



THE Veil

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In this Issue:

**Commemorations
& Calendar**
(pp 2–3)

**Unusual Lent,
Holy Week, &
Pascha** (pp 4–5)

**St. Mary's
Meeting Financial
Challenges** (p5)

**Doxacon Planning
Virtual Conference**
(p5)

**April Parish Council
Summary** (p7)

**St. Timothy
Project to Form
Connections
Amidst Isolation**
(p7)

**Mutability and Our
Life in Christ** (p6)

**Stop and Hear
What God is
Saying** (p6)

Christ is risen! Truly He is risen!

My brothers and sisters, I greet you in the joy of the Lord's Resurrection. After the difficulties of our early transition to online services in March, last month's service finally came together and culminated in a very special Holy Week and Pascha for the parish (see Jonathan J.'s excellent article on pp 4–5 detailing the transition). It was a great relief to see that one hundred households were plugged in to services on Pascha either on Zoom or YouTube, and we have had really great attendance in Holy Week and throughout the services. But it is not just the numbers of attendees that has comforted me, but also the great feedback about the whole experience we've been hearing. It's not the Pascha and Lent any of us wanted, but it has come with its own special blessings. Here are some of the things I have been told (some paraphrased from memory) in the last couple weeks.

- *"Thank you to everyone who has helped make this happen for the last week! We've joined you all every night for Holy Week. It made Holy Week very meaningful for our family and we loved seeing some familiar faces that we've missed. And thank you to whoever was in charge of uploading the service text! That was extremely helpful to follow along!"*
- *"Christ is risen! There are no words to express my heartfelt thanks to all who worked so hard to stream the services."*
- *"Truly He is risen! FINALLY, a good use of technology for me — I got to attend the celebration with my St. Mary's family!"*
- *"What a wonderful way to share our Orthodox faith during this time."*
- *"This was one of the best Holy Weeks I ever had. Working from home and being able to hear the services daily really allowed me to go deeper into them than I normally do."*

- *"The services have been a real lifeline for me as I am at home by myself most of the time, but I felt connected to my church community."*
- *"It really saved my life while I was sick, and I am so grateful for everybody working so hard on it."*
- *"I really enjoyed setting up a tomb for Christ in my house. Sure, we get to go and venerate every year at the Church, but it was special to have the Lord in my home this way. It's something I'd like to do again."*

As for your parish priest, this was indeed a special Pascha for me as well. In some ways just as exhausting as usual, but in other ways more relaxed and peaceful. Of course, what I miss most of all is being able to offer the Divine Liturgy and I long to be able to commune with you again in the Eucharist, but I am grateful for the lessons and blessings this time of inadvertent penance has offered. I am extraordinarily grateful to choir director Subdeacon Nicholas J. and communications manager Sophia P. without whom this period would have been very difficult and different. They are worthy!

We've also discovered that using Zoom for things like bible study and discussion group has made it possible for more people to get involved, so we anticipate continuing to offer opportunities for virtual attendance at such events even after the pandemic subsides. Likewise, we will continue to host streaming of services even when we are able to be back at the parish building together.

My beloved, it looks like we will also be under this obedience at least through May. May this period be a blessing for you in the light of the Lord's Pascha! ✠

— **FR. DAVID**



Commemorations

Don't see your name? Join us on Realm and fill out your profile. If you include your birthday and nameday, you'll see them here.

God grant you many years!

NAME DAYS

May 24 — St. Vincent of Lerins (Chris G.)

ANNIVERSARIES

May 5 — Glenn & Antonia P.

May 19 — James & Stephanie T.

BIRTHDAYS

Natalie A.	Alex J.	Ivan P.
Jordan B.	Ho K.	Kevin R.
Weseley C.	Irene L.	Lucian R.
Aaron D.	Jeff M.	Scott S.
Andrew D.	Megan M.	Matthew S.
Catherine D.	Nick M.	Beilul Y.
Leah F.	Fotina N.	Robert Y.
Chris G.	Patrick O.	
Warren H.	Veronica P.	



