

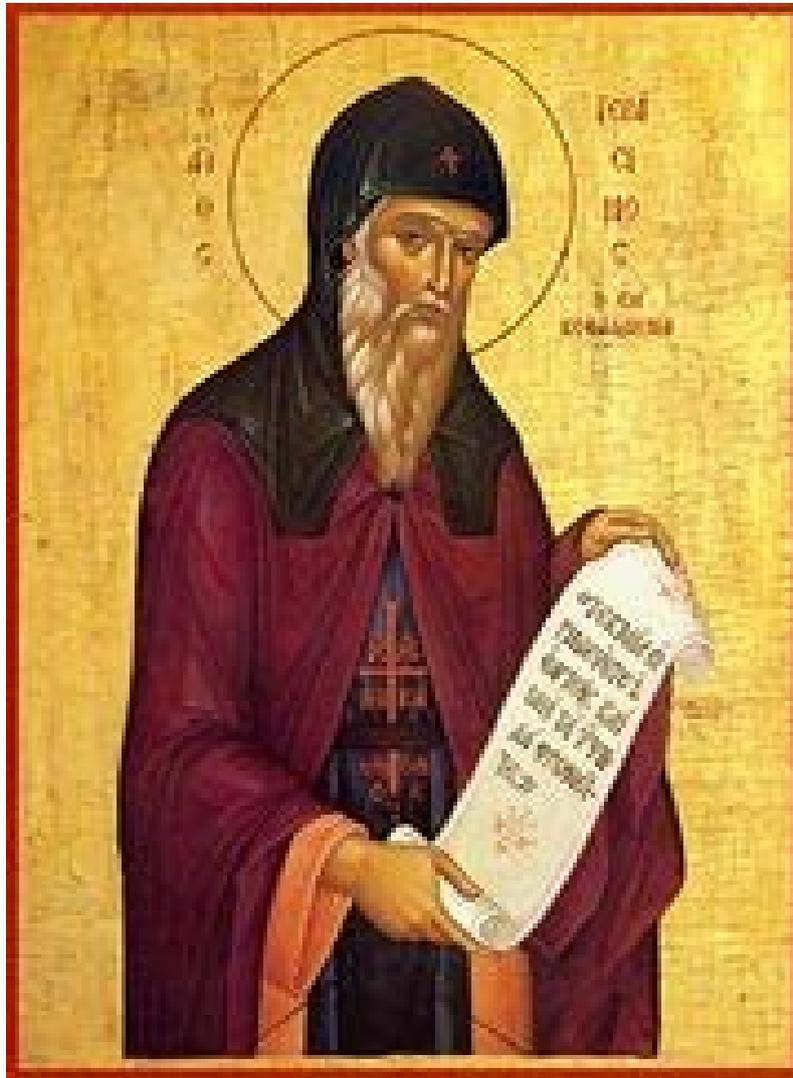
Saint Nestor

CENTRAL YOUTH COMMITTEE MAGAZINE

"I am the Resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live." (John 11: 25)

O believers, let us praise the protector of the Orthodox,
the God-bearing miracle-worker lately appearing to us,

demons. And therefore, he pours out healings to those who honour him.



the incarnate angel, divine Gerasimos. For he has rightly received from

God the ever-flowing grace of performing healing. He
strengthens those with diseases and he heals those with

"I am the light of the world. He who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8: 12)

SPIRITUAL WARFARE

Gospel Reading

And when He stepped out on the land, there He met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, and fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, "What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!" For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

(Luke 8:27-39)

Let us think about what the demons in this Gospel story have to say when they see Jesus. We know that they instinctively know who Jesus is, because they cry out, "Jesus, Son of God, what have we to do with You?" Then they say something very interesting: "Have You come here to torment us before the time?" The demons are saying, "Your arrival will mean our torment. We're not expecting You. It is not yet time. Have You come to torment us?"

What was it that Jesus came to do to those demons and to those men? He came to free those men from the demons who were possessing them—and for the demons His coming is torment. Blessed Theophylact says in his commentary on this passage: "See the true nature of the demons. It is torment for them when they cannot harm men." In this we see the true nature of our foe.

We are reminded in this text of the battle we must wage every second of every day. It is not a battle against flesh and blood, but against the powers and principalities, against the demons, against spiritual foes. These spiritual foes find joy when they destroy us. They con-

sider it torment when they cannot bring harm to our souls and our bodies.

St John Chrysostom says about this account, "Look at what the demons did when they were cast out of the men." They entered into the swine, and caused the swine to run violently down to their own death. St John says that is what the demons want to do to each one of us. They want to cause us to run violently down to our death. He says, "Do not be deceived. You have many foes. Just because you can't see them with your natural eyes does not mean they are not there. Just because you are not aware of them every second of every day does not mean they do not follow you around, because they do. They huddle around you." What they seek is to enter you so that they may cause you to rush violently to your own death.

This is the nature of our spiritual struggle. In 1 Peter 5:8, St Peter says that our adversary the devil "walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." If we are going to fight the spiritual war, if we are going to live out this Christian life, then we must be aware every second of every day that the demons are there, and that they are looking for just one opening, just one second when we are not paying attention, one look that is not carefully guarded, one thought that we do not bring immediately to the Cross of Christ, one movement of anger, jealousy, or envy in our heart. The demons look for opportunities to destroy us.

We live so often as if the demons are not there. We live carefree lives, as if we did not have spiritual foes, as if we could relax and take a day off. We say, "I don't need to pray today, I prayed yesterday. I don't need to be in Church this Sunday, I was in Church last Sunday. I don't need to attend this feast, I hit the last feast." "It's okay to watch this movie tonight, I know it's not holy, but I have to relax sometime. What's the big deal, it's just one scene?" "I'll just glance at that web site, I won't spend much time there. What can be the harm in glancing at it?" "I'll just entertain this judgmental thought for a minute—just a minute, so that I can suck some joy out of it. Then for a minute I'll look at my spouse and say, 'You dirty rotten scoundrel, you.' Just for a minute I'll look at my parents and say, 'You don't know what you're doing' - just for a minute, and then I'll let go of it."

