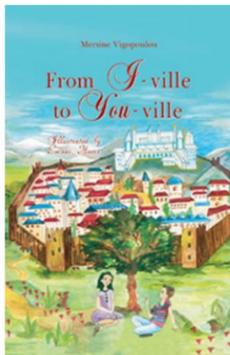
shaded squares note a Fast Day

Service schedule for every week:
 5:30pm Friday, Paraklesis
 6:30pm Saturday, Great Vespers. Confessions heard
 9:00am Sunday, Orthros
 10:00am Sunday, Divine Liturgy

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	St. Thomas the Apostle		1 Protection of the Theotokos +Helen Stewart	2	3 Paraklesis +Tatiana Stewart	4 Church Workday
5	6	7	8 Parish Council Meeting 7:00 pm	9	10 Paraklesis	11 Church Workday
12 Steve and Clarise Wedding Holy Cross OCA, Sacramento	13	14	15	16	17 Paraklesis	18 Church Workday Men's Breakfast St. Luke the Evangelist
19	20 +Jean Busher	21	22 +Michael Elias Abughazaleh	23	24 Paraklesis	25 Playground Workday
26 St. Demetrios the Myrrhbearer	27	28	29	30	31 Paraklesis	
31						

- Birthdays (B), Patron Saints (P) & Anniversaries (A)**
- 1 Abir Awwad (B)
 - 1 Johanna Cates (B)
 - 6 Tom Bennett (P)
 - 7 Abed H. Fashho (P)
 - 7 Abed K. Fashho (P)
 - 8 Samantha Awwad (B)
 - 10 Georgette Sayegh (B)
 - 10 Joan Coor (B)
 - 10 Dr Andrew & Ruth Andrews (A)
 - 11 Gareth Busher (P)
 - 16 Mary Denezis-Rantisi (B)
 - 17 Azieb Gebregiorghis (P)
 - 17 Mulu Gebregiorghis (P)
 - 20 Irena Dibs (B)
 - 22 Marina Awwad (B)
 - 23 James Boubonis (P)
 - 23 James Brezniski (P)
 - 24 Abed K. Fashho (B)
 - 24 Samir & Abir Awwad (A)
 - 26 Susan & David Johns (A)
 - 28 Mandy Fashho (B)
 - 29 Abeer Fashho (B) (P)

BOOK REPORT Debbie Bishop



From I-Ville To You-Ville: The Timeless Wisdom Of Elder Paisios Of The Holy Mountain
 by Mersine Vigopoulou; For Children And Adults

From I-ville to You-ville is a well-known, best selling Orthodox Christian children’s book from Greece. This is a Christian allegory with the unique and wise counsel of Elder Paisios of the Holy Mountain presented in a way that is perfect for children and adults alike. In every turn and twist of this adventure of a young man making his way from his home of I-ville to the unknown, but longed-for, kingdom of You-ville the author masterfully weaves the wisdom of the elder into the fabric of the story, constructing a seamless garment of beauty, charm and enlightenment.

I-ville is a Kingdom where pride and selfishness dwell, and where people live by the motto “Me first!” You-ville is a Kingdom where humility and kindness reign, and where people put the good of others before their own.

This is the story of a young boy named Stubborn, who strives to become the first person of I-ville to make the difficult journey to the beautiful, joy-filled Kingdom of You-ville, and to become a citizen there.

As we join Stubborn in his adventures, we learn, along with him, profound lessons in how to struggle against bad thoughts and feelings. The journey of young Stubborn is one that all of us - old and young - must take, and which all of us can accomplish - if only we shrink our “I” and put “You” first!

Patrick Barnes, editor of the Orthodox Christian Information Center and co-editor of the book, read the book to his 4th grade Sunday School class and shares some things the book taught them:

Our Big “I” (Ego) Prevents Us from Seeing and Hearing Clearly

“People from I-Ville can’t see very clearly, because their big egos dull their vision. They only hear what they want to hear, and they always think that what they say is correct.” (Page 47) Realize that “seeing” means discerning/understanding, and “hearing” means the ability to receive advice or criticism. So we understand these bodily senses in a spiritual way.