Stay Connected to St. Mary's on Realm

Have you signed up for Realm yet? Realm is the best way to keep in touch with St. Mary's through the COVID-19 quarantine. Through Realm, you'll be able to receive news from St. Mary's, stay informed on what services are offered online, event links, participate in interest groups, and get other updates from Fr. David and your fellow parishioners.

To sign up, simply email sophia@stmaryorthodox.org with your name and birthday, and we'll help you get started!

A NOTE FROM THE TREASURER

Traditionally, parishioners at St Mary have been generous and have provided a **Paschal bonus for Father David**. If you would like to contribute to that for 2020, please make a donation and write "Paschal Bonus" in the memo line of your check or in the appropriate field in the various online methods of giving. If you are unsure how to make a donation, please email stmary_treasurer@outlook.com. Thank you!

Bored at home? Miss the church?



Sign up for **Church Lawn Mowing!**

For details, contact Nicholas Masick at chinotwo@hotmail.com
An outdoor, socially distant activity

WED NIGHT ADULT EDUCATION

So Great a Cloud of Witnesses

A 5-Week Series on Sanctified Women in the Orthodox Tradition

BEGINS WEDNESDAY, MAY 6
AFTER VESPERS



Events are subject to change. Please check the calendar at stmaryorthodox.org/calendar for the most up-to-date event listings, service texts, and YouTube links to the services. Unless otherwise stated, all services and events are streamed online. Zoom links and passwords can be found on Realm.

MAY

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<p>3</p> <p>9:30am-11am Matins & Typika</p> <p>11am-11:30am Sunday School</p> <p>11am-12:00pm Virtual Coffee Hour</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>6</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7:00pm-7:30pm Daily Vespers</p> <p>7:30-8:30pm Adult Education</p>	<p>7 ST. ALEXIS OF WILKES-BARRE</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>6pm-7pm Doxacon Meeting</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>12pm-1pm Book Study</p>	<p>2</p> <p>5pm-6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>10</p> <p>9:30am-11am Matins & Typika</p> <p>11am-12:00pm Virtual Coffee Hour</p>	<p>11</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7pm-7:30pm Vespers for the Mid-Feast of Pentecost</p>	<p>13 MIDFEAST OF PENTECOST</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7:30-8:30pm Adult Education</p>	<p>14</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>15</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>12pm-1pm Book Study</p>	<p>16</p> <p>5pm-6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>17</p> <p>9:30am-11am Matins & Typika</p> <p>11am-12:00pm Virtual Coffee Hour</p> <p>6pm-8pm Men's Group</p>	<p>18</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7pm-9pm Parish Council</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7pm-8:30pm Women's Bible Study</p>	<p>20</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7:00pm-7:30pm Daily Vespers</p> <p>7:30-8:30pm Adult Education</p>	<p>21 SAINTS CONSTANTINE AND ELENI</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>22</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>12pm-1pm Book Study</p>	<p>23</p> <p>5pm-6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>24</p> <p>9:30am-11am Matins & Typika</p> <p>11am-12:00pm Virtual Coffee Hour</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>26</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>27 LEAVETAKING OF PASCHA</p> <p>Paschal Service (TBA)</p> <p>7:00pm-7:30pm Daily Vespers</p> <p>7:30-8:30pm Adult Education</p>	<p>28</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>Ascension Liturgy (TBA)</p>	<p>29</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>12pm-1pm Book Study</p>	<p>30</p> <p>5pm-6pm Great Vespers</p>
<p>31</p> <p>9:30am-11am Matins & Typika</p> <p>11am-12:00pm Virtual Coffee Hour</p>	<p>1</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>2</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>3</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>7:00pm-7:30pm Daily Vespers</p> <p>7:30-8:30pm Adult Education</p>	<p>4</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7:15-7:45am Morning Prayers</p> <p>12pm-1pm Book Study</p>	<p>6</p> <p>5pm-6pm Great Vespers</p>



An Unusual Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha

PARISH LIFE REPORT | JONATHAN J.