This is how we live, and Satan uses every minute we give him. Each of us has experienced this rushing headlong to our own death. It happens so fast. Spiritual falls can happen in an instant. You can be walking along, even praying, then forget for a moment, and find yourself engaged in behaviour you thought you would never do. You can be saying things to your wife or husband or parents or children that you thought you would never say, because Satan never sleeps.

The demons never take a day off. It would be nice if they got tired. It would be nice if they needed a lunch break and gave us a little card that said, "We'll be back in an hour," so we could rest. But they don't eat, they don't sleep. They want to destroy us. Make no mistake: the

(Continued on page 3)

Spiritual Warfare

(from page 2)

only thing Satan wants is for you to burn in hell with him. The only thing the demons want is to destroy you, to take away your joy, your love, your closeness to God. The demons have had years of experience, and we must constantly be vigilant.

Many of us assume that every thought that comes into our head is our own, and that every thought, because it is ours, is most precious and must be jealously defended. Once we have claimed a thought as our own, then we feel as if somehow we are being contrary to ourselves if we do not act on the basis of it. It might be a judgmental thought, an angry thought, a lustful thought.

But very often those thoughts are suggestions of the evil one. Satan and the demons are very skilful at suggesting thoughts to us and then leaving so quickly that we don't see that it was the demons who placed those thoughts in our head. They're very skilful at lining up all the facts to prove the thought.

Perhaps a judgmental thought comes in about a co-worker, or worse still, about your husband or wife. For a minute you think that they're doing something they shouldn't be doing. And all of a sudden you remember everything that proves what you have thought. You think, "How could I have been so stupid as not to have seen it before?" Why do you think that all of a sudden it is so very clear? It's not because you're so wise, it's because the demons are so clever.

There is a story told of Elder Isadore of the Glink Monastery. Satan hated the elder because he was so holy, and tried various ways to destroy him. The life of the saint says, "Then Satan used his most dangerous weapon: slander." We wouldn't think that would be Satan's most dangerous weapon, but it is. He suggested thoughts to the other brothers about Elder Isadore, and the other brothers grabbed those thoughts without examining them and acted on them. They accused Elder Isadore of something he had not done, and he was driven from the monastery. Satan planted the seeds, and the brothers were not vigilant.

The demons consider it torment when they cannot harm us. The demon's goal is to cause us to rush violently to our own death. We must be vigilant. We must wage a war. You say, "How do we defeat the demons when they are so clever?"



Saint Nestor

For one thing, we know that the demons will use the same attack over and over again. Even after we've figured it out, they will keep using it. It's only after we've convinced them that we're not going to do that thing that they come up with a new attack. Why are they so stubborn? It's because they know we humans are so forgetful. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 2:11, "We are not ignorant of his devices." Some

of us have been battling Satan long enough that we should be able to say, "Aha, you're not going to be able to get me on that one this time. You got me before on that one, but I've learned. That's you—it has you written all over it. You're going to have to come up with a new one, because that one is not going to get me any more."

But we forget. We don't pay attention to our spiritual life. When we fall, we confess it and move on without examining what caused our fall. Why did we fall into that trap? What were we thinking? What suggestions



came from the evil one? How did it work itself out in our lives, and how can we beat him at the beginning, rather than beating him by confessing in the end? By paying attention; by remembering; by reading the lives of saints.

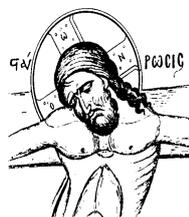
Satan doesn't do anything to us that he didn't do to the saints. One of the most important things we learn about in their lives is their struggles with the evil one. Why does the Church tell us about those? Not so that we can look at the saints and say, "Wow, you're great, you beat them!" but so that we can know how Satan is going to attack us. If he attacked the

Elder Isadore with slander, then if we're doing right he's going to attack us with slander. And when we're doing wrong, he's going to attack us to become the instrument of slander against someone else.

If you study the lives of the saints you will learn so much about the evil one. Then you apply it to your own life, and you'll say, "Aha, you did that to St Simeon, and he beat you. That trick got kicked out of the arsenal in AD 330. I'm not going to start it again now." We have to pay attention.

Most importantly, we beat Satan and the demons with the name of Jesus. It's a wonderful image of Satan and the demons in this Gospel passage, where the demons flex their muscles and scream at Jesus, "What have we to do with You? Have You come to torment us before the time?" And Jesus looks at them and says, "Go." And the demons flee. He doesn't argue with them—he doesn't have to. He just says, "Be gone." And they turn their backs and flee as fast as they can.

The name of Jesus is more powerful than any demon. The name of Jesus strikes fear into the heart of Satan and all his minions. That is why the name of Jesus is to be on our lips with every breath. If we centre our thoughts on the name of Jesus, then Satan will not get us with any other thoughts. That's why the Fathers say that we descend with our mind into our heart, and we guard our mind with our heart, because the name of Jesus is our protection: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner." When Jesus says, "Go," the demons flee.



(Source: *Journey to the Kingdom: Reflections on the Sunday Gospels* by Fr John Mack, Conciliar Press, California 2001)

The teachings of the Holy Fathers on the Passions - part 4

"If you wish, you can be a slave of passions; and, if you wish, you can remain free and not submit to their yoke—for God has created you with that power" (*St Anthony the Great, 170 Texts on Saintly Life*).

"It is impossible to live without natural desires arising in us, but it is quite possible to avoid giving in to them" (*Abba Dorotheus, On Renunciation*).

The first-created man obeyed not God, but his own impulse, thus giving birth to the first passion, pride and gluttony.

This is why, "amongst the demons who work against us, those who stand in the forefront of this battle are those entrusted with *lust, gluttony and greed* (both love of money and human glory). The other demons follow behind and receive the wounded, whom these pass down to them. For it is impossible to fall into the hands of adultery unless a man has fallen because of gluttony; it is impossible to be agitated by anger unless one covets and fights for goods, or money, or fame... In short, it is impossible for a man to fall under the power of any demon, unless he is first wounded by these three" (*Abba Evagrius, On Various Evil Thoughts*).