When Angry Keep Silent

The Elder noticed that Stubborn was angry and upset, so instead of talking with him, he suggested he go to bed. “Last night, your hurrying [to know how to find You-Ville] made you anxious, so you became angry and it was impossible for us to talk. The best medicine against anger is silence. A conversation ought to be conducted in peace and tranquility. Otherwise, we say things we shouldn’t say.” (Page 26, 28)

Shrink Your Ego By Humbling Yourself and Putting Others First

To get to You-Ville you must “put the other person’s good before your own. You have to say that the people around you are like you, and even better. When you not only say this, but also live it, then your ego – your big ‘I’ – will become smaller.” (Page 29)

Think Good Thoughts to Make an Easy Road

“On your journey, be careful how you think – what kind of thoughts you have. Always think good thoughts. As long as you do this, the road will be easy. But when you have bad thoughts you will have difficulties, and you’ll get tired but not accomplish anything.” (Page 30)

One Bad Thought Leads to Another

“When you have a bad thought, try to get rid of it. When you start to believe it, it leads to another bad thought.” (Page 38)

Bad Thoughts Slip from the Mind to the Heart, Causing Problems

“Before you know it, from your mind [bad thoughts] slip into your heart.... And when they reach the heart, anger comes, then evil-heartedness, and one bad thing leads to another.” (Page 38)

Give No Attention to Bad Thoughts. Instead, Replace Them with Good Thoughts

“So, right from the beginning, you need to get rid of bad thoughts and pay no attention to them.... Replace the bad thoughts you have with a good one. Be patient, be firm, and you’ll overcome your bad thoughts.” (Page 38)

PASTOR'S NOTES/REFLECTIONS ... *(Continued from page 1)*

Aermon, which cometh down upon the mountains of Sion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing, life for evermore" (Psalm 133).

Led by His grace in our lives, and the bodily strength that He has endowed us with, and a few new blisters, we participated together as the Body of Christ in this most worthy effort for our children and for our community. God is not indifferent and neither are we, for we have a vision for the future, and that vision most definitely includes our children, and creating a play area for them, where they can physically and emotionally express their joy, this is not an option, but a necessity.

As we fully enter into Fall and the changing of the seasons may we all find a way and purpose to participate, as God gives us grace, to find our talent in giving back to Him, as He has most profoundly given to us. We have set a course, and that course includes the expansion of our Nave and Sanctuary into the middle bay and renters space of our building. Along with the playground and landscape project, there is plenty of work to do for all who would take up the charge and commit themselves to the tasks at hand.

In closing we all thank God for the many new faces and families that He has brought into our community. May God richly bless those new families, and their household, in every way, and continue to grow and strengthen our community, the Body of Christ, here at St. Timothy's

Fr John

THE DEACON'S CORNER ... *(Continued from page 1)*

God loves us regardless of whether we love Him and regardless of our behavior, but in order for us to receive and experience that love more fully and to continue to grow in that love, we make an effort to be healed (through the many spiritual medicines that are available to us) of spiritual illnesses. Confession is one such medicine. At times I have looked forward to going to confession as much as I look forward to going to the dentist. At other times I have gone to confession with joy. But I know that avoiding this sacrament deprives me of the help that the church provides.

The act of confessing sins has a public aspect to it. We bring our sins to a priest who acts on behalf of the community to witness our repentance. Confessing our sins is also connected with receiving the Holy Eucharist, as part of the discipline of receiving the Lord Jesus Christ into our lives. If our own will and choice are not involved in going to confession, then we cannot be healed (because we cannot force God to heal us, but rather are vulnerable before our Creator). For this reason we try to avoid confessing sins to impress anyone or to fulfill a quota in a mechanical manner. Rather, we confess sins before a priest so that we can live our Christian lives to the fullest. Regular confession, if sincere, helps us in the journey towards the Kingdom of God.

Deacon John

SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS**HYMN OF PRAISE****The Holy Apostle Thomas**

The Apostle Thomas, by his unbelief,
Strengthened his faith: the Lord appeared to him.
Thomas witnessed Him and rejoiced,
And joyfully glorified Christ.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

education as well as his administrative and military abilities, appointed him to his father's position as proconsul of the Thessalonica district. The main tasks of this young commander were to defend the city from barbarians and to eradicate Christianity. The emperor's policy regarding Christians was expressed simply, "Put to death anyone who calls on the name of Christ." The emperor did not suspect that by appointing Demetrius he had provided a way for him to lead many people to Christ.

