The Tower

Saint Barbara the Great Martyr Orthodox Church

Sunday 8th November 2026

7th Sunday of St. Luke

Issue 041

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We are a week away from the beginning of the Nativity fast. This Sunday we celebrate the Synaxis of the Archangels. Synaxis, which means the gathering of believers to celebrate a feast or to celebrate the remembrance of a saint. A special meaning is held during this feast as it is the gathering of both the humans and the angels, as they stand in fear in front of the Creator. For that reason, in some Orthodox traditions, the departed are also commemorated. In our community we also held Panachida for the departed at 4.30pm on Saturday. I would like to remind everyone that the correct time to serve the Memorial service for the departed is on Saturday before Vespers. After Divine Liturgy on Sunday is not the best time for this service. We do it because many people travel a great distance and we would not like to punish them, but offer as much as we can on Sunday. May the Lord have mercy to all our departed relatives!

It is worth saying that after the Divine Liturgy on Sunday we will serve a Memorial prayer at the Cemetery Cenotaph. There are a lot of graves of soldiers in our Cemetery.

The Commemoration Day of the people who lost their lives in wars is always around Saturday of the Souls and that makes it even more special for us. I would also like to remind everyone that the back door of the Cemetery, by the gravediggers hood, is now open all the time. This give us access from the church straight to the park. This is great place for a walk, or a picnic in good weather.

In a weeks time we will start the Nativity Fast. The Nativity Fast sanctifies the last part of the year and was established so that by the day of the Nativity of Christ we will purify us by repentance, prayer and abstinence. As a result, we could piously meet the Son of God who came to this world and, in addition to the usual gifts and sacrifices, bring Him a pure soul and the passionate intention to follow His commandments and teachings.

Saint Simeon of Thessalonica described this autumn fast in the following way: "The fast of the Nativity depicts the fast of Moses, who, after fasting for forty days and nights, received the inscription of the words of God on stone tablets. We, fasting for forty days, contemplate and accept the living word from the Virgin, inscribed not on stone, but incarnate and born, and partake of His Divine Body and Blood"

Fr. John

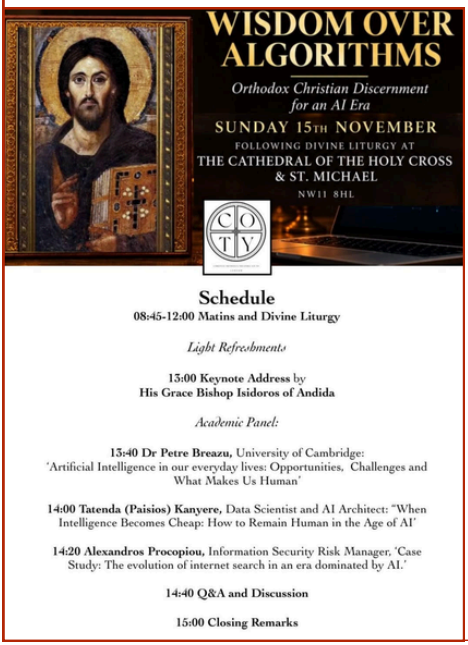




Upcoming Services

8 Nov Sunday	**09.00am 11.00am**	**Matins Divine Liturgy**	**7th Sunday of St Luke, Synaxis of the Archangels**
11 Nov Wednesday	6.30pm 7.15pm	Vespers Catechesis	St John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria
12 Nov Thursday	6.30pm	Vespers	St John Chrysostom Patriarch of Constantinople
13 Nov Friday	6.30pm	Vespers	St Philip the Apostle
14 Nov Saturday	5.30pm	Great Vespers	
15 Nov Sunday	**09.00am 10.00am**	**Matins Divine Liturgy**	**NATIVITY FAST 8th Sunday of St Luke**

An Announcement from COTY - Wisdom Over Algorithms



With the blessing of His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas, Christian Orthodox Thyateira Youth, kindly invites the youth of our communities to our upcoming event titled 'Wisdom over Algorithms: Orthodox Christian Discernment for an AI Era.' The event will commence following the Divine Liturgy on Sunday 15th November, from 13:00, at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Golders Green, NW11 8HL. His Grace Bishop Isidoros of Andida, the event's keynote speaker, will address the theme 'Could Machines Pray?'