Aiding these three passions are what St Mark the Ascetic speaks of as "three giants of the Evil One": *ignorance, forgetfulness and laziness* (or indifference), "which, out of darkness, weave a dusky garment and cloak in the soul... For through indifference, forgetfulness, and ignorance the props of all other passions grow and strengthen" (*Epistle to the Monk Nicholas*).

Therefore, we must "enter upon the struggle against the passions without self-pity or self-indulgence" (*St Anthony the Great, Directions on Life in Christ*).

Abba Evagrius advises: "When an enemy comes and wounds you... do as we tell you: analyse the thought in yourself introduced by him: what it is, of what it is composed, and how it affects the mind... If you examine it all, the thought will vanish... and the demon will run away" (*On Various Evil Thoughts*).

"There is a war: that of desire for money, of envy, of the passions. Paul, describing this war, says, *We wrestle not against flesh and blood* (Eph. 6:12). This war is ever at hand. Therefore he wishes us to stand ever armed" (*St John Chrysostom, Homily 6 on Hebrews*).

Since earliest Christian times, the Holy Fathers developed a systematic approach to discussing the passions. The ascetic Fathers generally agree that there are eight principal passions:

"There are eight principal passions which attack mankind: first... **gluttony**, secondly **fornication**, thirdly **love of money or covetousness**, fourthly **anger**, fifthly **dejection**, sixthly... **despondency**, seventhly... **vainglory**, and eighthly **pride**" (*St John Cassian, Conference of Abbot Serapion*).

These eight give birth to all of the other passions, which are legion. We will speak here of four passions and the antidote for each, before hearing the words of the Fathers on the proper context within which the struggle against the passions is to take place.

WARFARE WITH THE PASSIONS: G L U T T O N Y

The Holy Fathers teach that gluttony is "the door of passions" (*St John Climacus, The Ladder of Divine Ascent*).

"Take care lest the Evil One tempt you into the sin of Adam and Eve... He who seduced Adam from Paradise by causing him to steal food... will be far bolder with you in preparing this



strong and poisonous drink.

"The great attraction of gluttony is not necessarily concerned with large quantities of food, but in the temptation to have just a 'little taste'. But if the wish for a taste succeeds in making you a slave to gluttony, the Evil One can then give you up utterly to destruction.

"For, just as water that irrigates many furrows makes those furrows fertile, so also the vice of gluttony proceeding from your heart, irrigates all of your senses, raising a whole jungle of evils within you, making your soul a lair of wild beasts" (*St Basil the Great, On Renunciation of the World*).

"There are two kinds of gluttony. One is when a man seeks food that pleases him and does not always want to eat very much, but wishes to eat only what pleases his palate. Another is when a man is overcome by a tendency to eat much... He only wants to eat and eat, not minding what the food may be, only caring to fill his belly" (*St Abba of Dorotheus, Directions on Spiritual Training*).

Gluttony blinds us to things of God. Speaking of the Gospel passage where the Saviour miraculously fed the multi-

tude, St John Chrysostom writes: "*And the multitude said that this of a truth is the Prophet* (John 6:14). Oh, excess of gluttony! He had done ten thousand things more admirable than this, but nowhere did they make this confession, save when they had been filled... O wonder! How great is the tyranny of gluttony, how great the fickleness of men's minds!" (*Homily 42, On St John*).

"It is impossible to fill the body to satiety with food and at the same time have spiritual enjoyment of mental and Divine blessings. For inasmuch as a man panders to his belly, in the same measure he deprives himself of spiritual blessings; conversely, in proportion as he keeps his body lean, he will be filled with spiritual food and consolation" (*St Symeon the New Theologian, Precepts*).

St John Climacus says that "*the prince of demons is the fallen Lucifer, and gluttony is the prince of the passions.*" Therefore it can be said that "the stomach is the cause of all human disaster... Let us then ask of this arch-foe: Who is your mother? Who are your children?

"... And gluttony... furiously raving at us, answers:... Why do you try to separate yourself from me? I am bound to you by nature. I gain entry through the very nature of food [i.e. food is by nature pleasant to the taste and desirable]. The cause of my insatiability is habit. The foundation of my passion is repeated habit, insensitivity of the soul and forgetfulness of death... Now learn the names of my first-born and best loved children: 1. **Fornication**; 2. **hard-heartedness**; 3. **drowsiness**" (*The Ladder*).

Fulfilling the stomach to satiety and burdening it with food is an act deserving God's wrath, as He says: *Woe to you that are filled now* (Luke 6:25)... To become a slave to the pleasures of the table is to make the stomach one's god" (*St Basil the Great, The Long Rules*). "Where there is surfeiting there the devils surely hold their choirs" (*St John Chrysostom, Homily 59 on St Matthew*). **(To be continued)**

(Source: *The Teaching of the Holy Fathers on THE PASSIONS, Nicodemus Orthodox Publication Society, New York 2004*)





Confronting the Devil, Magic & the Occult: part 7

Satanism The Confession of a Former Satanist

Doreen Irvine, was born in the London slums in 1939. She was raised in a wretched family environment. When she was no more than 15 years old, she was led astray into prostitution and thereafter into drugs, exactly the qualifications she needed for her entry into Satanism. And, indeed, the evil wasn't long in coming. She was soon initiated. She herself tells how this happened in her book, "From Witchcraft to Christ."

The First Step

From the time she was still young, Doreen had been a visitor to a strip club. Two weird girls were regular clients. They approached her. It turned out that they were Satanists. Doreen expressed a desire to learn more about Satanism, so the three of them decided to visit a temple. The rendezvous was fixed for the following day at dusk—six o'clock outside the club. A black car came and picked Doreen up. The driver told her it would be necessary to blindfold her, because no one was allowed to know where the Satanist temple was. She agreed. After about half an hour they arrived at their destination. They went up some stairs and then they uncovered her eyes.

She was standing before a large Satanist temple. Some five hundred people had already gathered. Right at the front was a stand draped in black cloth decorated with representations of serpents, dragons and flames. On the stand was the leader of the Satanists, dressed in a special costume and with a black hood over his head. Around him stood thirteen priestesses, in the shape of a crescent, dressed in black and chanting.

The leader came down from the stand. The priestesses took the black hood off his head. All of them, together with the 500 others, fell to the ground and prostrated themselves before their chief. The whole "congregation" chanted "hymns" in his praise. The priestesses handed him the vessels and the emblem of the Satanists, the knife, which he kissed and dedicated to Satan.

