

# St. Demetrius

## On the True Aim of the Christian Life: Communion and the Way of Holiness

by Hieromonk Jonah Paffhausen

"The true aim of our Christian life consists in the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God." said St. Seraphim. What does this mean? It means to have the Holy Spirit dwell in our hearts, and for our whole life to be filled with His grace and presence. How do we acquire the Holy Spirit? Prayer, fasting, going to Church, going to confession and receiving Holy Communion, reading the Bible and holy books, are all means to acquire the Holy Spirit. The disciplines of Orthodox spiritual life are given to us precisely to sanctify our lives, and to help us live in grace, which is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Holy Communion is the center of our life in the Church. When St. Sergius of Radonezh celebrated the Divine Liturgy, he frequently had a vision of the fire of grace, of the Holy Spirit, descending onto the bread and chalice. How great and awesome is the Mystery of Christ's Body and Blood! One of the prayers before Holy Communion says, "Be awed, O man, when you see the deifying Blood! It is a fire which burns the unworthy! The divine Body both deifies and nourishes me. It deifies the spirit, and wondrously nourishes the mind." When we receive communion, it is not just bread and wine. Rather, it is a burning coal, alive with the fire of divine grace. We receive the Body of Christ, and are made partakers of the Holy Spirit. We are united to Christ in the most intimate way, because we become one body, one flesh and blood, with Him, and are given His Spirit. Being given this Gift, we must strive to live up to it! How?

First, we must prepare to receive Holy Communion. That means keeping the fasts, not eating meat or dairy on Wednesdays and Fridays and during fasting periods, and eat or drink nothing on the morning before Church. Second we must pray. The Church gives us prayers before communion and other prayers that are good for preparation. Use them! They teach us how to pray. Third, examine your conscience and come to confession. Think about how you have offended God, and ask His forgiveness. Then come to confession and confess these things and all your spiritual struggles before God, so the priest can give you God's forgiveness and blessing. Then, come and receive consciously, asking God to make you worthy of this great gift. Come surrendering your whole life to God, and He will give you of His own life. Come in humility, with thanksgiving to God for all the wonderful things He has done for you. Come with love, asking Him to fill you with the Holy Spirit and unite you to Himself in love. And after receiving, give thanks to God for the great gift of His grace He has given you. Feel the grace of His Spirit fill you, as you have eaten His Body and Blood, and are made one with Christ. Give thanks that He has blotted out all your sins.

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This newsletter  
is for the good  
health of  
Jack Anderson  
offered by  
Bill & Angela Lolas  
and family.

May God Grant Him  
Many Years!

### A Prayer of St. John Damascus

Wounded am I in heart; they  
zeal hath consumed me and  
they love hath changed me, O  
Master, I am held by the desire  
for Thee. May I be filled with  
they flesh. May I be sated with  
they living and deifying  
blood. May I obtain they  
blessings. May I be nourished  
with they divinity. May I be  
worthy to meet thee when  
thou wilt come with glory in  
the aerial rapture, in the  
clouds with all thine elect,  
that I may hymn, worship and  
glorify thee with grateful con-  
fession, together with thine  
unoriginate Father and thy  
most holy good and life cre-  
ating Spirit, now and ever and  
unto ages of ages. Amen.

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## On the True Aim of the Christian Life: Communion and the Way of Holiness

Our whole life as Orthodox Christians should be a constant preparation for Holy Communion and a living out of the gift of Communion given to us each time we partake. During the week, we should pray every day, and read the Bible. How much we pray or read is not as important as that you do so every day, without fail. We can pray anywhere at any time. We can say the Lord's Prayer (Our Father..), or we can say the Jesus Prayer (Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner). We should keep the feasts and fasts. But the real challenge is to live all our life conscious of the presence of God at all times and in all places. Then our whole life becomes an act of communion with God, and our lives are sanctified by the Holy Spirit dwelling within us.

If we do this, and to the extent we do it, God's grace will change and transform our lives. But we have to let Him. By receiving Communion we receive Christ in our hearts. We receive the grace and gift of the Holy Spirit. If we do so unconsciously, it can sear and burn us. But if we strive to consciously receive the grace of Holy Communion, we can grow spiritually, to fulfill all that God created us to be.