During February 2020, I was aware of the spread of COVID-19 in Asia, but was still expecting this Great Lent to be similar to other Lents I've experienced since my family and I became Orthodox in 2003. I would prepare to fast from certain foods as well as social media activity, and would attend the pre-sanctified liturgies to be offered on Wednesdays during March and April. On Forgiveness Sunday, March 1, 2020, I joined with members of St. Mary's, including my wife and one of my daughters, in the rite of mutual forgiveness and wishing each other a blessed fast. On March 7, some members of the parish attend a Divine Liturgy for St. Theodore Saturday while others watched on StreamingChurch.TV. The next day, March 8, we celebrated the Sunday of Orthodoxy, albeit without the procession with icons that occurred in past years.

By the middle of March, my expectations had changed. The emerging spread of COVID-19 across the United States led Governor Northam to declare a state of emergency in Virginia on March 12, and President Trump to declare a national

emergency on March 13. Work at my federal agency shifted to telework at this time. I abandoned thoughts of a social media fast as I tried to stay connected with friends. While several dozen members of St. Mary's gathered together for the Divine Liturgy on March 15, the mood was different than before. Many parishioners stayed home out of concern for their own health, or the health of loved ones or neighbors at greater risk. By March 17, our bishop, Archbishop Nathaniel of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America, instructed parishes to stop all liturgical, administrative, and social gatherings, including the Divine Liturgy, through March 31. On March 23, Governor Northam banned all public and private gatherings of more than 10 persons through June 10.

On April 2, Archbishop Nathaniel instructed Fr. David and other priests of the diocese who *"drive to the church [that] services may not be conducted by him in the church for the reason of re-locating from place to place. He may serve in his home. The services blessed to be served may all be broadcast through appropriate social media."* These instructions applied not only

to services for the remainder of Great Lent, but also for Holy Week, Pascha, and Bright Week. It was now clear to me that not only this *"lentiest of Lents"*, but Holy Week and Pascha as well, would be unlike any others I had experienced. While our time away from the Divine Liturgy is unlikely to last 47 years, as it did for St. Mary of Egypt during her time alone in the desert, I knew the period of physical separation would last through early June, and possibly longer.

On March 20, St. Mary's had offered the first of numerous virtual services during Great Lent, a Akathist service to the Theotokos, in which Fr. David and the chanters from the choir joined each other through Zoom, and others could watch the service through Realm or to the public through YouTube. Dn. Nicholas soon joined virtual Vespers and Sunday Typika services, and Fr. David gave online sermons that connected the readings or saints of the day to our daily lives. The Parish Council met online on April 6. On April 12, after the Palm Sunday Typika service and Fr. David's sermon, Church School students met with their



teachers using Zoom, and adults with accounts in Realm were able to meet through a virtual “coffee hour.” During Holy Week, the Bridegroom Matins, Holy Unction, Passion Gospels, Royal Hours, Passion Gospels, and Lamentations services all occurred online, with access through Zoom or YouTube as before.

On Holy Saturday, I awoke to hear the voices of readers reciting the Psalms as part of the all-night vigil at the Tomb. Whereas in past years, this vigil had occurred at the Tomb of Christ decorated in front of the iconostasis at our parish, this year, the vigil occurred in numerous homes, where we each had created and decorated with flowers our own small tombs in order to venerate our Lord’s burial for us and His Sabbath rest before His Resurrection.

We added a photo of our home altar to the digital scrapbook *Psa. Stephanie* had established on Realm. It was a blessing not only to hear and see parishioners through Zoom and YouTube, but also to see the representations of the Orthodox Faith in the snapshots on Realm from each other’s homes.