They switched off the lights and lit candles. They brought in a cockerel, which they killed by wringing its neck. Then they sprinkled the temple with its blood. They sang "hymns" and said "prayers". Finally, they offered the cockerel as a sacrifice to their "god," i.e. Satan.

Doreen stresses that everything they did made her shudder with horror. And everything was done in the name of Satan.

The whole ceremony lasted about two hours.

The Fatal Decision

The leader was informed that, among the 500 people in the temple, there was a young girl who was there for the first time and who was searching. No sooner was the ceremony over than he rushed over to her. They struck up a conversation; he was dreaming and flattering. He told her that there were no old and young there, because everyone was equal.

Doreen swallowed the bait. She was hooked. She agreed to become a Satanist. But before she could become an initiate, she had to receive instruction. She had to learn and apply certain rules:

- Lies, deceit, blasphemy, depravity and even murder are all allowed.
- The leader is Lucifer's representative. He is to be accorded total submission and complete respect.
- Every new idea that comes to mind and every new event that happens must be reported in detail to the leader in the temple.
- Prayers must be offered every day to Lucifer.
- Attendance in the temple must be punctual. Anyone arriving late is to be whipped by the leader and the whole congregation.
- Christian assemblies are out of bounds.
- The Scriptures are to be mocked and burned in the temple of the Satanists.

Initiation

The moment arrived for the young Doreen to become an official member of the Satanists and a child of Lucifer.

The "sacrament" happened at night in a large Satanist temple in England. There were about 800 Satanists present, who had come from all over the country to be present at the great event. Doreen Irvine wore a full-length black gown in honour of Satan.

She describes how the leader sat on a throne. At a particular moment, he stood up and raised his hands. At once, all 800 people, including Doreen herself, fell on their faces and prostrated themselves before him. Two "priests" then brought a white cockerel. They wrung its neck and the blood flowed into a silver bowl.

The leader approached her with a knife and opened a cut on her left arm. Her blood also flowed into the silver bowl, where it mixed with that of the cockerel. She drank some of this and swore her oath to Satan. Then she dipped her finger in the blood and appended her signature to the parchment. She had now sold her soul to Satan and became a follower of Lucifer.

The onlookers were delighted that Satan now had another child. But this wasn't all; they also displayed weird signs of madness. That night, a host of unmentionable and disgusting acts were performed.

Her "Father"

Lucifer was now her god, her lord and her father. She heard his voice. She saw him before her. He often appeared in person in his temple. Everyone was certain that this was Satan. They heard him say, It is I, Lucifer, your master. My children, I am speaking. Listen to me:

- Do as much evil as you can.
- Sate yourselves with pleasure and fulfill your every desire.
- I am gratified when this happens.
- Never be afraid.
- I will always be there to protect you.

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Confronting the Devil, Magic & the Occult

(from page 6)

"White" Magic

It's called "white" because it's said to only do good. This is a gross error. How is it possible for the homicidal i.e., murdering devil ever to do anything good?

How Does Magic Happen?

The Materials

Priests of Christ, through their priesthood, bless water and sanctify it. When we drink this sanctified water, we drink the blessing, namely, the grace of God which is indwelling in the water, that is, in the matter. In other words, the grace of God, His blessing, is also transferred through matter.

Something analogous also happens on the side of the devil. His "priests" (magicians), "bless" matter when they do "magic."

It's through this matter that Satanic energy is passed to people.

These materials are used for magic:

- nails, needles, soap, egg, oil and figurines.
- bat or snake bones.
- soil from graves or skulls.
- human or animal blood.
- women's soiled sanitary equipment.
- Holy Communion.

Ritual

The late Archimandrite Haralambos Vasilopoulos in his book *"Is There Magic?"* [In Greek], presents the astonishing testimony of a witness who attended a ritual performed by a witch and saw with his own eyes what happened. He says: "I didn't believe the witch, so I decided to go with her. I went with her at midnight to a deserted place. 'Stay here', she told me, so I did. She went on and I watched her. She stopped. She undressed. She motioned. She was calling the demons. I heard strange whistling sounds that were constantly getting louder. I then saw pitch-black dogs and cats approaching from the surroundings. I was frightened. The demons had arrived."

Its Effect

On Nature

The American university professor Richard Kieckhefer tells us that in the Middle Ages there were wizards who, with their invocations, caused frosts and floods which destroyed trees and crops. In Sweden and other neighbouring countries, many wizards were taken to court because they were accused of destroying their neighbour's harvest with flood and calamities which they themselves caused.

Naturally, witches and wizards are capable of doing the same damage anywhere and everywhere. This is why, in the old days our more pious ancestors who lived in the country would "plant" a cross in the middle of their garden and fields as a weapon against the evil and criminal spirits.

Witches can also do harm to dumb animals. The demons drowned the swine in the sea. Witches, too, with their invocations, can do the same; they can kill animals.

One Sunday in the year of 1989, I had celebrated the Liturgy in the chapel of Saint Eleftherios at the Saint

Stephen prison in Patras, Greece. Afterwards, I struck up a conversation with an inmate from the region of Xeromero, in Aetoloacarnania. During our discussion he told me how he ended up in prison.

"In my village I had sheep and goats and other animals. A man who was a real good-for-nothing told me, 'First thing, tomorrow, you'll find such and such a ewe of yours dead in such and such a place.' And it happened. The next day, he said to me again, 'tomorrow, you'll find such and such a goat dead.' And it happened. On the third day, he said, 'You'll find your horse dead.' That happened as well. I said to myself, 'There's something not right here.' The villain was casting spells on my animals. I got angry. I grabbed my carbine and attacked him.

That's why I'm here in prison for attempted manslaughter."

On people

**It brings couples together*

There was a man who was deceiving his wife. In order to keep him, the wife, instead of having recourse to God, went to the devil, i.e., to a wizard, and begged him to tie her husband to her.

The wizard made a figurine of wax in the likeness of her husband. He then wrapped it in a net and bats' wings, at the same time making invocations to Satan. And the "miracle" happened. Yes, indeed! We also know of cases where

men have "returned" to their wives because of the murderous devil!