His Grace's address will be followed by a panel of academics and AI specialists, including Dr Petre Breazu from the University of Cambridge, Tatenda Kanyere, a data scientist and AI Architect and Alexandros Procopiou, an information security manager. The event promises to promote dialogue and discussion on such a relevant theme for our young faithful. Please do share the attached poster and programme with your youth groups and on social media.

What is the purpose of fasting?

Fasting heals us. That's the simple answer. It's medicine for the soul, and like any good medicine, it works on the body too.

When you check into a hospital, one of the first things a doctor does is regulate your diet. The Orthodox Church does the same thing. We're sick, sick with passions, sick with self-will, sick with the delusion that we're fine on our own. Fasting is part of the treatment plan. The Church asks us to fast from certain foods during specific times of the year. No meat, no dairy, no eggs during Lent or on Wednesdays and Fridays. But if you think fasting is just about what you don't eat, you've missed the point entirely. St. John Chrysostom put it this way: fasting isn't kept by the mouth alone. It means controlling your tongue, forgiving anger, letting go of lust and falsehood. You can eat nothing but bread and water and still fail the fast if you're gossiping about your coworker at the plant or nursing a grudge against your sister-in-law.

Fasting gives you power over yourself. That's what we're after. Most of us go through life controlled by our appetites. We want what we want when we want it. Food, comfort, entertainment, validation. Fasting teaches us that we can say no. We can choose something higher than immediate gratification. And if you can say no to a cheeseburger for the love of God, you can say no to darker things too.

This isn't about earning God's approval. Christ already redeemed us on the Cross. We're not trying to pay Him back or prove we're serious. We're trying to get well. The Church fasts together because we need each other in this. When your neighbor at St. Michael's is also skipping meat on Wednesday, you're not alone in the struggle. There's no room for pride here. The fast is adjusted for pregnant women, the sick, and children, and Fr. Michael guides each case. This is healing, not legalism.

Jesus told His disciples that some demons don't come out except by prayer and fasting. The two go together. You can't separate them. When you fast, you're making space for prayer. You're admitting that you need God more than you need three meals a day exactly the way you like them. Your stomach reminds you all day that you're fasting, and each time it does, you can turn that reminder into prayer. "I'm hungry. I remember why. I turn to God."

The fasts prepare us for the feasts. We fast before Pascha so that the Resurrection hits us with its full weight. We fast before Nativity so that Christmas morning feels like the gift it is. And we fast before receiving Holy Communion because we're about to receive the actual Body and Blood of Christ. That requires preparation. You don't walk into that casually.

Here in Southeast Texas, fasting can feel countercultural in a particular way. We live in a place that loves its barbecue and its Tex-Mex. Food is hospitality. Food is family. Your Baptist relatives might not understand why you're turning down brisket at the family reunion. That's okay. Explain it if they ask. Don't make a show of it. The goal isn't to be weird. The goal is to be free.

The Triodion, one of our liturgical books for Lent, says this: "As we fast from food, let us abstain from the passions." That's the heart of it. Physical fasting is the training ground for spiritual fasting. When you learn to control what goes in your mouth, you start learning to control what comes out of it. When you can say no to cheese, you can start saying no to envy.

Some people worry they can't keep the fasts perfectly. Good. You probably can't. Talk to your priest. He'll help you figure out what's realistic for where you are right now. The Church is a hospital, remember? Patients don't all get the same treatment plan. But everyone who wants to get well has to take some medicine. Start somewhere. Fast one day a week. Try it. See what happens when you let yourself be a little hungry for God.

