



Hermitage of the Holy Cross

NEWSLETTER

March 2014 - Issue #31

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“O Lord and Master of my life, a spirit of idleness, despondency, ambition, and idle talking give me not. But rather a spirit of chastity, humble-mindedness, patience, and love bestow upon me Thy servant. Yea, O Lord and King, grant me to see my failings and not condemn my brother; for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

- *Prayer of St. Ephraim the Syrian*

— LATEST NEWS & EVENTS —

First Week of Lent

The First Week of Great Lent was celebrated with the usual solemnity at Holy Cross Monastery. Every effort is made annually to ensure that this sacred time, so important to monastics, proceeds with silence and discipline. The morning cycle of services, combined with the monastic readings by His Grace Bishop George from St. Ephraim the Syrian, the Ladder of Divine Ascent, St. Theodore the Studite and the Evergetinos, lasts seven to eight hours each day. Every evening His Grace Bishop George read the Great Canon during Compline, and the Hierarchal Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts was served Wednesday and Friday.

At the conclusion of Clean Week, Vigil and Divine Liturgy were served by His Grace Bishop George, who was coserved by monastery clergy. At the small entrance Deacon Jeremiah Davis, in honor of the 5th anniversary of his diaconal ordination and with the blessing of His Eminence Metropolitan Hilarion, was awarded the right to wear the double orarion. Hieromonk Alexander delivered a sermon on the importance of preserving our Orthodoxy in a changing world, especially as individuals who must realize that we as Orthodox Christians are fundamentally different from the world around us because of the interaction of our soul with Divine Grace through the Holy Mysteries of Baptism, Chrismation, Confession, and Holy Communion. After the dismissal of the Divine Liturgy the "Moleben for Those Gone Astray" was served, along with the Rite of Orthodoxy which is served where a bishop is present.



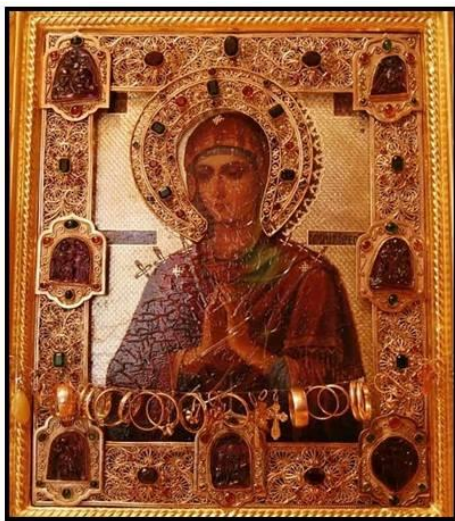
At the conclusion of the Rite of Orthodoxy, His Grace Bishop George congratulated Deacon Jeremiah on his award, noting that Fr. Jeremiah has served diligently as a deacon without any salary for five years out of love for the monastery and the Divine services, and is always ready to travel to mission and other parishes to ensure that liturgical rites during archpastoral visits go smoothly. 'Many Years' was intoned for Deacon Jeremiah and his matushka Margaret, who commented that she thanks God that she is still alive today to celebrate this anniversary, inasmuch as she and Fr. Jeremiah moved to the monastery environs

in anticipation of her death after she was diagnosed with terminal cancer from which she was later miraculously healed. Bishop George presented Fr. Jeremiah with the gift of another double orarion in burgundy and gold in gratitude for his service.

Project Kellia Update

Progress on Project Kellia is moving along! Painting and trim work is almost complete upstairs and in the stairway. Tile work in the upstairs bathrooms is likewise nearing completion. Flooring is being installed now by a Romanian Orthodox contractor, after which furniture for the cells will be delivered and final lighting installed so that monks can begin moving into the cells on the upper level.

Visit our [website](#) for more photos.



Miraculous Icon Visit

On April 2nd and 3rd the Myrr-Streaming Icon of the Mother of God "Softener of Evil Hearts" will be visiting Holy Cross Monastery and the local parish of Christ the Savior. The tentative schedule:

Thursday of the Great Canon, April 3rd

8:00 a.m. Hrs., Typica

10:00 a.m. Presanctified Liturgy

2:00 p.m. Moleben w/ Akathist at the Hermitage of the Holy Cross

6:30 p.m. Moleben w/ Akathist at Christ the Savior Orthodox Church, Wayne WV

All are welcome!

For more information on the icon, click [here](#).

2014 Holy Unction

The Hermitage is planning to serve this year's Holy Unction Thursday afternoon of Sixth Week, Thursday April 10th at 2pm.



Gift Shop Items for Lent & Pascha

Deluxe Pascha Gift Basket

This large Pascha Gift Basket includes our Kulich, one 12 oz. bag of Monastery Blend Coffee, one Amber room spray, one bottle of Vanilla Bean Liquid Soap, one Ambrosia Bar Soap, one 8 oz. bottle of Green Tea Lotion, one 9 oz. jar of Hermitage Creamed Honey, and a handpainted pysanky egg.

Includes a greeting card of your choice!

[Order](#) \$109



Paschal Kulich

Kulich is a traditional yeasted cake that is filled with eggs, milk, butter, honey, sugar, sweet spices, and studded with candied cherries. In order to symbolize the Resurrection of our Savior, it is allowed to rise high. Then it is baked to a golden brown, topped with a rich sugar frosting and the letters "XB", an abbreviation of the traditional Russian Paschal greeting meaning "Christ is Risen!".

