

Wisdom from the East and West

"Are you capable of risking your life for someone? Do it for Christ." -- Pope John Paul II

"Prayer is where the action is." -- John Wesley

"You do not need to wallow in guilt. Wallow in the mercy of God." St. John Vianney

"God creates out of nothing. Wonderful you say. Yes, to be sure, but He does what is still more wonderful: He makes saints out of sinners." Soren Kierkegaard

"Do you wish to rise? Begin by descending. You plan a tower that will pierce the clouds? Lay first the foundation of humility." Saint Augustine

"The most powerful weapon to conquer the devil is humility. For, as he does not know at all how to employ it, neither does he know how to defend himself from it." Saint Vincent de Paul

Today is the joyful forefeast of the time of abstinence, the bright threshold of the Fast. Therefore, brethren, together let us run the race with confident hope and with great eagerness.

— Ode I, First Canon of Cheesefare Monday

Saint Innocent Orthodox Christian Church of Eureka
www.eurekafirstchurch.com | (707) 443-2099

LENT 2017 NEWSLETTER

"Acquire the Spirit of Peace and a thousand souls around you will be saved." This is perhaps the most famous quote of the great Russian saint, Seraphim of Sarov. Many of his icons have this saying on them. I've never met anyone who didn't like it. On the other hand, I think there are many who do not understand it. And understanding what he meant can take you to the very heart of Orthodoxy.

"To acquire the Spirit of Peace," has a wonderful ring to it – and most of us assume

that it is the fruit of the great saint's long years of strict monastic practice. Doubtless many of the gifts of St. Seraphim were manifested in such a powerful fashion on account of his years of silence and prayer.

But his statement on acquiring the Spirit of Peace is not nearly as complicated or mysterious as some might think.

In many ways it is simply an expansion of the Gospel parable of the talents:

For it will be as when a man going on a jour-

ney called his servants and entrusted to them his property; to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them; and he made five talents more. So also, he who had the two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money. Now after a long time the master of those serv-



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Lent and Holy Week Schedule – 2017

Saint Innocent Orthodox Church

Pre-Lent

Sunday, February 05	Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
Sunday, February 12	Sunday of the Prodigal Son
Sunday, February 19	Meat-fare Sunday
Sunday, February 26	Cheese-fare Sunday
	Forgiveness Vespers 6:00pm

Lent (Begins Monday, February 27)

Monday, February 27	Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete 6:00pm
Tuesday, February 28	Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete 6:00pm
Wednesday, March 1	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm (<i>Soup & Meditation following</i>)
Thursday, March 2	Canon of Saint Andrew of Crete 6:00pm
Saturday, March 4	Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, March 5	Sunday of Orthodoxy: Divine Liturgy at 10am
Wednesday, March 8	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm (<i>Soup & Meditation following</i>)
Saturday, March 11	Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, March 12	Sunday of St. Gregory Palamas: Divine Liturgy at 10am
Wednesday, March 30	No Pre-Sanctified Liturgy
Saturday, April 2	No Great Vespers

Sunday, March 19	Sunday of the Veneration of the Cross: Divine Liturgy at 10am
Saturday, March 25	Divine Liturgy for the feast of The Annunciation 10:30 am (<i>fish feast after</i>)

Sunday, March 26	Sunday of St. John of the Ladder: Divine Liturgy at 10am
Wednesday, April 5	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm (<i>Soup & Meditation following</i>)
Wednesday, April 6	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm (<i>Soup & Meditation following</i>)
Saturday, April 16	Great Vespers 6:00pm

Sunday, April 2	Sunday of St. Mary of Egypt: Divine Liturgy at 10am
Wednesday, April 5	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy 6:00pm (<i>Soup & Meditation following</i>)

Holy Week

Saturday, April 8	Lazarus Saturday, Divine Liturgy at 10:30am; Great Vespers at 6pm
Sunday, April 9	Palm Sunday, Divine Liturgy at 10am
Monday, April 10	Bridegroom Service 6:00pm
Tuesday, April 11	Bridegroom Service 6:00pm
Wednesday, April 12	Pre-Sanctified Liturgy with Holy Unction 6:00pm
Thursday, April 13	Divine Liturgy of the Institution of the Holy Eucharist 10:30am
	12 Passion Gospels 6:00pm
Friday, April 14	Great Vespers of the Burial of our Lord 6:00pm
Saturday, April 15	Divine Liturgy of the Great and Holy Sabbath 9:00am
	Matins and Divine Liturgy of Great and Holy Pascha 10:30pm
Sunday, April 16	Agape Vespers 11:00am