* source: https://stmichaeltx.org/



John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

This greatest and most beloved of all Christian orators was born in Antioch the Great in the year 344 or 347; his pious parents were called Secundus and Anthusa. After his mother was widowed at the age of twenty, she devoted herself to bringing up John and his elder sister in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. John received his literary training under Anthragathius the philosopher, and Libanius the sophist, who was the greatest Greek scholar and rhetorician of his day. Libanius was a pagan, and when asked before his death whom he wished to have for his successor, he said, "John, had not the Christians stolen him from us." With such a training, and with such gifts as he had by nature, John had before him a brilliant career as a rhetorician. But through the good example of his godly mother Anthusa and of the holy Bishop Meletius of Antioch (see Feb. 12), by whom he was ordained reader about the year 370, he chose instead to dedicate himself to God. From the years 374 to 381 he lived the monastic life in the hermitages that were near Antioch. His extreme asceticism undermined his health, compelling him to return to Antioch, where Saint Meletius ordained him deacon about the year 381. Saint Meletius was called to Constantinople later that year to preside over the Second Ecumenical Council, during which he fell asleep in the Lord. In 386 Bishop Flavian ordained John presbyter of the Church of Antioch. Upon his elevation to the priesthood his career as a public preacher began, and his exceptional oratorical gifts were made manifest through his many sermons and commentaries. They are distinguished by their eloquence and the remarkable ease with which rich imagery and scriptural allusions are multiplied; by their depth of insight into the meaning of Scripture and the workings of God's providence; and, not least of all, by their earnestness and moral force, which issue from the heart of a blameless and guileless man who lived first what he preached to others. Because of his fame, he was chosen to succeed Saint Nectarius as Patriarch of Constantinople. He was taken away by stealth, to avoid the opposition of the people, and consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople on February 28, 398, by Theophilus, Patriarch of Alexandria, who was to prove his mortal enemy.

At that time the Emperor of the East was Arcadius, who had had Saint Arsenius the Great as his tutor (see May 8); Arcadius was a man of weak character, and much under the influence of his wife Eudoxia. The zealous and upright Chrysostom's unsparing censures of the lax morals in the imperial city stung the vain Eudoxia; through Theophilus' plottings and her collaboration, Saint John was banished to Pontus in 403. The people were in an uproar, and the following night an earthquake shook the city; this so frightened the Empress Eudoxia that she begged Arcadius to call Chrysostom back. While his return was triumphant, his reconciliation with the Empress did not last long. When she had a silver statue of herself erected in the forum before the Church of the Holy Wisdom (Saint Sophia) in September of 403, and had it dedicated with much unseemly revelry, Saint John thundered against her, and she could not forgive him. In June of 404 he was exiled to Cucusus, on the borders of Cilicia and Armenia. From here he exchanged letters with Pope Innocent of Rome, who sent bishops and priests to Constantinople requesting that a council be held. Saint John's enemies, dreading his return, prevailed upon the Emperor to see an insult in this, and had John taken to a more remote place of banishment called Pityus near the Caucasus. The journey was filled with bitter sufferings for the aged bishop, both because of the harshness of the elements and the cruelty of one of his 310 guards. He did not reach Pityus, but gave up his soul to the Lord near Comana in Pontus, at the chapel of the Martyr Basiliscus (see May 22), who had appeared to him shortly before, foretelling the day of his death, which came to pass on September 14, 407. His last words were "Glory be to God for all things." His holy relics were brought from Comana to Constantinople thirty-one years later by the Emperor Theodosius the Younger and Saint Pulcheria his sister, the children of Arcadius and Eudoxia, with fervent supplications that the sin of their parents against him be forgiven; this return of his holy relics is celebrated on January 27.