**It brings "love"*

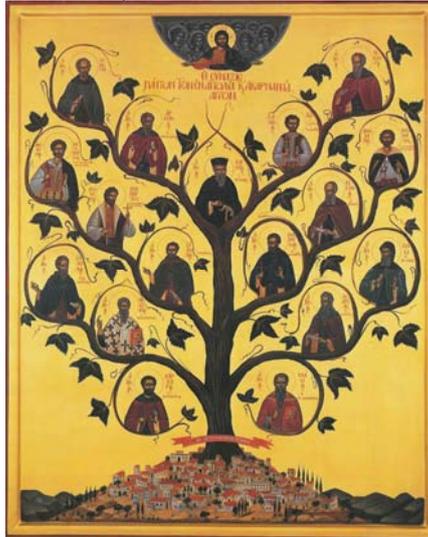
Suppose there's a woman who wants to make somebody fall in love with her. She goes to a witch, who sets the ball rolling. According to one practice, she draws the naked man in pigeon's blood on the skin of a dog. Thereafter, she "censes" and so on, performing all the necessary actions for the invocation of Satan.

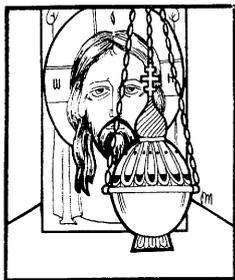
A certain woman, who was an emotional wreck, told me recently (1997) of a similar case which happened to her. Her relations with her husband were harmonious. He loved her so much that he never turned his head to look at another woman. But another woman set her sights on him. At first he snubbed her and ridiculed her, but she refused to give up. In the end, she went to a witch. And it wasn't long before the harm was done:

The husband began to withdraw from his wife. When he returned home, he vomited! Whenever he got into bed with his wife, he jumped straight out again. A powerful force propelled him out of bed and onto the balcony.

One evening, without warning, the icon-lamp in the house, which was lit, exploded into tiny shards. The mirror in their bedroom smashed into smithereens. In the end, he abandoned his wife, whom he had loved so much, and moved in with the woman he'd laughed and mocked!

(Source: *Confronting the Devil, Magic & the Occult* by Archim. Vassilios Bakoyiannis, Orthodox Book Centre, Athens 2003)





St Hilarion the Clerk and Monk from Crete September 20, 1804

Francisco and Catherine, Orthodox Christians from the city of Herakleion, Crete, gave birth to five children: three boys named John, Polyzoos, and George and two girls, whose names are not known to us.

John, the future Neomartyr Hilarion, was brought up together with his siblings in a very pious Christian home. As a young man he accompanied his uncle to Constantinople with the understanding his uncle would see to his professional education. But though he lived with him for some ten years, John's education was completely neglected by his uncle, who did very little else for him.

Deeply disappointed, John left his uncle's home and took a job as a clerk with a merchant, named Francisco, who grew to trust John. Consequently, one day he left for his homeland, the island of Chios, and left John with another Orthodox Christian employee in charge of the business. Unfortunately for John, he left without taking any inventory.

Upon his return the merchant charged that he had been cheated, that is, he claimed the money collected did not equal the price of the goods sold. The employees were thirty *grosia* short, but because the other employee had been with the merchant for many years, it was John who was accused of having taken the money. Moreover, he was threatened with dire consequences if he did not restore it immediately.

Understandably, John, who was innocent, became quite upset, and not knowing what to do, ran off to his uncle to seek assistance. But his uncle refused to see him. Down-hearted and disappointed, John went to the imperial palace seeking to see the *valide sultana*, the mother of the sultan. But he first encountered the Ethiopian eunuch, *Mertzan Aga*, who was in

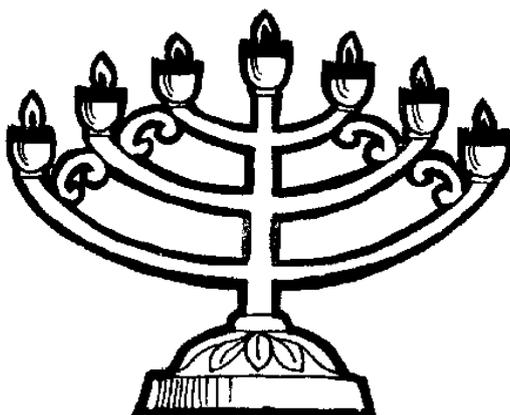
charge of that part of the palace. John apparently knew the *aga* and felt comfortable telling him his story and seeking his advice on what to do. The *aga* counselled John to become a Muslim and thereby become immune to any punishment. John promised to do just that. The *aga* then informed the *valide sultana* who in turn informed Sultan Selim III (1789-1807) of what had happened.

John was immediately circumcised and was given new Muslim clothing, in addition to many gifts, and was assigned a *hodja* to instruct him in the tenets of the Islamic faith. But after only three days, John realised the enormity of his sin, abandoning his faith in Jesus Christ, and sought an opportunity to escape from his new situation. Twelve days later, he managed to leave the palace and was on a ship for the Crimea where he remained for ten months. But he could not quite reconcile himself with the fact he had converted to Islamic faith. So he decided that the only way he could pay for his sin was to become a martyr.

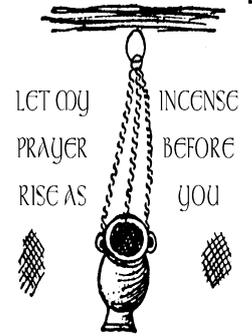
John therefore took another ship sailing back to Constantinople where he went to consult Father Symeon, a well known spiritual father, and Ieremias (Jeremiah) the ascetic, to whom he revealed his intentions of giving his life for Jesus.

The two spiritual advisors, however, convinced John instead to go to the Holy Mountain. John did exactly as they advised him and entered the Iveron Monastery. The fathers there sent him on to the Skete of St Anna to place himself under the spiritual direction of the monastic priest Vessarion who the year before had accompanied Luke the Neomartyr from Mytilene to his martyrdom.

