

# ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

A PARISH OF THE DIOCESE OF NEW YORK AND NEW JERSEY

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Department of  
**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION**  
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AMERICA

## Give Me a Word: A Book Review

In a *New York Times* opinion piece earlier this year, Arthur C. Brooks wrote about what constitutes true happiness. He concluded that our society does us a disservice by encouraging us to seek luxury and wealth, to look for physical pleasure with numerous partners, and to strive for fame or even the fleeting celebrity of a reality show. These things, he stated, do not bring happiness.

Brooks offered a simple formula for happiness: rather than love things and use people, we can love people and use things. Among his closing words are these: "Of course you are driven to seek admiration, splendor and physical license...Declaring war on these destructive impulses is not about asceticism or Puritanism. It is about being a prudent person who seeks to avoid unnecessary suffering."

The phrase "declaring war on these destructive impulses" will strike a chord with anyone who has read sayings of the desert fathers and mothers—people who set out deliberately to fight that very war head on. Brooks' statement that the war is "not about asceticism" reminds us that the desert dwellers, who were indeed ascetics, are not the only ones called to the war—it is for all human beings to engage in.

"Give Me a Word: The Alphabetical Sayings of the Desert Fathers" (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2014) is a collection of sayings (in alphabetical order according to the Greek alphabet) from desert-dwelling fathers and mothers. It offers the reader "some impression of the amazing life and sound teachings of those pioneers who abandoned 'the world' to live with Christ in the wilderness..." as the translator John Wortley writes in his helpful introduction.

The sayings offer many insights. One story gives a helpful way

## Intercessory Prayers

We pray for all our fellow parishioners, but we pray especially for those who are incapable of being with us in church. Among them are: Michael, Mary and Max Bakaletz, Genevieve Bobenko, Pauline Bodnar, Nancy Filak, Mary Hadginske, Helen Kurnewitz, Margaret Lawler, Kathleen Lazarczyk, Emil Mikulik, MaryAnn Rabakozi, Anatoly & Anna Rozanovich, Nadia Sojka, Maryann Stagen, Eva Stashitsky, Ann Velebir.

of thinking about a well-known passage, "There is no greater love to be found than for somebody to lay down his life for his neighbor" (Jn 13:15) Abba Poemen taught that "if someone is being browbeaten and bears it without paying [his adversary] back, such a person is laying down his life for his neighbor." We may not all get the chance to "lay down our lives" literally for another person, but the forbearance described by Poemen is something we can practice.

Sometimes desert dwellers didn't know their own power. Amma Sarah, while out walking, leaped over a stream. A passing stranger laughed at this, and she, not knowing God's grace had come upon her, said, "Be quiet, you are going to burst." When she turned, she saw the stranger's intestines spilling out. She fearfully prayed, "My Jesus, bring him back to life and I will never say such a thing again." We really do need to be careful about asking God for things.

Desert ascetics could overdo it. Abba Sisoës, attempting to conquer the need for sleep, suspended himself from the precipice of Petra. An angel promptly detached him and forbade him to do or suggest to anyone else ever to do such a thing. Over-zealousness is a dangerous temptation.

A glossary, good notes, and a wealth of stories make this book rewarding for any reader



## Announcements

◆ The next **Trustees' Meeting** will be this Tuesday, **October 21** at 7pm.

◆ The "**O**" **Club meeting** will be today after the coffee hour. All members are urged to attend this last meeting before the Convention.

◆ Save the date: **Sat.- Sun. November 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>**: His grace Bishop Michael will be visiting our parish with **Archpastoral visitation**, and he will also be a guest and a main speaker at the New Jersey **District Convention of the F.O.C.A.**, hosted by our "O" Club the same weekend at our church hall. Please plan to attend services on both days, and support our "O" Club by purchasing a patron or booster or by taking an ad in the convention adbook. If you would like more information, please see Bob or Betty Czech or any "O" Club member.

◆ Save the date: **Sat. November 8, 2014 - Annual Beefsteak Dinner** at the Assumption Church in Clifton, NJ. For reservations (due by Sun. November 2<sup>nd</sup>) call Barbara Polk at 973-473-3773

◆ A **luncheon** for members of the "**O**" **Club** and the **Women's Club** will be held on **Sunday, November 9**, at "Al Cavaliere" in Clifton.

◆ The **Annual Diocesan Assembly** will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, **November 11 & 12, 2014** at St. Peter and Paul Church in Endicott, New York. More information on our Diocesan website [nynjoca.org](http://nynjoca.org).

## Birthday Greetings

Happy 1<sup>st</sup> Birthday to **Helena Czech**, Oct. 22, and to all those celebrating their birthdays this week: **Dennis Maixner**, Oct. 21; **Mat. Anna Kseniuk**, Oct. 22; and **Lauren Silvestre**, Oct. 25. May God grant all of you good health and happiness for Many Years! Mnohaja Lita!



October 19, 2014

19<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

- **8:00am** – Hours
- **9:00am** – Divine Liturgy  
Epistle: 2 Cor. 11:31-12:9  
Gospel: Lk. 8:5-15
- **Panikhida** – for the departed members of Szestawicki family, offered by Walentina & Mirek Szestawicki
- **Fellowship** – everyone is invited for Coffee Hour following the service.

## Schedule of Services

**SATURDAY, OCT. 25 - MEMORIAL SATURDAY**  
5:00pm - Panikhida for the Departed  
5:30pm - Great Vespers with Litya

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19**  
9:00am - Divine Liturgy