Note: this is the list of liturgical services; please see newsletter for additional events

What *is the Canon of St. Andrew?*

The Great Canon of St Andrew, Bishop of Crete in the 700s, is the longest canon in all of our services, and is associated with Great Lent. There is no other sacred hymn which compares with this monumental work, which St Andrew wrote for his personal meditations. Nothing else has its extensive typology and mystical explanations of the scripture, from both the Old and New Testaments. One can almost consider this hymn to be a “survey of the Old and New Testament”. Its other distinguishing features are a spirit of mournful humility filled with hope in God. ***The canon is a dialog between St. Andrew and his soul.***



The ongoing theme is an urgent exhortation to change one's life. St Andrew always mentions his own sinfulness placed in juxtaposition to God's mercy, and uses literally hundreds of references to good and bad examples from the OT and NT to “convince himself” to repent (change his mind). A canon is an ancient liturgical hymn, with a specific format. It consists of a variable number of parts, each called an “ode”. Most common canons have eight Odes, numbered from one to nine, with Ode 2 being omitted. The most penitential canons have all nine odes, whereas some canons have only three Odes. In any case, an “Irmos” begins each Ode. This is generally sung, and each Irmos has a reference to one of the nine biblical canticles, which are selections from the Old and New Testament (they can be found in an appendix in any complete liturgical Psalter (book of Psalms, arranged for reading in the services)). A variable number of “troparia” follow, which are short hymns about the subject of the canon. These are usually chanted, and not sung. After each troparion a “refrain” is chanted. At the end of each Ode, another hymn, called the “Katavasia” is sung. The troparia of the Great Canon in all its twelve Odes are usually chanted by the priest in the center of the church, with the choir singing the Irmos and Katavasia. There are varying traditions about bows and prostrations. Some prostrate and some make the sign of the cross and bow three times after the Irmos and each troparion.

THE MOST IMPORTANT THING TO KNOW ABOUT THE GREAT CANON.

The Great Canon was written by a holy man to teach himself the right way to live. We cannot benefit from it unless we make it a priority to stand in prayer, in the church, and listen to it, with a great desire and expectation for God's grace to teach us and heal us. Our theology is first and foremost – experienced and prayed, and not only “studied”. *Fr Seraphim Holland*

ants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me five talents; here I have made five talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, 'Master, you delivered to me two talents; here I have made two talents more.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a little, I will set you over much; enter into the joy of your master.' He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not winnow; so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' But his master answered him, 'You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sowed, and gather where I have not winnowed? Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to every one who has will more be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness; there men will weep and gnash their teeth' (Mt. 25:14-30).

This very familiar parable is quite odd. Christ is alluding to something in the imagery of the "talents" of silver (or gold). Whatever it is, it has been given freely to the stewards – but the stewards are expected to do something with the gift. It is to be given back, with a profit.

First, the parable is not about talents: piano-playing and the like. Nor is it about public-speaking, or even being a good teacher of children. It is not about talents. It is about a sum of money – but is not a "stewardship" parable in the sense that Christ is not trying to tell us to be sure and make money.

It is a parable about grace, about the Holy Spirit.

St. Seraphim, in his own teaching, would be almost crass. He told his disciples to "acquire the Holy Spirit," and used the gross comparisons of a businessman investing his money in order to make more. His own father was a merchant. He knew what he was talking about – but the imagery was carried over to the spiritual life – and its goal was supremely described as the "acquisition of the Holy Spirit."

The larger question then (and it applies to the parable as well): How do we acquire grace – or the Holy Spirit?

Please note that I am not speaking about earning more grace and performing works in order to gain the Holy Spirit.

Grace is nothing other than the Life of God who is "Good" and "Love." But that phrase, unless correctly understood can be all to confusing. I prefer to speak either of grace or of God's own Life, freely given to us.