(Continued on page 9)



St Hilarion the Clerk & Monk from Crete, September 20, 1804



(from page 8)

Vessarion assigned John to a small monastic cell, instructed him to do one thousand prostrations every twenty-four hours, and to eat bread and water only after sunset. Shortly afterwards John became a monk and took the name of Hilarion.

Sometime later Hilarion presented himself before Vessarion and said to him, "Holy elder, on the one hand I thought of the vanity of the world, and on the other the great sin of my denial to which I fell when I denied my Author and Maker. Now I must confess the true God whom I denied." Vessarion agreed with Hilarion, who received Holy Communion and then sailed to Constantinople.

In the Imperial City, Hilarion presented himself at the palace where he had converted to Islam and sought out the *aga* to whom he said, "Three days after converting to the Muslim faith I repented of my action and immediately found myself leaving the darkness of deceit and returning to the amazing light of truth. Therefore, I anathematise your religion and faith."

The *aga* grew very angry and shouted to Hilarion, "And who are you?"

Hilarion answered, "I was and am an Orthodox Christian and I anathematise your religion and faith." He then threw his Muslim headdress to the floor and put on his black monastic cap which he kept under his coat.

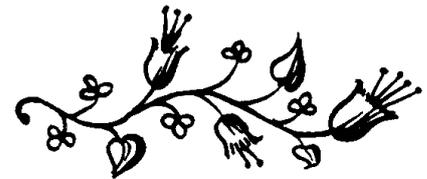
After some further discussion the *aga* realised Hilarion was steadfast and determined, so he ordered him to be beaten and tortured mercilessly. In the end John

was sentenced to death and beheaded. Many Orthodox Christians, including Vessarion, took some of Hilarion's relics with them.



Thus Hilarion the clerk and monk from Herakleion, Crete sacrificed his life for the love of Christ in Constantinople on September 20, in the year 1804.

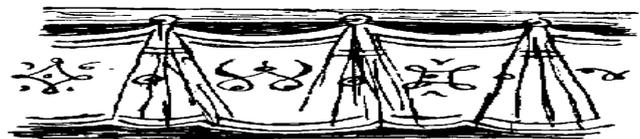
(Source: *Witnesses for Christ—Orthodox Christian Neomartyrs of the Ottoman Period 1437-1860*: by Nomikos Michael Vaporis, St Vladimir's Seminary Press, Crestwood, New York 2000)



Prayer in Time of Trouble

Lord our God, who became human and did not refuse the hardship and tears of this present life, but humbled yourself also in this, to show that our weak nature is related to and compatible with your Divinity, look with compassion on me your troubled servant in this time of trial, and grant me the humility of the Harlot, the repentance of Peter, the endurance of the Martyrs, the wisdom of your Saints. You who cried out in pain and anguish shortly before your suffering, Now my soul is troubled and what shall I say?, do not disregard my cry sent up to you at this hour with sighs too deep for words, but with this trial provide also the way out so that I may be able to endure it and glorify your boundless mercy and love for us, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, for ever. Amen.

(Source: *Book of Prayers—A selection for Orthodox Christians* Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia, Sydney 1993)



SCRIPTURAL & OTHER EVIDENCE FOR THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF MEMORIAL SERVICES

B. Evidence from the Church's Holy Tradition
2) *The Holy Liturgies*

There are prayers for the dead in all the holy liturgies.

The following prayer is recited for the dead in the Holy **Liturgy of St Mark**: "And for their souls [for whom the priest is praying and performing the Holy Liturgy] and for all souls, give rest, Master and Lord, our God, in the place where your saints reside... Give rest to these souls, Lord and King, and make them worthy of your heavenly Kingdom."

The Holy **Liturgy of St James Adelphotheos** contains the following prayer after the holy Apostles, Prophets and others are remembered: "Remember, Lord and God of the spirits and all flesh, those Orthodox we commemorate now as well as those we do not, and give them rest there... May our offering be deemed acceptable by you and blessed in the Holy Spirit, for redemption of our transgressions and the errors of the people and for rest for the souls of those who have died."

The Holy **Liturgy of St Clement**, disciple of the Apostle Peter, contains: "Again we pray to you Lord on behalf of your Holy Church which stretches from one end of the earth to the other... and on behalf of all those whose names are in his care." (Here the deacon urges the people to pray with the priests "on behalf of the faithful who have passed on to their final rest.")

The Holy **Liturgies of St Basil and St John Chrysostom** also mention the deceased: "... remember all those who have died placing their hope in resurrection and eternal life and give them rest in a place where the light of your countenance will shine upon them." Here the priest mentions the names of the deceased that he would like to commemorate.

3) *The Diptychs of the Church*

Prayers for the deceased are part of the Church's apostolic tradition, and this is nowhere more apparent than in the diptychs of the Church.

What was a diptych? It was two planks of wood joined together, like the two stone tablets of Moses on which the Ten Commandments were written. The names of the Orthodox were written on these wooden tablets. In accordance with the decision of the 5th Ecumenical Council, the deacon used to commemorate the names written on the diptychs following the blessing of the Holy Eucharist and the recitation of the prayer "It is truly meet" (*Axion estin*) or "In thee, O Full of Grace, all creation doth rejoice" (*Epi soi chairie Kecharitomeni pasa I ktisis*). This practice is still maintained today on Mount Athos.

There were three kinds of diptychs: the diptychs of the saints, the diptychs of the living, and the diptychs of the deceased. The diptychs of the saints were in existence from the time of St Dionysios the Areopagite. The diptychs of the deceased were also extremely old and are referred to the Holy Liturgy of St Mark, the evangelist. The diptychs of the living contained the names of high priests, emperors, dignitaries, and officials, especially those who had helped that particular church, and of all the people in general. The diptychs were guarded with great care in the inner sanctuary of the church by the

officiating priests. The care with which they were guarded was due to the fact that they demonstrated how necessary it was that the saints of the Church be praised as saints, that Orthodox Christians be blessed and remembered as Orthodox, that heretics be condemned as apostates, and that "the deceased faithful, whose names are known by the Lord, be commemorated."