Saint John was surnamed Chrysostom ("Golden-mouth") because of his eloquence. He made exhaustive commentaries on the divine Scriptures and was the author of more works than any other Church Father, leaving us complete commentaries on the Book of Genesis, the Gospels of Saints Matthew and John, the Acts, and all the Epistles of Saint Paul. His extant works are 1,447 sermons and 240 epistles. Twenty-two teachers of the Church have written homilies of praise in his honour. Besides his feasts today and on January 27, he is celebrated as one of the Three Hierarchs on January 30, together with Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory the Theologian.

The following readings and sermon have been extracted from the Archdiocese of Thyateira & Great Britain news bulletin.

To access the full bulletin, please visit: www.thyateira.org.uk.

ΑΠΟΣΤΟΛΙΚΌΝ ΑΝΆΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Ἑβρ. β΄, 2-10

Ἀδελφοί, εἰ ὁ δι΄ ἀγγέλων λαληθεὶς λόγος ἐγένετο βέβαιος, καὶ πᾶσα παράβασις καὶ παρακοὴ ἔλαβεν ἔνδικον μισθαποδοσίαν, πῶς ἡμεῖς ἐκφευξόμεθα τηλικαύτης ἀμελήσαντες σωτηρίας; Ἥτις, ἀρχὴν λαβοῦσα λαλεῖσθαι διὰ τοῦ Κυρίου, ὑπὸ τῶν ἀκουσάντων εἰς ἡμᾶς ἐβεβαιώθη, συνεπιμαρτυροῦντος τοῦ Θεοῦ σημείοις τε καὶ τέρασιν, καὶ ποικίλαις δυνάμεσιν, καὶ Πνεύματος Ἁγίου μερισμοῖς, κατὰ τὴν αὐτοῦ θέλησιν. Οὐ γὰρ ἀγγέλοις ὑπέταξεν τὴν οἰκουμένην τὴν μέλλουσαν, περὶ ἧς λαλοῦμεν. Διεμαρτύρατο δέ πού τις λέγων, Τί ἐστιν ἄνθρωπος, ὅτι μιμνήσκῃ αὐτοῦ; Ἢ υἱὸς ἀνθρώπου, ὅτι ἐπισκέπτῃ αὐτόν; Ἠλάττωσας αὐτὸν βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους· δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφάνωσας αὐτόν· πάντα ὑπέταξας ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν αὐτοῦ. Ἐν γὰρ τῷ ὑποτάξαι αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα, οὐδὲν ἀφῆκεν αὐτῷ ἀνυπότακτον. Νῦν δὲ οὔπω ὁρῶμεν αὐτῷ τὰ πάντα ὑποτεταγμένα. Τὸν δὲ βραχύ τι παρ' ἀγγέλους ἠλαττωμένον βλέπομεν Ἰησοῦν, διὰ τὸ πάθημα τοῦ θανάτου δόξῃ καὶ τιμῇ ἐστεφανωμένον, ὅπως χάριτι Θεοῦ ὑπὲρ παντὸς γεύσηται θανάτου. Ἔπρεπεν γὰρ αὐτῷ, δι' ὃν τὰ πάντα, καὶ δι' οὗ τὰ πάντα, πολλοὺς υἱοὺς εἰς δόξαν ἀγαγόντα, τὸν ἀρχηγὸν τῆς σωτηρίας αὐτῶν διὰ παθη- μάτων τελειῶσαι.

EPISTLE READING

Heb. 2: 2-10

Brethren, if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking. It has been testified somewhere, What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet. Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for every one. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.