Pascha arrived two hours early for us this year, as Fr. David had scheduled the Nocturne and Paschal Matins service to begin at 10 PM. My wife and daughters dressed in white, and my son joined us for the service as we lit our candles and sang the Paschal Troparion with the choir: “*Christ is risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!*” My son, impressed by the use of technology by our clergy and choir to conduct this service online, said “*seeing the Orthodox innovate liturgically is*

like watching a tree get up and go for a stroll.” Yes, I responded in true Geek Orthodox fashion, “*We are Treebeard!*”

Despite the sadness of not being able to be present with each other in person—and especially to gather together and partake of the Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Eucharist—I am thankful for Great Lent, Holy Week, and Pascha of 2020. I have learned to be thankful for God’s presence in our lives,



Fr. David and the Subu family chant for Pascha.

the wisdom of His Saints, and His victory over sin and death *even—or, I should say, especially*—during these times of suffering for our neighbors, our nation, and the world. Because of the services now recorded online, we now have a new way to share some of the beauty of Orthodox worship with our friends and family, and thereby bear witness to the “*Faith delivered once for all to the Saints*” (Jude 3), and to our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ, who “*is the same yesterday, today, and forever*” (Hebrew 13:8). Now is also a time to appreciate how *Christ is still present with us and at work through the members of our parish community*, which is reason to offer thanks and glory to God, and to share, as we are able, our time, talents, and treasure with each other, our parish, and our neighbors. *Christ is Risen!* ✠

Doxacon Planning Virtual Conference

MINISTRY REPORT | DANIEL S.

The fate of conferences like Doxacon is uncertain. This year’s Doxacon is planned for November 6-7, but given the constantly changing landscape of the public health situation, it’s hard to optimize planning that

far ahead. It’s very possible that Doxacon will need to be hosted virtually, which brings a host of logistical challenges that we’re working on brainstorming solutions to. For example, one of the most important aspects of Doxacon as a ministry is in building community. If we go virtual, we still plan on bringing you great speakers. Recently, we’ve become excited by the possibility of building com-

munity virtually by facilitating online RPGs, board games, and (of course) virtual hangouts and chats.

We’ll be keeping you updated on plans for Doxacon, as our highest priority is the health and safety of the attendees. All of us at Doxacon are praying for the safety and health of all, and we hope to see you in November, either online or in person. ✠

Parish Rises to Meet Financial Challenges Here and Elsewhere

TREASURER’S REPORT | ELLEN R.

I am amazed by the generosity of our parish! We have so far been able to pay our bills without drawing from our savings, and in this time of unrest in all of our lives, we are also continuing to reach out to help others in greater need than us.

At the April 6 parish council meeting, we voted to distribute part of our budgeted year-end donations to Orthodox seminaries and other charitable organizations that are truly struggling to survive (see April Parish Council Summary on p. 7). We agreed to provide funds to several local groups that provide food for the many families who are unable to afford food. We also delivered the food that we had collected before the shelter-in-place orders were issued. Many of you have also directed donations to support humanitarian needs. All the organizations are grateful for your generous support during these times with such uncertain futures, especially those that operate primarily on donations.

If you are making contributions to St. Mary’s and would like some amount of your donation to be directed to help others, please note that when making your payments. On Realm, there is a drop-down menu item labeled “Humanitarian Aid” that you can use to indicate your intent; on checks, please put a note in the memo line; on PayPal, please specify the purpose of the donation in the appropriate field for notes. ✠



Life in Christ Frees us From Our Former Mutability

HYMNOGRAPHICAL REFLECTION / NICHOLAS J.

The hymns of the Orthodox Church are full of allusions, puns, plays on words, and unattributed scriptural references. While some of these poetic techniques can be impossible to translate, we are normally still left with a comprehensible piece of text; the hymn may still require some dedicated study time, since it is poetry after all, but it is tractable. Except, when it's not...

In the Resurrectional hymns at Vespers, the set for the Plagal of Second (or Sixth) Tone has a rather curious phrase: "Wishing to set aright our former mutability, Christ is nailed to the Cross and laid in the grave" (Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Aposticha #3). Mutability is the confusing word here. Wishing to correct our changeableness or fickleness, maybe? I began to ponder what this might mean and how Christ's crucifixion and sleep in the grave was the remedy for this. Maybe it was related to our lack of will, and our inconstancy in our actions and behaviors. But, before I jumped too far, I decided to check multiple translations for assistance. While the second half of the phrase was almost identical for all of them, the confusing first part became all the more confusing:

- *Wishing to set aright our former mutability...* (Holy Transfiguration Monastery)
- *Desiring to return us to Paradise...* (Orthodox Church in America)
- *Wishing to lift us out of the ancient corruption...* (Greek Orthodox Archdiocese)
- *Wishing to set us upright from our ancient fall...* (Fr. Ephrem Lash)

None of these translations provided clarity, and, in fact, they provided very different understandings of the same phrase (there are more translations, still, but they don't add anything further, unfortunately). In the midst of confusion, I checked the Greek words for "our mutability": *ῥεύσεως ἡμῶν*. This was not helpful either, since I don't know much Greek, and the lexicon I had said,

"our flow[ing]." I could kind of understand this, since "go with the flow" can have a connotation of easily changeable, but there was a missing component. Lest you get frustrated by my own translational frustrations, there was a great well-spring of beauty beneath the surface that was yet to be uncovered. Rather than continue on my own, I went to a Greek-speaking chanter who had studied these topics for many years. After all, Orthodox Christianity is always about the passing down of knowledge from person to person in community!

After a bit of study and etymology research, my friend got very excited. The word translated as "mutability" came from the root for a flowing stream or to gush forth. And, what does water do by nature? It follows the path set before it by the dirt, and flows to the lowest point, descending in altitude, and eventually mixing with a bigger body of water that has always done the same thing. This is precisely the problem with our fallen state, though! We have accepted our proclivity to always pursue the most base and lowest state, and are constantly not doing our own will (let alone the will of God!), but follow the paths of dirt engraved in our brain and in society, sometimes even pursuing it mindlessly. We might break out of these tendencies briefly, splashing up on the banks of the flowing stream, but these are fleeting experiences. In acceptance of this fallen state, much of society says, "What? I'm only human!", yet the psalmist says, "Ye are gods, and all of you the sons of the Most High" (Psalm 81:6, LXX). Acknowledging our current "mutability", though, he continues, "but like men ye die, and like one of the rulers do ye fall." But, that is precisely why Christ came among us. He came to show us a different path, to change the dirt path and the tendency to go down, encouraging us to "go up higher", and ascend the mountain with Moses and there to meet God face-to-face. He did not follow the ways of this world, or even His own will, but the will of the Father. In this, he shows us the *(cont'd on back)*

Stop and Hear What Our Lord God is Saying

REFLECTION / SOPHIA P.

Some time ago, during a work day, I noticed that my mind had become noisy with concerns, and I resolved to sit on our apartment's little balcony for a while to quiet myself. My husband had told me years ago about a concept that he'd read about in the early Fathers, which was that God had written two books of revelation — first, the book of nature, and then, the book of scripture. I often return to that concept to chew on for nourishment, and thought it may be useful to return to again to help stir up a little zeal in myself to order my unruly mind. I watched the trees wave in the wind and waited for how they might clap their hands.

Quite naturally, the greatest spiritual advantage of the quarantine is distance

from others and a break from normal societal structures. When we're so busy with school, work, sports, dining out, and parties, we barely have time to ask ourselves who we are or who God is. If you're able to calm the thundering of your own life, concerns, ego, and insecurities enough to hear the quiet whisper of the conscience, these kinds of mysteries begin to become much more accessible. Like most people, I'm still learning to hear it. Reason, idle chatter, and excessive activity so easily drown it out with louder thoughts! Archimandrite Aimilianos of Simonopetra describes in his book *The Church at Prayer* how people in the world "rush around, tire themselves out, and consume one another", which is a reality many of us are able to escape for the moment. Now, instead, this is a time when sins hidden by hyperactivity are bubbling to the surface for us to see with embarrassing

clarity: perhaps impatience with constant interaction with those we live with, or an existential discomfort without the structure of school, career, or church to guide our day-to-day life, an unexpected dependency on fast-food, paralyzing concerns of what tomorrow will bring for our neighbors or economy, or any other vices that we haven't handled with saintly sanity.