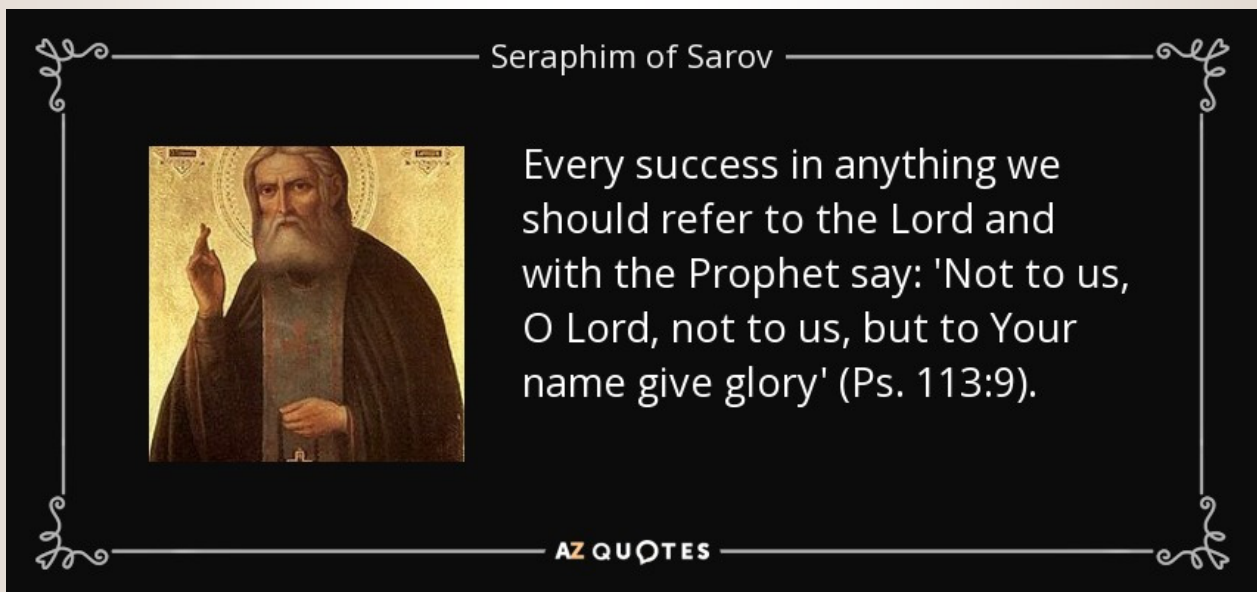
First, grace is a gift. You don't have to go anywhere to get what you already have been given. What we need to do is allow the grace of God to work in us what God intends.

St. Paul would urge: "We entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain! (2 Corinthians 6:1)

Each of us (certainly in our Baptism and Chrismation) have been given the grace of God for our salvation – that is to bring forth the fruit of the Spirit and to conform us to the image of God in Christ. The question is what do we do with it?

This is a question particularly about the small things of the day. Do we pray? Do we begin the day by crossing ourselves before our feet ever hit the floor? When tempted to grumble do we refrain and give thanks instead? Do we condemn others, even when we could have been silent? Do we forgive when we could have nursed a grudge?

There is grace for each of these things and thousands more. We are able, because God has made us able. Grace that is put to use in our lives produces dividends of grace. St. Seraphim did not become what he was through a momentary gift, but through a lifetime of asceticism and “reinvesting” the grace given him.



Some words from the great saint for the little things of the day:

You cannot be too gentle, too kind. Shun even to appear harsh in your treatment of each other. Joy, radiant joy, streams from the face of him who gives and kindles joy in the heart of him who receives.

All condemnation is from the devil. Never condemn each other...instead of condemning others, strive to reach inner peace.

Keep silent, refrain from judgment. This will raise you above the deadly arrows of slander, insult, and outrage and will shield your glowing hearts against all evil.

This—I think—is what St. Seraphim meant.

‘Stillness or Death...’

In Genesis, we read that Cain was “deeply grieved” when his sacrifice was not accepted, and so God commands him: “Be still!” But Cain finds no stillness, and proceeds to murder his brother. In telling Cain to be “still,” God literally tells him to ἡσυχάζω (“hesychazo,” Gen. 4:7 LXX). The very first murder flows from a lack of hesychia or an inability to practice “hesychasm” (quiet, stillness, rest).