Accepting the appointment, Demetrius returned to Thessalonica and immediately confessed and glorified our Lord Jesus Christ. Instead of persecuting and executing Christians, he began to teach the Christian Faith openly to the inhabitants of the city and to overthrow pagan customs and idolatry. The compiler of his Life, St Simeon Metaphrastes (November 9), says that because of his teaching zeal he became "a second Apostle Paul" for Thessalonica, particularly since "the Apostle to the Gentiles" once founded at this city the first community of believers (1 Thess. and 2 Thess.).

The Lord also destined St Demetrius to follow the holy Apostle Paul as a martyr. When Maximian learned that the newly-appointed proconsul was a Christian, and that he had converted many Roman subjects to Christianity, the rage of the emperor knew no bounds. Returning from a campaign in the Black Sea region, the emperor decided to lead his army through Thessalonica, determined to massacre the Christians.

Learning of this, St Demetrius ordered his faithful servant Lupus to distribute his wealth to the poor saying, "Distribute my earthly riches among them, for we shall seek heavenly riches for ourselves." He began to pray and fast, preparing himself for martyrdom.

When the emperor came into the city, he summoned Demetrius, who boldly confessed himself a Christian and denounced the falsehood and futility of Roman polytheism. Maximian gave orders to lock up the confessor in prison. An angel appeared to him, comforting and encouraging him.

Meanwhile the emperor amused himself by staging games in the circus. His champion was a German by the name of Lyaeos. He challenged Christians to wrestle with him on a platform built over the upturned spears of the victorious soldiers. A brave Christian named Nestor went to the prison to his advisor Demetrius and requested a blessing to fight the barbarian. With the blessing and prayers of Demetrius, Nestor prevailed over the fierce German and hurled him from the platform onto the spears of the soldiers, just as the murderous pagan would have done with the Christian. The enraged commander ordered the execution of the holy Martyr Nestor (October 27) and sent a guard to the prison to kill St Demetrius.

At dawn on October 26, 306 soldiers appeared in the saint's underground prison and ran him through with lances. His faithful servant, St Lupus, gathered up the blood-soaked garment of St Demetrius, and he took the imperial ring from his finger, a symbol of his high status, and dipped it in the blood. With the ring and other holy things sanctified by the blood of St Demetrius, St Lupus began to heal the infirm. The emperor issued orders to arrest and kill him.

The body of the holy Great Martyr Demetrius was cast out for wild animals to devour, but the Christians took it and secretly buried it in the earth.

During the reign of St Constantine (306-337), a church was built over the grave of St Demetrius. A hundred years later, during the construction of a majestic new church on the old spot, the incorrupt relics of the holy martyr were uncovered. Since the seventh century a miraculous flow of fragrant myrrh has been found beneath the crypt of the Great Martyr Demetrius, so he is called "the Myrrh-gusher."

Several times, those venerating the holy wonderworker tried to bring his holy relics, or a part of them, to Constantinople. Invariably, St Demetrius made it clear that he would not permit anyone to remove even a portion of his relics. It is interesting that among the barbarians threatening the Romans, Slavs occupied an important place, in particular those settling upon the Thessalonian peninsula. Some even believe that the parents of St Demetrius were of Slavic descent. While advancing towards the city, pagan Slavs were repeatedly turned away by the apparition of a threatening radiant youth, going around on the walls and inspiring terror in the enemy soldiers. Perhaps this is why the name of St Demetrius was particularly venerated among the Slavic nations after they were enlightened by the Gospel. On the other hand, the Greeks dismiss the notion of St Demetrius being a Slavic saint.

St Demetrius is regarded as a protector of the young, and is also invoked by those struggling with lustful temptations.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

**The Holy and Glorious Apostle Thomas**

Oct 6

Born in the Galileian city of Pansada, the holy Apostle Thomas was a fisherman who, upon hearing the good tidings of Jesus Christ, left all and followed after Him. The Apostle Thomas is included in the number of the holy Twelve Apostles of the Savior.