The apostolic tradition indisputably defends entreaties and prayers for the deceased and, consequently, memorial services. Our prayers for the deceased when we offer the holy gifts during the Holy Eucharist are based on this same tradition, according to which we are to pray for the deceased and to place the portions of the holy bread of oblation (*prosphora*) that represent the souls of the dead beside the portions of the living. Following this, the portions for the living and the deceased are placed into the Holy Chalice, where the All-Holy Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ will bless and redeem them, as the priest says: "Cleanse, Lord, the sins of your commemorated servants with Your Holy Blood, through the intercessions of our most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and of all Your Saints. Amen."

4) *Church Testimonies*

Mitrophanes Kritopoulos. Mitrophanes Kritopoulos, Patriarch of Alexandria, writes the following, which has particular bearing on our subject: "The Church of Christ first thought of offering prayers and supplications on behalf of the dead in order that those who had died might either be released entirely from their sufferings through prayers offered to God or might at least receive some relief or comfort in the place where their souls were imprisoned."

"We pray," he says, "specifying the names of those who have died. We do this on the first, third, ninth, twentieth, and fortieth days following a person's death and then at the end of three months, six months, and finally at the end of one year. Moreover, there is no reason not to repeat these prayers as often as the relatives of the person who has passed away wish to do so. However, the Church does offer prayers every Saturday throughout the year for all those who have passed away in a state of godliness; this takes place in all churches, and the names are also commemorated every time the Holy Liturgy is performed."

Peter Mogila. This testimony states the following: "There is no opportunity to regret or to do good deeds after death. From this it clearly follows that after death the soul cannot free itself or repent and do good works that might deliver it from the fetters of hell. The only things that can help are Holy Liturgies, prayers, and charitable deeds performed by the living on behalf of the dead; moreover these can be of the utmost benefit and can even release such souls from the fetter of hell."

Explaining the passage at Luke 12:5 which says "fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell," he writes: "The Evangelist does not say 'him who, after he has killed, casts into hell' but 'him who has power to cast into hell.' In other words, he does not say that after death God will cast our souls into hell but that he has the ability to do so. Sinners who have died are certainly not cast into hell, even though doing so lies within God's power, because forgiveness also lies within His power. Furthermore, I mention this with regard to the offerings and charitable deeds that are done for those who have departed, as these acts are of great benefit to them, even to those who died with serious sins. God does not cast these souls into hell after death; he only has the power to do so. Therefore, let us not cease to entreat Him who has the power to cast our souls into hell but does not use this power, as He is able to forgive." (*To be continued*)

(Source: *The Memorial Services and their benefits by Hieromonk Benedict, New Skete, Mt Athos, 2002*)



From the Old
Testament - The Psalms

Psalm Eight (8)

THE GLORY OF THE LORD IN CREATION

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above
the Heavens!

Out of the mouth of babes and
nursing infants
You have ordained strength,
Because of Your enemies,
That You may silence the
enemy and the avenger.

When I consider Your heavens,
the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which
You have ordained,
What is man that You are
mindful of him,
And the son of man that You
visit him?

For You have made him a little
lower than the angels,
And you have crowned him
with glory and honour.

You have made him to have
dominion over the works of
Your hands;
You have put all things under
his feet, All sheep and oxen—

Even the beasts of the field,
The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea
That pass through the paths of the seas.

O LORD, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth!

[This psalm is a the communion hymn on Lazarus Saturday (the day before Palm Sunday) and is also sung at Palm Sunday Matins. Jesus Teaches that this prophecy (v. 2), is fulfilled by the children praising Him on Palm Sunday as He enters Jerusalem (Matt.21:15, 16). The best commentary on this passage (vv. 4, 5) is found in the book of Hebrews (Heb. 2:5-9), where we see that Jesus is made "a little lower than the angels" so that He can taste death for all and thus exalt humanity above the angels.]

(Source: The Orthodox Study Bible, Thomas Nelson Publishers, Nashville, Tennessee 1997)



Saint Nestor

Beauty will save
the World

When I asked the earth, it responded: "I am not God." When I asked the heavens, the sun, the moon, the stars, they said: "Nor are we God you seek." I said: "Speak to me of my God." Loudly, they exclaimed, "It is He who made us." The heavens, the earth, and everything that is in them, all these things tell me to love you.

-St Augustine

When the prince in Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* (1869) was mocked for his belief that "beauty will save the world", it was a mocking that was superficial, for the prince had understood something that was at the very heart of Orthodox spirituality: beauty can indeed save the world.



When the envoys of Prince Vladimir of Kiev returned from the Divine Liturgy of *Hagia Sophia*, they exclaimed, "We cannot forget that beauty."

It was that beauty of the liturgy which reflects the glory of God that attracted the envoys to the Christian faith, resulting in the conversion of the Slavs.

The Psalmist speaks of God's beauty in Psalm 27:4,

One thing I have desired of the Lord, that I will seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.

Beauty will save the world. It occupies an important position in Orthodox spirituality as well as in the Orthodox view of God.

Beauty will save the world. It occupies an important position in Orthodox spirituality as well as in the Orthodox view of God.

(Source: *Do Something Beautiful for God*, by Anthony M. Coniaris, Light & Life Publishing Co. Minneapolis 2006)



Orthodox Christian Calendar 2007

This monthly (x2) calendar is provided for your information. It aims to give you an insight into the Orthodox Christian Church year of 2007 and hopes to prove useful and beneficial with its indications. The calendar provides you with a day-by-day outlook of the following pieces of information: **1. The Greater Feast days (†)** celebrated in the Orthodox Christian Church. **2. The main fasting and non-fasting periods** in the Church and the strictness of each of these fasts. **3. The schedule of English Divine Liturgies**, where these are held and at what time. **4. Main Vespers Services** held at each of our Melbourne, VIC Parishes (commence 7p.m.) **5. Public Holidays** and **other events** held.