This meditative and spiritual discipline of Orthodox Christianity has a long heritage. It is known as both ἀναχώρησις or “withdrawal” and νῆψις or “watchfulness” (1 Pet. 5:8). Ultimately, the purpose within each emphasis is the same: to find a true inner peace by God’s grace, so that we are able to resist temptation and be freed from deception. St. Hesychios of Jerusalem describes watchfulness as:

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Highlights of Divine Services

*Annunciation of the Theotokos
Divine Liturgy and Fish Feast*



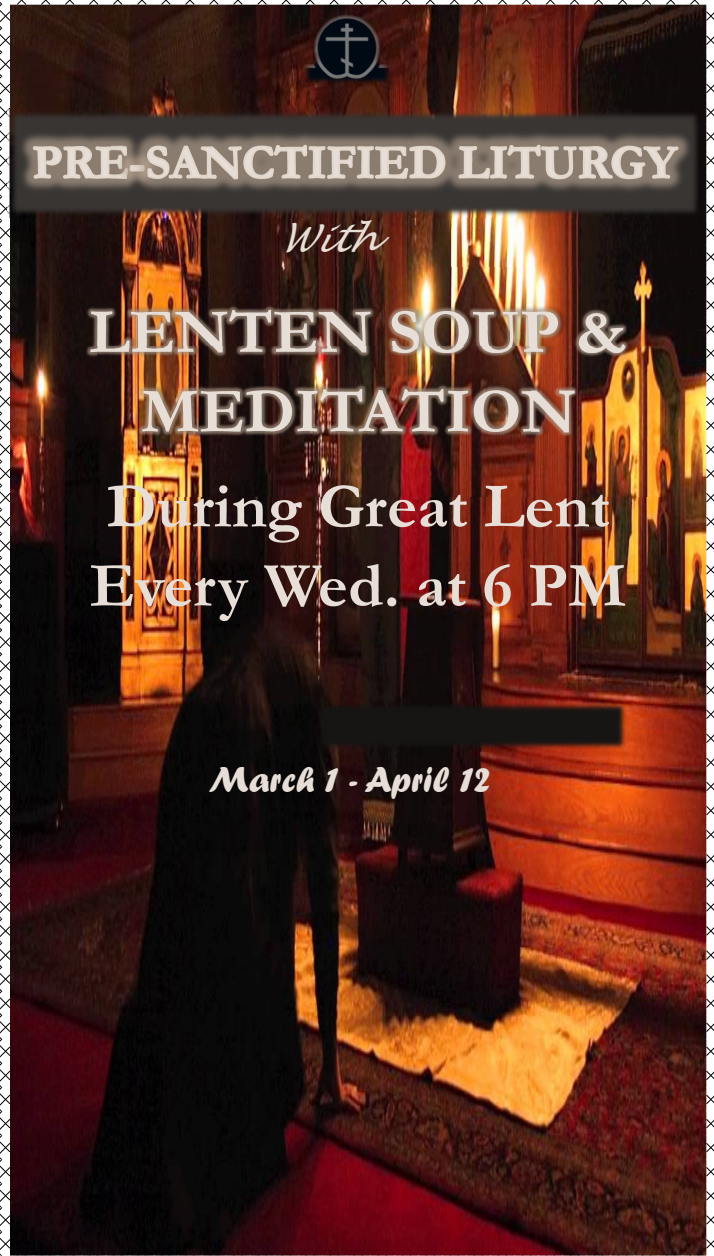
*March 25 - Saturday at
10:30 AM*

PRE-SANCTIFIED LITURGY

With
**LENTEN SOUP &
MEDITATION**

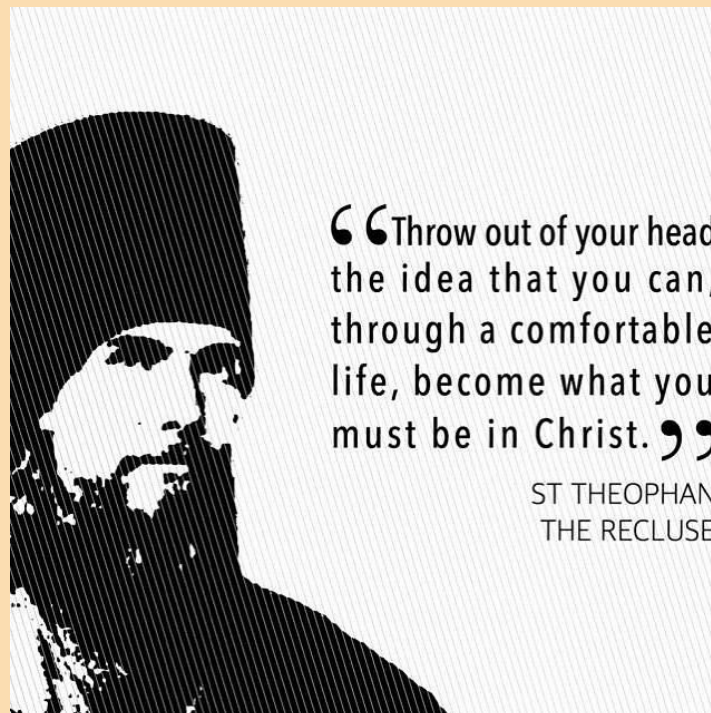
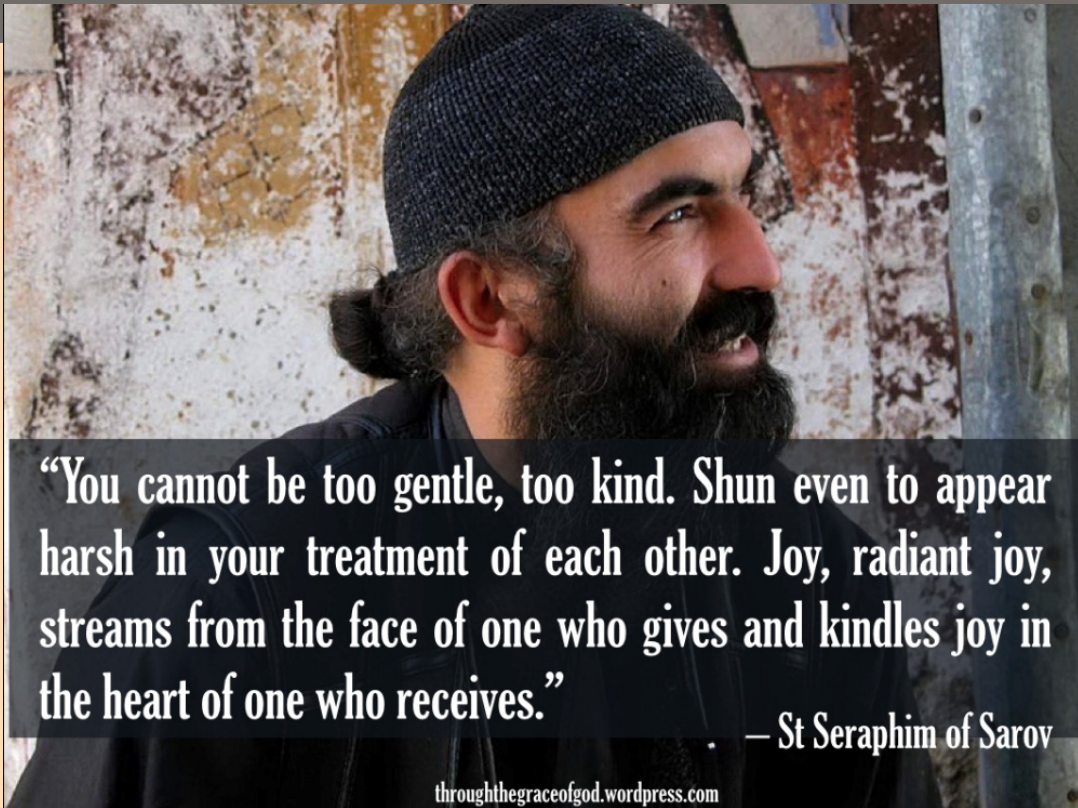
**During Great Lent
Every Wed. at 6 PM**

March 1 - April 12



**Forgiveness Sunday Vespers
Sunday February 26 at 6 PM**

Quotes worth cutting out and placing on your fridge
or dashboard...



A spiritual method which, if sedulously practiced over a long period, completely frees us with God's help from impassioned thoughts, impassioned words and evil actions . . . It is, in the true sense, purity of heart, a state blessed by Christ when He says: 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God' (Matt. 5:8). —On Watchfulness and Holiness I

St. Hesychios goes on to note that Moses taught the ancient Hebrews to seek after this quietude of heart: "Be mindful of yourself, lest a hidden word is in your heart, a transgression of the law" (Deut. 15:9 LXX).