According to Holy Scripture, the holy Apostle Thomas did not believe the reports of the other disciples about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ: "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (John 20:25).

On the eighth day after the Resurrection, the Lord appeared to the Apostle Thomas and showed him His wounds. "My Lord and my God," the Apostle cried out (John 20:28).

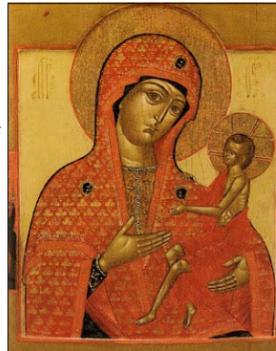
"Thomas, being once weaker in faith than the other apostles," says St John Chrysostom, "toiled through the grace of God more bravely, more zealously and tirelessly than them all, so that he went preaching over nearly all the earth, not fearing to proclaim the Word of God to savage nations."

Some icons depicting this event are inscribed "The Doubting Thomas." This is incorrect. In Greek, the inscription reads, "The Touching of Thomas." In Slavonic, it says, "The Belief of Thomas." When St Thomas touched the Life-giving side of the Lord, he no longer had any doubts.

According to Church Tradition, the holy Apostle Thomas founded Christian churches in Palestine, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Ethiopia and India. Preaching the Gospel earned him a martyr's death. For having converted the wife and son of the prefect of the Indian city of Meliapur [Melipur], the holy apostle was locked up in prison, suffered torture, and finally, pierced with five spears, he departed to the Lord. Part of the relics of the holy Apostle Thomas are in India, in Hungary and on Mt. Athos. The name of the Apostle Thomas is associated with the Arabian (or Arapet) Icon of the Mother of God (September 6) (see below).

The Arapet, or "Arabian" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos appeared while the holy Apostle Thomas (October 6) was evangelizing Ethiopia, Arabia, and India.

Instead of the usual three stars (signifying the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God), the outer garment of the Theotokos has three circles with the head of an angel inside each one. In this feature, it resembles the icons "In Giving Birth you Preserved your Virginity" ("A Virgin Before and After Giving Birth") (October 17) and "O All-Hymned Mother" (October 6).

**Holy, Glorious Demetrius the Myrrh-gusher of Thessalonica**

Oct 26

The Great Martyr Demetrius the Myrrh-gusher of Thessalonica was the son of a Roman proconsul in Thessalonica. Three centuries had elapsed and Roman paganism, spiritually shattered and defeated by the multitude of martyrs and confessors of the Savior, intensified its persecutions. The parents of St Demetrius were secretly Christians, and he was baptized and raised in the Christian Faith in a secret church in his father's home,

By the time Demetrius had reached maturity and his father had died, the emperor Galerius Maximian had ascended the throne (305). Maximian, confident in Demetrius'

(Continued on page 9)

SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS

India became Thomas's vineyard
And he cultivated that land with the Cross:
Preaching Christ to the mighty and the lowly,
Preaching His wisdom and His works.

O wise sons of India,
Your wisdom is but a snake in the grass.
Lo, true Wisdom has descended from heaven for you-
The Wisdom of God has appeared in the flesh!

Thomas spoke and worked miracles,
And a multitude of people followed him,
In hearing his wisdom, and beholding the wonders
That Thomas worked in the name of the Lord.

Thomas endured great torments,
But shattered the gates of the darkness of idolatry,
And suffered, like Christ, five cruel wounds,
Which he received in his body for the sake of the truth.

Five bitter wounds, for the number of the senses-
Which is a lesson in mystical wisdom:
He who subdues not all his senses
Will taste of no spiritual sweetness.