Christian Orthodox Thyateira Youth (COTY)
COTY is the official youth ministry of the Archdiocese of Thyateira and Great Britain, for ages 16-35.
To learn more visit: www.coty.org.uk.
Instagram: COTY_org

ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΚΟΝ ΑΝΑΓΝΩΣΜΑ

Λουκ. η΄, 41-56

Τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ἄνθρωπός τις προσῆλθε τῷ Ἰησοῦ ᾧ ὄνομα Ἰάειρος, καὶ αὐτὸς ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς ὑπῆρχε· καὶ πεσὼν παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ παρεκάλει αὐτὸν εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν οἶκον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι θυγάτηρ μονογενὴς ἦν αὐτῷ ὡς ἐτῶν δώδεκα, καὶ αὕτη ἀπέθνησκεν. Ἐν δὲ τῷ ὑπάγειν αὐτὸν οἱ ὄχλοι συνέπνιγον αὐτόν. καὶ γυνὴ οὖσα ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος ἀπὸ ἐτῶν δώδεκα, ἥτις ἰατροῖς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον οὐκ ἴσχυσεν ὑπ᾽ οὐδενὸς θεραπευθῆναι, προσελθοῦσα ὄπισθεν ἥψατο τοῦ κρασπέδου τοῦ ἱματίου αὐτοῦ, καὶ παραχρῆμα ἔστη ἡ ῥύσις τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς. καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Ἰησοῦς· τίς ὁ ἁψάμενός μου; ἀρνουμένων δὲ πάντων εἶπεν ὁ Πέτρος καὶ οἱ σὺν αὐτῷ· ἐπιστάτα, οἱ ὄχλοι συνέχουσί σε καὶ ἀποθλίβουσι, καὶ λέγεις τίς ὁ ἁψάμενός μου; ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν· ἥψατό μού τις· ἐγὼ γὰρ ἔγνων δύναμιν ἐξελθοῦσαν ἀπ᾽ ἐμοῦ. ἰδοῦσα δὲ ἡ γυνὴ ὅτι οὐκ ἔλαθε, τρέμουσα ἦλθε καὶ προσπεσοῦσα αὐτῷ δι᾽ ἣν αἰτίαν ἥψατο αὐτοῦ ἀπήγγειλεν αὐτῷ ἐνώπιον παντὸς τοῦ λαοῦ, καὶ ὡς ἰάθη παραχρῆμα. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν αὐτῇ· θάρσει, θύγατερ, ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέ σε· πορεύου εἰς εἰρήνην. Ἔτι αὐτοῦ λαλοῦντος ἔρχεταί τις παρὰ τοῦ ἀρχισυναγώγου λέγων αὐτῷ ὅτι τέθνηκεν ἡ θυγάτηρ σου· μὴ σκύλλε τὸν διδάσκαλον. ὁ δὲ Ἰησοῦς ἀκούσας ἀπεκρίθη αὐτῷ λέγων· μὴ φοβοῦ· μόνον πίστευε, καὶ σωθήσεται. ἐλθὼν δὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν οὐκ ἀφῆκεν εἰσελθεῖν οὐδένα εἰ μὴ Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον καὶ τὸν πατέρα τῆς παιδὸς καὶ τὴν μητέρα. ἔκλαιον δὲ πάντες καὶ ἐκόπτοντο αὐτήν. ὁ δὲ εἶπε· μὴ κλαίετε· οὐκ ἀπέθανεν, ἀλλὰ καθεύδει. καὶ κατεγέλων αὐτοῦ, εἰδότες ὅτι ἀπέθανεν. αὐτὸς δὲ ἐκβαλὼν ἔξω πάντας καὶ κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς ἐφώνησε λέγων· ἡ παῖς, ἐγείρου. καὶ ἐπέστρεψε τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς, καὶ ἀνέστη παραχρῆμα, καὶ διέταξεν αὐτῇ δοθῆναι φαγεῖν. καὶ ἐξέστησαν οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῖς. ὁ δὲ παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς μηδενὶ εἰπεῖν τὸ γεγονός.