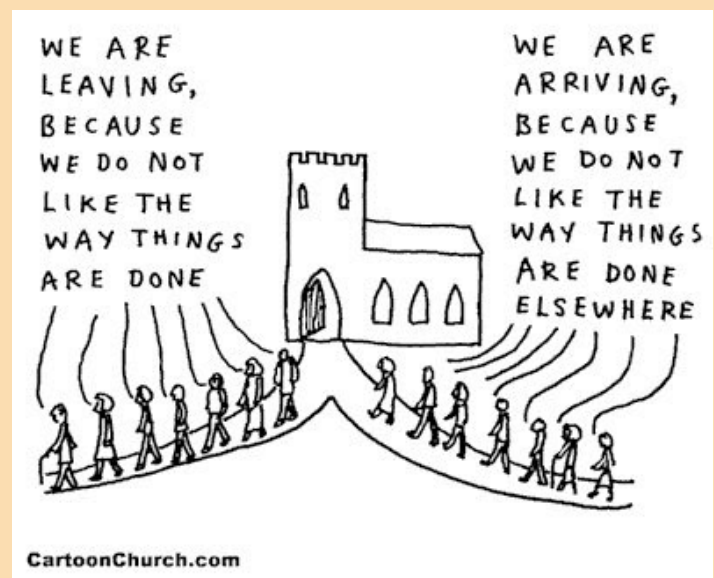
This pursuit of stillness runs contrary to every twisted impulse and deception of our day. Demands for equality, empowerment, and rights are demands that betray our higher calling to stillness. Or, as the late Fr. Alexander Schmemmann once put it, "Equality is from the devil, because it comes entirely from envy."

We are not all meant to be the same. Not all of us are meant for "great things"—as perceived by the world's eyes—or the sort of success promised by the American Dream. We are unique individuals, and God has placed us when and where we are for a purpose beyond our comprehension. But in this uncertainty, we can still find a quietude of heart—we can "be still" and know God (Ps. 45:10 LXX)—if we direct our thoughts, prayers, and intentions in a proper and spiritual manner. We must learn to accept our lot in life, learn to accept with patience all things presented to us, and learn to find contentment in circumstances beyond our control. We need not always look for the next, best thing. The grass is almost never greener.

In my own life, my greatest regrets, failures, and sins have all resulted from envy. These actions have all arisen from an unholy desire, a lack of contentment and stillness in my heart. But we should seek that higher calling, that promised Sabbath rest (Heb. 4:11).

Even as there is chaos and insanity all around us, we can find an inner peace beyond human understanding (Phil. 4:7). And in this peace, we meet God.

Source: <https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/onbehalfofall/desire-stillness-and-the-first-murder/>





As a canonical Orthodox parish, St Innocents is the only Christian community in Eureka that is in communion with the ancient churches where Christianity started and to whom St Paul wrote his epistles: Jerusalem, Damascus, Corinth, Thessaloniki, etc.

As Orthodox Christians, we may well have 'America's best kept secret' — the original proclamation of the Gospel, spiritual roots that spread as wide and deep as history itself, and the assurance to be joined to Christ Jesus through Apostolic Faith and Apostolic Worship.

Spread the secret! Share the Gospel!

WWW.EUREKAFIRSTCHURCH.COM | WWW.ORTHODOXANSWERS.ORG
TO ENRICH YOUR DAILY LIFE: WWW.ANCIENTFAITH.COM

Books for Recommendation

"I can't imagine a man really enjoying a book and reading it only once." – C.S. Lewis

Rebel's Journey by Fr. Alexander Goussetis

"Lefty Pappas, a child of immigrants, lives in the socially turbulent America of the 1960's. He struggles with whether the wisdom of his ancestors is relevant in his life. He becomes an activist in many of the social issues of his day. Although from a stable and pious Christian family, Lefty feels an emotional and spiritual void in his life."

The Actor and Other Stories by V. Nikiforov-Volgin

"The Actor and Other Stories is a collection of gripping stories that reveal the resilient spirit of Russian Orthodox people living through World War I, through the Communist Revolution, to World War II. Translated from the Russian. This book is appropriate for youth and adults."

Diamonds on the Bosphorus by Aliko Kafetzopoulou

"Diamonds on the Bosphorus—an historical novel for young people—is the story of the choice made by Christians throughout the centuries: to follow the path of Christ or the path of worldly glory."

Letters to Saint Lydia by Melinda Johnson

"A Novel, by Melinda Johnson Lydia's life is turning upside down. Her family has converted to Orthodox Christianity without her, she's just about to leave home for college, one of her friends is pregnant, and soon she'll be facing all the trials and temptations encountered by every young adult who is on her own for the first time."

The Crimson Knight by Demetrious Glimidakis

Sabastian is kidnapped and taken to a foreign land where he is trained to be a warrior. Deep in his heart there burns a poisonous hatred and desire for revenge against the people who killed his family. He tries to serve The Knight who is the Light but seems to constantly fail and succumb to the violence of his new identity. But faith may find him when he least expects it, and salvation may be the only thing left worth fighting for. Will Sabastian overcome his pride and anger to follow the Knight who is the Light?