The ingredients speak for themselves: wheat flour, whole milk, sweet cream butter, fresh eggs, West Virginia honey, sliced almonds, candied citrus peel, sugar, yeast, sea salt, ground cardamom, and vanilla. Topped with frosting and candied cherries. Send a kulich to your loved ones in honor of the Paschal Feast!

Each kulich weighs around 3.5 lbs.

\$35 each

Buy a case of 4 for \$119 and save \$21!

[Order](#)

Paschal Pysanky Eggs

Pysanky eggs are traditional Paschal gifts for family and friends. Handpainted from the Ukraine.

Pysanky eggs can be purchased [individually](#), or in a beautiful [gift box](#) set of 12.

\$4 each - \$49 for gift box



"This Was From Me" *St. Seraphim of Vyritsa's Spiritual Testament*



Have you ever thought that everything that touches you touches Me as well? For that which touches you touches the apple of My eye.

You are dear in my eyes, precious, and I have loved you; therefore it is a particular

pleasure for Me to educate you.

When temptations arise against you, and the enemy comes like a river, I want you to know—This was from Me.

Your weakness needs My strength, and your safety comes from giving Me the opportunity to fight for you. If you find yourself in difficult circumstances, among people who do not understand you, who do not take what you like into consideration, who alienate you—This was from Me.

I am God, Who arranges circumstances. It was no accident that you find yourself in the place where you are; this is the place I have appointed for you. Did you not ask that I teach you humility? Well, then, look: I have placed you in precisely that place, in that school, where this lesson is learned. Your surroundings and those who live with you are only fulfilling My will. If you find yourself in financial difficulty, if you find it hard to make ends meet—This was from Me.

For I have your material means at my disposal. I want you to call unto me, for you to be dependent upon Me. My reserves are inexhaustible. I want you to be confirmed in fidelity to Me and to My promises. May it not be said to you in your need: “You did not believe in the Lord your God.”

Are you in a night of suffering? Are you separated from your loved ones and those close to your heart? This was from Me.

I am the Man of suffering, Who has tasted affliction. I have allowed this so that you would turn to Me, so that in Me you would find eternal comfort. If you have been let down by your friend, to someone to whom you opened your heart—This was from Me.

I allowed this disappointment to touch you so that you would know that your best friend is the Lord. I want you to bring everything to Me and to speak to Me.

Has someone slandered you? Give this to me, and bring your soul closer to Me, your Refuge, to hide from the “contradiction of the nations.” I shall bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your judgment as the noonday. If your plans have been destroyed, if you are downtrodden in soul and tired—This was from Me.

You made plans, and brought them to Me, so that I would bless them. But I want you to leave Me in charge of the circumstances of your life, and then responsibility for everything will be Mine, for this is too difficult for you; by yourself you can not manage them, for you are only an instrument, and not the actor. If unanticipated problems of life have visited you, and if despondency has seized your heart, then know—This was from Me.

For I want your heart and your soul to be always aflame before My eyes; to conquer faint-heartedness of the soul in My name. If you do not hear from your dear ones and friends for a long time, and in your faint-heartedness fall into despondency and grumbling, know—This was from Me.

By this anguish in your spirit, I test the strength of your faith in the surety of My promise and the strength of your boldness in prayer for these dear ones of yours. Was it not you

who entrusted them to the Protection of My All-Pure Mother? Was it not you who once entrusted their care to My providential love? If serious illness, either temporary or incurable, has visited you, and has confined to your bed, then know—This was from Me.

For I want you to know Me even more deeply in your bodily infirmities, so that you would not grumble over this trial sent to you, that you would not try to penetrate My plans through different means for the salvation of people's souls, but that you would uncomplainingly and submissively bow your neck under My goodness towards you. If you have dreamed of performing some special deed for Me, and instead haven fallen onto a bed of sickness and weakness—This was from Me.

Then you would have been immersed in your activities, and I would not have been able to attract your thoughts to Me, for I want to teach you My deepest thoughts and lessons, so that you would be in My service. I want to teach you to recognize that you are nothing. Some of My best co-workers are those who have been cut off from vital activity, that they would learn to wield the weapon of unceasing prayer.

Have you unexpectedly been called to occupy a difficult and responsible position? Go, place it on Me. I entrust these difficulties to you so that the Lord God would bless you for this in all your deeds, on all your paths, in everything that will be done by your hands. On this day I put into your hands a vessel of holy oil. Use it generously, My children! Every difficulty that arises, every word that insults you, every obstacle to your work that could elicit in you a feeling of annoyance, every revelation of your weakness and inability, shall be anointed with this oil.

Remember that every obstacle is a Divine instruction. Every sting will be dulled when you learn to see Me in everything that touches you. Therefore place the word I have declared to you today in your heart: This was from Me. For this is not an empty matter for you—this is your life.

Holy St. Seraphim of Vyritsa, pray to God for us!

[Source](#)

[Life of St. Seraphim](#)



[The Hermitage of the Holy Cross](#) is a men's monastery in the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad. Our growing community is located in the hills of West Virginia, near the town of Wayne.

Glory to God for all things!



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