## Durable Power of Attorney Medical Workshop

Cinda Walton BS, RHIA retired Health Information Administrator from Lenawee Health Systems and Jackson Community College Adjunct Professor will present an adult workshop at St. Demetrius Church on **March 20th – 3 pm - 5 pm in the church hall.**

The program includes printed information and a form for completing a Durable Power of Attorney Medical. Ms. Walton will explain the process of thinking about health issues, end of life decisions and personal wishes about who a person wants to consent for themselves if they are incapacitated due to illness.

Fr. Dusan will be present to give the Orthodox point of view on end of life issues. This is a very important workshop and is for adults only.

The schedule is:

- 3 pm—5 pm Cinda Walton—Durable Power of Attorney  
Medical Workshop
- 5 pm - 6 pm Vespers
- 6 pm - Lenten meal (free will offering)

Please RSVP to  
Jean Dennerll,  
783-4681

If you would like to attend this important workshop or you have questions, please call Jean Dennerll at 783-4681.

### **The Lenten Prayer of St. Ephraim of Syria**

**O Lord and Master of my Life! Take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power and idle talk! But give rather the spirit of chastity, humility, patience and love to thy servant! Yea, O Lord and King! Grant me to see my own sins and not to judge my brother! For thou, are holy unto ages of ages. Amen!**

## Bible Questions

### Answers to last months questions:

1. Who was the brother of Judah? **Simeon**
2. After Ehud had locked himself in the upper room—what did the servants find when they unlocked the door? **Ehud was dead.**
3. How many sons did Gideon have? **70**
4. Monoah had a son, what was his name? **Samson**
5. What was done to Samson so that he would no longer have great strength? **His hair was cut.**

### The following questions may be found in the book of Ruth:

1. Naomi had 2 sons, what are their names?
2. The 2 sons were married to whom?
3. In whose field did Ruth find a place to collect grain?
4. What was the custom in Israel to make a contract binding?
5. Whom did Boaz marry?

## Presanctified Liturgy

During Great Lent we observe Presanctified Liturgy on Wednesdays and Fridays. On Fridays we have a Lenten Supper. For the March Lenten suppers, those who last name begins with:

A-E please bring a salad

F-L please bring an dessert

M-Z please bring an entree

## Wrap Up of All Church—Future Facilities Vision Meetings

On Sunday, February 7<sup>th</sup>, we held our final Vision Meeting. With Jean Dennerll's help, we prioritized the ideas and needs, listed by the parishioners, during the first brainstorming meeting. (In case you missed the meeting, the charts and results will remain up in the Church basement for the next few weeks.)

Now, that the Future Facilities Committee has this feedback from the parish in hand, we can begin to explore the possibility of building a new church hall on the ground floor level. We ask for your prayers as we work to meet the ever-changing needs of our parish community.

A great big thank you, to everyone who took their valuable Sunday afternoon time to participate in the All Church Vision Meetings.

Future Facilities Committee

St. Demetrius Orthodox Church  
Rev. Fr. Dusan Koprivica  
3043 Seymour Road  
P.O. Box 125  
Jackson, Michigan 49204  
517 784-0116  
www.stdemetrius.com

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### **Holy Week Services**

Great & Holy Wednesday, March 31 Unc-  
tion Service 6 pm

Great & Holy Thursday, April 1, Liturgy 10  
am, Matins 12 Gospel Readings 6 pm

Great & Holy Friday, April 2 Decorate  
Tomb 9 am, Vespers/Rite of Entombment  
4 pm, Matins/Laminations 6 pm,

Great & Holy Saturday, April 3, Liturgy  
with 15 O.T. readings 9:30 am. Saturday  
night Compline Procession, Pascha Liturgy  
11 pm

Paschal Vespers, Sunday, April 4th, 11 am

### **Please remember in your prayers**

#### For Good Health

Van Christoff  
Cyndi Frantzis  
Winnie Wangler  
Michael Wangler  
Kalliopi Anastasiadis  
Helen Tannis  
Mary Lazaroff  
Elaine Kleiner  
Patty Canalas  
Phil Lazaroff  
Milan Koprivica  
Jack Anderson  
John Stamcos

#### Departed

Deno Demos  
Ted Chames  
Ellen Koprivica  
Samantha Cipolla  
Mike Egnatuk  
Archbishop Job  
Stella Stamatakis  
Norman Kirchis

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**P.O. Box 125**  
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