Month of October

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 † PANAGIA GORGEOPIKOOS	2 † ST KYPRIANOS THE MARTYR	3 † ST. DIONYSIOS THE AREOPAGITE	4	5	6 † ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE
7 † 3RD SUNDAY OF LUKE	8 CYC Monthly Talk: "A glimpse of Hell..." by Rev. Fr Timothy Evangelinidis, at St Eustathios, Sth Melbourne, 7.30pm	9	10	12	13	13 ENGLISH LITURGY AT GEELONG MONASTERY, 9.00 - 10.00am
14 † 4TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (THE HOLY THE FATHERS OF THE 7TH ECUMENICAL COUNCIL)	15	16 ENGLISH LITURGY AT ST. EUSTATHIOS, STH MELBOURNE, 7.30-8.45pm	17	18 † ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST	20 † ST. ARTEMIOS THE GREAT MARTYR	20
21 † 6TH SUNDAY OF LUKE	22	23 † ST. JAMES THE APOSTLE & BROTHER OF CHRIST	24	25 VESPERS: ST. DIMITRIOS ASCOT VALE	26 † ST. DIMITRIOS THE GREAT MARTYR	27 † ST. NESTOR THE GREAT MARTYR
28 † 7TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (Holy Protection of the Theotokos 'OXI' DAY)	29 † ST ANASTASIA OF ROME	30	31 VESPERS: STS ANARGYRI OAKLEIGH			

Month of November

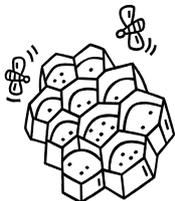
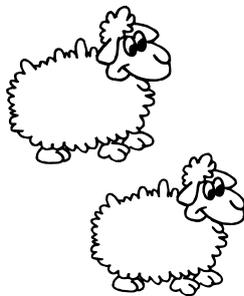
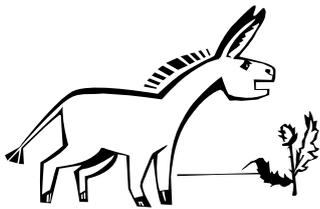
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 † STS DAMIANOS & KOSMAS THE UNMERCENARIES	2	3
4 † 5TH SUNDAY OF LUKE	5	6 **MELBOURNE CUP DAY** (PUBLIC HOLIDAY)	7	8 † ARCHANGELS MICHAEL & GABRIEL ***** VESPERS: ST NEKTARIOS, FAWKNER	9 † ST. NEKTARIOS OF PENTAPOLIS	10 ENGLISH LITURGY AT GEELONG MONASTERY, 9.00 - 10.00am
11 † 8TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (St Minas the Great Martyr)	12 † ST. JOHN THE MERCIFUL	13 † ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM	14 † ST. PHILLIP THE APOSTLE	15 ** CHRISTMAS FAST BEGINS **	16 † ST. MATTHEW THE EVANGELIST	17
18 † 9TH SUNDAY OF LUKE	19 CYC MONTHLY TALK: "Cremation and Burial: An Orthodox Perspective?" by Very Rev. Elias Kentrotis, at St Eustathios, South Melbourne, 7.30 pm	20 VESPERS: THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LADY TO THE TEMPLE, NORTH BALWYN	21 † THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LADY TO THE TEMPLE	22	23	24 VESPERS: ST CATHERINE, MALVERN
25 † 13TH SUNDAY OF LUKE (St Catherine the Graet Martyr) ***** DINNER FOR ARCHBISHOP'S NAMEDAY AT ULTIMA ON KEILOR RECEPTION CENTRE, 7.00 p.m.	26 † ST. STYLIANOS THE RIGHTEOUS (ARCHBISHOP STYLIANOS' NAMEDAY)	27 ENGLISH LITURGY AT ST. EUSTATHIOS, STH MELBOURNE, 7.30-8.45pm	28	29 VESPERS: ST. ANDREW, NUNAWADING	30 † ST. ANDREW THE FIRST CALLED OF THE APOSTLES	

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

SECOND ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

ANNUAL MELBOURNE CUP DAY FAMILY PICNIC DAY AT THE MONASTERY

TUESDAY 6th NOVEMBER 2007



All are welcome to come along to
enjoy a fun day at the Geelong
Monastery of Panagia Gorgoepikoos

Corner Monastery Court and
Bluestone Bridge Road,
Lovely Banks, Vic. 3221



Divine Liturgy in the morning in Greek and
English : 9.00—10.30am
Games and Activities will be organized
BYO PICNIC LUNCH

GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA

SECOND ARCHDIOCESAN DISTRICT OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Central Youth Monthly Lectures

“Cremation and Burial: An Orthodox Perspective”

presented by

Very Rev. Elias Kentrotis



Monday, 19th November 2007

at the

***Greek Orthodox Church of St. Eustathios
221 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne***

Commencing at 7.30pm

For further information telephone: 9690 1595 or 9696 2488

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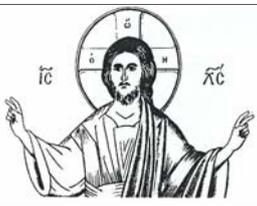
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Saint Nestor

CENTRAL YOUTH COMMITTEE MAGAZINE



Youth Group Meetings in Victoria



Ascot Vale: St. Dimitrios
Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9375 1119)

Brunswick: St. Basil
Wednesday 6.30 p.m. (9387 7693)

Clayton: Three Hierarchs
Monday 7.30 p.m. (9544 5706)

Coburg: Presentation of our Lord
Tuesday 7.45 p.m. (9350 5559)

Dandenong: St. Panteleimon
Thursday 7.30 p.m. (9791 8369)
(www.dandenongyouth.com)

East Kellon: Panagia Soumela
Monday 7.00 p.m. (9331 2010)

East Malvern: St. Catherine
Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9563 6623)

Fawkner: St. Nektarios
Wednesday 7.00 p.m. (9359 4404)

Forest Hill: St. Andrew
Monday 7.30 p.m. (9802 0165)

Northcote: Axion Esti Monastery
Monday 7.30 p.m. (9481 7826)

Oakleigh: Sts. Anargyri,
Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9569 6874)

Richmond: Holy Trinity
Thursday 7.30 p.m. (9428 1284)
(parishofholyltrinityrichmond@yahoo.com)

South Melbourne: St. Eustathios
Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9690 1595)

Springvale: St. Athanasios,
Saturday 6.00 p.m. (9547 8610)

Templestowe: St. Haralambos
Tuesday 8.30 p.m. (9846 4066)

Thomastown: Transfiguration of the Lord,
Thursday 7.30 p.m. (9465 9907)

Yarraville: St. Nicholas
Tuesday 7.30 p.m. (9687 1513)