REFLECTION

We have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (II Corinthians 5:1), says the discerning Apostle Paul. All our efforts for God on earth have this purpose: to merit, according to our power, this eternal house in the heavens not made by hands. The Indian King Gundafor decided to build himself a magnificent palace, unlike any other on earth. When Abban, his envoy, sought a skilled craftsman to build the king's palace, he met the Apostle Thomas by God's providence. St. Thomas told him that he was a craftsman, and that no one else could build what the king wanted. Thomas therefore received much gold from the king for the building of this palace. As soon as he departed from the king, he distributed all the gold to the poor. The palace site was some distance from the king's capital, and after two years the king sent servants to ask Thomas if the palace was completed. Thomas replied: "Everything is ready except the roof," and he sought more money from the king; and the king gave it to him. Again, Thomas distributed it all to the poor, and went throughout the kingdom doing his work, preaching the Gospel. The king, learning that Thomas had not even begun to build the palace, seized him and threw him into prison. That night, the king's brother died, and the king fell into great sorrow. An angel took the soul of the deceased and, leading him through Paradise, showed him a magnificent palace, such as the mind of man could not imagine. The soul of the deceased wished to enter that palace, but the angel told him that he could not, for it was his brother's palace, which the Apostle Thomas had built with his alms. Then the angel returned the brother's soul to his body. When he came to himself, he said to the king: "Swear to me that you will give me anything I ask." And the king swore. Then the brother said: "Give me the palace that you have in the heavens." The king was amazed that he had a palace in the heavens. When the brother described everything in detail, the king believed and immediately released Thomas from prison. Then, when he heard the apostle's preaching of salvation and eternal life, the king and his brother were baptized. King Gundafor undertook new works of charity, and built an even more magnificent palace in the heavens for himself.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

**The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke**

Oct 18

The Holy Apostle and Evangelist Luke, was a native of Syrian Antioch, a companion of the holy Apostle Paul (Phil.1:24, 2 Tim. 4:10-11), and a physician enlightened in the Greek medical arts. Hearing about Christ, Luke arrived in Palestine and fervently accepted the preaching of salvation from the Lord Himself. As one of the Seventy Apostles, St Luke was sent by the Lord with the others to preach the Kingdom of Heaven during the Savior's earthly life (Luke 10:1-3). After the Resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to Sts Luke and Cleopas on the road to Emmaus.

Luke accompanied St Paul on his second missionary journey, and from that time they were inseparable. When Paul's coworkers had forsaken him, only Luke remained to assist him in his ministry (2 Tim. 4:10-11). After the martyric death of the First-Ranked Apostles Peter and Paul, St Luke left Rome to preach in Achaia, Libya, Egypt and the Thebaid. He ended his life by suffering martyrdom in the city of Thebes.

Tradition credits St Luke with painting the first icons of the Mother of God. "Let the grace of Him Who was born of Me and My mercy be with these Icons," said the All-Pure Virgin after seeing the icons. St Luke also painted icons of the First-Ranked Apostles Peter and Paul. St Luke's Gospel was written in the years 62-63 at Rome, under the guidance of the Apostle Paul. In the preliminary verses (1:1-3), St Luke precisely sets forth the purpose of his work. He proposes to record, in chronological order, everything known by Christians about Jesus Christ and His teachings. By doing this, he provided a firmer historical basis for Christian teaching (1:4). He carefully investigated the facts, and made generous use of the oral tradition of the Church and of what the All-Pure Virgin Mary Herself had told him (2:19, 51).

In St Luke's Gospel, the message of the salvation made possible by the Lord Jesus Christ, and the preaching of the Gospel, are of primary importance. St Luke also wrote the Acts of the Holy Apostles at Rome around 62-63 A.D. The Book of Acts, which is a continuation of the four Gospels, speaks about the works and the fruits of the holy Apostles after the Ascension of the Savior. At the center of the narrative is the Council of the holy Apostles at Jerusalem in the year 51, a Church event of great significance, which resulted in the separation of Christianity from Judaism and its independent dissemination into the world (Acts 15:6-29). The theological focus of the Book of Acts is the coming of the Holy Spirit, Who will guide the Church "into all truth" (John 16:13) until the Second Coming of Christ.