I think these revelations should be considered cherished gifts, if we're able to see them and use them for our benefit. This quarantine is a perfect opportunity to quietly grow our virtue in whatever vices are being revealed to us. The best part is that there probably isn't any clear physical reward for us to receive for growth during this time, unlike if we were to begin excelling at work or in school. As far as I can tell, this is the difficult, quiet inner growth of saintliness that builds up rewards in heaven but *(cont'd on back)*



April Parish Council Summary

SUMMARIZED FROM ANNA C.'S NOTES BY SOPHIA P. | APRIL 6, 2020 | 7:00PM–9:21PM

Fr. David's Reports

- **Fr. David presented his hours** and full reports on February and March. He worked 163 hours (plus 17 in travel) in February, and 161 in March.
- **In spite of the loss of services at church** and other coronavirus-related restrictions, he is pleased that services have continued, and he has been able to teach and communicate with both adults and children through Zoom. Father was also pleased by the high degree of parishioners' virtual participation. He commended Sophia P. and Sdn. Nick for their extraordinary help with communications, coordination and liturgical services.
- **Sophia P. has had to work many more hours** than the 20 hours per week allotted in the budget, and it is anticipated that she will continue to do so.
- **Fr. David is conducting confessions by phone or via Zoom**, and has several scheduled already.

Treasurer's Report (Ellen R.)

- **Ellen reported that, while donations have slowed down, our expenses have also decreased.** With donations starting to pick up, Ellen believes that if we are careful and disciplined, we should be able to weather the coronavirus crisis and fulfill our financial obligations. Other highlights included:
 - We will continue to pay Ronaldo's (the caretaker's) fees and ask him, in return, to check regularly on the church and the grounds.
 - The rental from the Roosevelt Street property is continuing to come in.
- Given that we will be unable to conduct our typical fundraising activities, such as the soup luncheon that raises funds for missions, concern arose that some of our human-

itarian aid may suffer. Additionally, some of the missions we support may need financial support earlier than usual. **A motion was passed unanimously to spend \$3,000 of our \$7,500 missions budget for the three Orthodox seminaries we supported last year, and \$3,000 of our \$5,000 humanitarian aid budget by donating \$500 each to Brite-Paths, FACETS, Falls Church Community Service Council, FOCUS, NAMI Northern Virginia, and Project Mexico.**

Business

- Parish council entertained the possibility of availing itself of the 2-trillion-dollar stimulus package the government is providing for small business loans to help get the parish through. After some consideration, the council assessed that St. Mary's has enough resources to continue operating, unlike other small businesses that are on the verge of collapse due to the crisis.
- **The council accepted a proposal for \$4,800 worth of work for needed upgrades to the church.**
- **Some Strategic Development / Building Campaign fundraising efforts have been suspended**, but others have continued, such as the selection of an architectural design and the development of a brochure. The steering committee picked a concept drawn up by architect Maria Arhire for continued development, after which it will be presented to the parish council for review.
- **The Telos Project** for engaging young adults in the faith held its annual conference online, which was attended virtually by the St. Mary's Telos team.
- **The Hospitality Committee** is developing a telephone wellness check in light of the pandemic.

Though only council members may vote, parish council meetings are open for anyone to attend. Meeting times are posted on the St. Mary's calendar on the website.

St. Timothy Project to Form Connections Amidst Isolation

MINISTRY REPORT / SOPHIA P.

The St. Timothy Project is among the most recent efforts in the St. Mary community to mitigate some of the negative effects of the coronavirus lockdown felt by parishioners. Its goal is to initiate remote social interaction with people who have been suffering from isolation.

The project is led by recent parishioner Patrick O., a college student at Liberty University. A leadership class in his final semester at Liberty requiring him to develop and lead a community team project of his choosing allowed him the opportunity to organize an effort to alleviate the intense loneliness he was observing in the parish community.

Patrick and his half-dozen volunteers began the project in the last week of April with efforts to call, email, and otherwise reach out to anyone who is suffering, but especially the elderly and shut-ins. They're looking to pursue relationships with parishioners they either don't know very well or create new relationships with parishioners they don't know at all.