GOSPEL READING

Luke 8: 41-56

At that time, there came to Jesus a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As he went, the people pressed round him. And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and had spent all her living upon physicians and could not be healed by anyone, came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. And Jesus said, Who was it that touched me? When all denied it, Peter and those who were with him said, Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you! But Jesus said, Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me. And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. And he said to her, Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace. While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more. But Jesus on hearing this answered him, Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well. And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping. And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But taking her by the hand he called, saying, Child, arise. And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

SAINT NECTARIUS

May I never boast of anything except the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world (Gal. 6:14). These words of the Holy Apostle Paul, from the epistle reading for this Sunday, express very deeply the person of St Nectarius, Metropolitan of Pentapolis, whose memory we keep today. Saint Nectarius was someone, whose entire life was tied to the cross of Christ. He suffered much injustice from worldly-minded people both from outside the Church and especially from within the Church. His love, however, for Christ, for learning and for virtue steered him clear of the enticements of this corrupt world; and his love for the people and for the truth of Christ kept him close to those who suffer, and well rooted in the Orthodox Church.

The persecution and calumny, which he had to endure during his lifetime, St Nectarius bore with patience and forgiveness never seeking to avenge himself or to revenge. Again, St Paul's words are fitting to describe his stance to difficult situations of great injustice: *Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. ... Never, avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' (Rom. 12:17, 19)*

But who was St Nectarius? Born in Silybria, in Eastern Thrace, in 1846, St Nectarius, or Anastasios Kephalas as he was then called, after his schooling in his hometown, he worked and studied in Constantinople, Chios and Athens. In Chios, he become a monk and a deacon (1876-77), and after his graduate studies in Athens he moved to Egypt, where he was ordained priest (1886) and subsequently consecrated bishop (1889) by the Patriarch Sophronios of Alexandria. His exceptional gifts, which he put to the use of the Orthodox Church in Egypt, his pastoral work, compassion for the needy and love for the people very quickly produced plentiful good fruit, but at the same time all this also provoked envy and fear in some local power-hungry clergy. In the end, through the machinations of these people the Saint was removed from the country without any possibility to defend himself.

Moving to Greece, slander, like a plague, kept following him. At first, he had great difficulty finding any work, so much so that he could scarcely earn his living. Later, he was appointed a preacher in Euboia and Laconia, and thereafter he was given the position of the director of the Rizarios Theological Seminary in Athens (1894), a position which he held for 14 years. His final accomplishment was to establish the Monastery of the Holy Trinity in Aegina, where he also spent the last years of his earthly life.

St Nectarius passed away late in the evening of 8th November 1920, in the Aretaieion Hospital in Athens, and his myrrh-flowing and fragrant body was returned to Aegina and buried there in the monastery's courtyard. The Church recognized his sanctity 41 years later and he is, now, loved and revered throughout the entire Orthodox Christian world.

During his lifetime St Nectarius wrote extensively on a variety of spiritual, theological and historical topics. These works are now being republished by the monastery, and they will surely play a role in the present-day wave of so many people entering the Orthodox Church. St Nectarius also taught a great number of future bishops, priests and lecturers in Theology and Philosophy, he guided as a spiritual father a multitude of people, and was connected to many of his contemporary Saints, such as Amphilochios of Patmos, Savvas of Kalymnos and Ieronymos of Simonopetra. Through all these people his influence on spiritual life, monasticism and theological education has been and continues to be significant.

May his example, word and sanctifying presence strengthen and guide us, so that when the time of our own departure from this life will be at hand, we shall be able to be near St Nectarius and all those who truly loved Christ. Amen.

Hieromonk Melchisedec

For your prayers

1 Nov	Ioana Petkov John Mason	Baptised this day in 2020 Laid to rest this time in 2002
2 Nov	Jacob Andrei Potereas	Baptised this day in 2014
4 Nov	Jessica Elena Boaca	Baptised this day in 2012
6 Nov	Dominik Nikolas Horvath	Baptised this day in 2021
7 Nov	Valeria Popescu	Laid to rest this time in 2007
8 Nov	Antiopi Georgia Kasapidis	Baptised this day in 1998
10 Nov	David & Julie Anastasia Maria Vultur	Wedded this day in 2001 Baptised this day in 2019

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Thank you for your continous support !

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