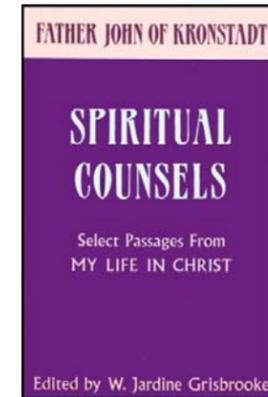
The holy relics of St Luke were taken from Constantinople and brought to Padua, Italy at some point in history. Perhaps this was during the infamous Crusade of 1204. In 1992, Metropolitan Hieronymus (Jerome) of Thebes requested the Roman Catholic bishop in Thebes to obtain a portion of St Luke's relics for the saint's empty sepulchre in the Orthodox cathedral in Thebes.

The Roman Catholic bishop Antonio Mattiazzo of Padua, noting that Orthodox pilgrims came to Padua to venerate the relics while many Catholics did not even know that the relics were there, appointed a committee to investigate the relics in Padua, and the skull of St Luke in the Catholic Cathedral of St Vico in Prague.

The skeleton was determined to be that of an elderly man of strong build. In 2001, a tooth found in the coffin was judged to be consistent with the DNA of Syrians living near the area of Antioch dating from 72-416 A.D. The skull in Prague perfectly fit the neck bone of the skeleton. The tooth found in the coffin in Padua was also found to fit the jawbone of the skull.

Bishop Mattiazzo sent a rib from the relics to Metropolitan Hieronymus to be venerated in St Luke's original tomb in the Orthodox cathedral at Thebes.

SPIRITUAL INSIGHTS

**The Approach of Man to God: Faith, Hope, Trust**From *Father John of Kronstadt, Spiritual Counsels*

Faith is the key to God's treasury: *All things are possible to him that believeth*. Faith is a spiritual mouth, and the more freely it opens, the more freely may the divine streams enter in. Let it open freely, then, as does your bodily mouth; let not your lips be closed by doubt—if they are, the treasury of God's blessing will be closed to you.

What is faith? Sureness of spiritual truth, of that which is, or of, God. To believe means to be as sure of the reality of the spiritual world as of the material world.

Nothing is impossible to those who believe: lively and unshaken faith can accomplish great miracles in the twinkling of an eye. And even without it miracles are wrought, such as those accomplished in the sacraments; for God's mystery is always accomplished, even when

we are lacking in faith, when it is celebrated.

Faith gives rest and joy; unbelief trouble and wounds.

How many say 'I believe in God' without really believing! How many are silent when it is necessary to defend the glory of God's truth, or to put a stop to irreverence or blasphemy.

Men have fallen into unbelief because they have either completely lost the spirit of prayer, or never had it—in short because they do not pray.

Unfortunately our faith is hindered by the short-sightedness of our reason. Faith understands directly whilst reason arrives at the truth by circuitous ways; faith is the means of communication between the spiritually sensual and the simply material; the first is of the spirit, and the latter of the flesh.

If from time to time we do not stir up the fervor of faith in our heart, eventually faith may become entirely extinct in us. The enemy takes pains to attain this end, which is why we see men who are Christians only in name, while their actions are quite heathen.

The means to confirm and strengthen Christian hope are prayer, especially frequent and sincere prayer, confession of our sins, frequent reading of the Word of God, and, above all, frequent communion of the holy and life giving sacraments of the Body and Blood of Christ.

If you indeed call God your Father, then trust in him as in the one Father, most merciful, all powerful, most wise, ever-loving, ever perfect. Trust in him in respect to the blessings of this temporal life, but above all in respect of the future blessings which shall be granted you in Christ Jesus. But as through the love of the heavenly Father for you you have become the child of God; for you have come forth from Him endowed with reason and free-will; so on your part you should make every effort to reach that blessed and eternal heavenly inheritance.

Let that which calms my mind and my heart be committed to writing that I may return to constant peace of heart amidst the cares of life. What is it? It is this saying, full of trust and power: "The Lord is everything to me". This is the priceless treasure, which if we possess we can be calm in every estate, rich in poverty, generous and kind to others in time of wealth, and not losing hope even after having sinned.

The Lord is everything to you, and you must be everything to the lord. As all your treasure is in your heart and your will, and God asks of you your heart, saying, *My son, give me thine heart*, therefore in order to fulfill God's perfect will, renounce your own corrupt, wayward, plausible will, and know it not; know only God's will. *Not my will, but thine be done*

Father John of Kronstadt, Spiritual Counsels

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