As a school project, the St. Timothy Project is not an official ministry of St. Mary's, so it has been functioning alongside other existing ministries. With Fr. David's blessing, Patrick has been working with Ken L. in the Hospitality Committee and the Young Adult Ministry to gather volunteers and find parishioners who might like someone to talk to. He felt that it was especially fortuitous that the Young Adult Ministry was already looking for new efforts to reach out to the com-

munity, as a COVID-19 world had upturned some of its previous plans. All of the volunteers for the St. Timothy Project are young adults whose move to teleworking has lightened their workload, and were looking for ways to use their newfound time well.

"I was going to call it the St. Barnabas Project, but because I saw that the young adults were looking for something to do, Fr. David convinced me to call it the St. Timothy Project," Patrick explained. "The inter-generational aspect of it was a perfect fit."

Don't be surprised if you get a cold call from the team at the St. Timothy Project! "We don't want to foist ourselves on anyone, but we do want to start a conversation," Patrick said.

If you would like to be contacted by someone in the St. Timothy Project, please send an email to underherveil@stmaryorthodox.org. ✉



(Mutability, cont'd) original Image, which was disfigured in the fall, to remind us of our calling to become divine. He descended to us, not to follow what we do, for “all we like sheep have gone astray”, but He came as the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for the sheep, by being “nailed to the cross and laid in the grave”, as our original hymn continues. He descended to us not to become base like us, but to ascend the Cross and show us what it means to become truly human and deny our will, even though it may seem to be engraved in our nature.

To take the water metaphor one step further, the next sentence of the hymn finds the myrrh-bearing women “seeking Him with tears.” It was a different flow of water that gave them the strength to rebel against their world around them, and leave while it was still dark and dangerous in search of their Lord, to give him a proper burial and to perfect their love for Him. It is these tears of love and of repentance that the ardent Christian seeks to cultivate, replacing our sinful, “watery” nature with a transformed flow of water that purifies, illumines, and brings joy.

Wishing to correct our tendency to pursue the lowest path which follows the ways of the world, Christ is nailed to the Cross and laid in the grave, only a few days later to arise and judge the earth and fashion an inheritance among the nations that calls itself Christians (cf. Psalm 81:8). May we have the strength to carve a new path in the dirt, one that goes against the grain of this world and ascends to God; and may this path unite with His will, that the old, “watery” man might “be crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin” (Romans 6:6). It will be hard, but let us flow upstream, my brother and sisters – upstream! ✠

(Stop, cont'd) may not win you much now outwardly. With efforts toward silence of heart, we can practice tempering the temptation to correct others. We can hold our tongues from judging or slandering others. And, especially in light of the dangers of the pandemic, we can refocus our thoughts toward the fragility of life and the certainty of death: St. John of the Ladder says that this focus naturally “reduces the amount of what [one] has to say”. These aren’t things that will satisfy our worldly instincts, but they’ll humble our spirits; and we know that a broken and humbled heart God will not despise. In this way, pain and suffering isn’t something to be feared and avoided, but to be coveted.

Fr. Roman Braga, a priest in Romania who served under the communist regime, spent three years in solitary confinement. He said in an interview in 2012 that, when in solitary confinement, “you have to go somewhere; and so you go inside yourself, inside your heart and inside your mind to examine yourself, to see who you are and why God brought you into this world.”

There’s an intriguing mystery in that humility, when you’re as deeply aware of your imperfection as you are of God’s abundant mercy. St. Isaac the Syrian says this about the fruit of silence in his *Ascetical Homilies*: “Many show an appearance of repentance, but no one truly possesses it save the man who is pained in his heart. Many run to find pain of heart, but no one finds [except] he who possesses unremitting silence. Every man who is a servant of God loves contrition... Inward sorrow is a bridle for the senses. If you love the truth, love silence; it will make you illumined in God like the sun, and will deliver you from the illusions of ignorance. Silence unites you to God Himself.”

No one can control what is inside of you except for you. I encourage you to fight, with all your might, to use this opportunity to make what is inside of you good and well-pleasing to God. ✠

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The Veil

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