



THE EASTERN ORTHODOX No 100: March 2018

**ЦЕРКОВЬ СВТ. ИОАННА ШАНХАЙСКОГО
ST JOHN'S RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
Military Road, Colchester, Essex CO1 2AN**

**His Holiness Kyrill, Patriarch of Moscow and All the Russias
Most Rev. Metropolitan Hilarion, First Hierarch of the Church Outside Russia
Rt. Rev. Bishop Irenei, Administrator of the Diocese of Great Britain and Ireland**

The Church of St John of Shanghai, built in 1855, is the largest Russian Orthodox church building in the British Isles and is attended by 3,000 Orthodox of 24 nationalities. It is a parish of the Church Outside Russia, part of the East of England Orthodox Church, (Charity No: 1081707), comprising Colchester, Norwich, Bury St Edmunds and Wisbech, devoted to the care of all who are faithful to the Orthodox Church in Eastern England.

Rector, Prison Chaplain and Safeguarding Officer: прот. Андрей Филлипс / Archpriest Andrew Phillips M.A. (Oxon): frandrew_anglorus@yahoo.co.uk / 07745 298266
Assistant Priest: Fr Ioan Iana (Romanian): ovi.iana@yahoo.com / 07983 204844
Assistant Priest: Fr Spasimir Ivanov (Bulgarian): miro.si@abv.bg / 07746 272011
Caretaker: Monk Symeon: 07546 122773
Readers: Jack Sardo, Sergei Dorofeev, Timothy Phillips, Maxim Brown, Daniel Zabacinski
Choir and Sisterhood: Sabine Phillips: sabinenbn@yahoo.co.uk
Sunday School, St Alban's Youth Club, Searchlight Magazine and St Juliana's Sewing Club: Mary Kisliakova: mary0170@yahoo.com
St Joseph's Construction Club: Martina Colto: coltomarian@yahoo.com
Facebook Page Co-ordinator: timo_phillips@yahoo.com
Russian School: Sophia Bown: safi@mail.ru
Church Bookshop and Publications: Audrey Body: abody@st-albans.suffolk.sch.uk
Parish Beekeeper: Galina Ivanova: ivanovaymg@abv.bg
Icon Painter: Elena Khmel'nitskaya: darrat@ukr.net
Russian Orthodox Camp (Ages 9-16): Fr Stephen Platt: fr.stephen.platt@googlemail.com
Gardener: Paul Hopkins, 69 Military Road
Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnsorthodoxcolchester
Youtube: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rE2T2sYTy8s
Website: www.orthodoxengland.org.uk

Расписание Богослужений / Timetable of Services

Saturday 3 March

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 4 March: Память свт. Григория Паламы / Sunday of St Gregory Palamas

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Saturday 10 March

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 11 March: Крестопоклонная неделя / Sunday of the Cross:

10.00 am: Hours and Divine Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Saturday 17 March

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 18 March: Память преп. Иоанна Лествичника / Sunday of St John of the Ladder

10.00 Hours and Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Saturday 24 March

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Sunday 25 March: Sunday of St Mary of Egypt / память преп. Марии Египетской

10.00 Hours and Liturgy / Часы и Божественная литургия

Wednesday 28 March

6.00 Holy Unction / Елеосвящение (Соборование)

Saturday 31 March

LONDON: 12.00 Service of Unction with Bishop Irenei at the London Church, 57 Harvard Road, London W4 4ED. Соборование в 2.00 в Лондонском храме, где будет служить Владыка Иринеи

Saturday 31 March

5.30 pm: Vigil / Всенощное бдение

Dates for Your Diary / Важные Даты на Следующий Год

Easter: Sunday 8 April / Пасха: Воскресенье 1 апреля

Patronal Feast: Saturday 30 June

Престольный праздник: Суббота 30 июня

Baptisms in February

10 February: Emilia Prisacari
17 February: Maria Manolache
17 February: Sarah Beke
25 February: Felix Body

Wedding in February

Jose and Svetlana Gallivan

Church News

Our collection for the seminary in Jordanville raised £300. Thank you!

СВЯТЫЕ ОТЦЫ О ВЕЛИКОМ ПОСТЕ И ПРАВИЛЬНОМ ЕГО ПОНИМАНИИ

Святоотеческие труды – неиссякаемый источник духовной мудрости. Не обошли вниманием угодники Божии и такое важное делание, как [Великий пост](#). Предлагаем нашим читателям – в назидание и укрепление – некоторые из высказываний святых о том, что такое Великий пост и как правильно его проходить.

О значении Великого поста

«Четыредесятницей не пренебрегайте, она составляет подражание жительству Христову» (Священномученик Игнатий Богоносец).

«Во всю Четыредесятницу должно поститься правоверующим, потому что она содержит чин и устав общества Господня» (Священномученик Игнатий Богоносец).

«Если ты имеешь душу, одетую в одежду любостяжания и алчности, то отринь вретисце, отложи любоддеяния и оденься в светлую одежду целомудрия. Я тебя убеждаю к сему: прежде, нежели придет Иисус, Жених душ наших, и увидит твою одежду, ты имеешь довольно времени, поскольку дано тебе сорок дней для покаяния» (Святитель Кирилл Иерусалимский).

«Всячески презирай блага мира сего. То, что ты оставляешь, ничтожно, гораздо более получишь от Господа; оставь настоящее, веруй будущему. Столько времени ты истратил в тщетной работе миру, неужели и во Святую Четыредесятницу ты не воздержишься ради спасения души своей?» *(Святитель Кирилл Иерусалимский)*.

«Господь освятил нам постом Своим Четыредесятницу: это сотворил Он для нашего спасения, чтобы не только словом, но и примером научить нас посту» *(Святитель Амвросий Медиоланский)*.

«Пророк Илия, совершив течение сорокадневного поста, соделался достойным погасить долговременную и ужасную сушу дождевою росой и утолить горящую жажду земли обилием небесных вод. Мы должны знать, что это совершено для назидания нашего, чтобы и мы, пребывая в посте, во время Святой Четыредесятницы удостоились крестительных вод духовного дождя, чтобы этот дождь свыше сошел и на нашу землю, давно уже иссохшую, и оросил долговременную сушу некрещеных росой душеспасительной бани. Ибо тот, кто не орошается благодатию Крещения, сух и терпит зной и душегубительное жжение» *(Святитель Амвросий Медиоланский)*.

«Дни Четыредесятницы обозначают жизнь настоящего века, так как и дни Пасхи предизображают вечное блаженство. Во время поста мы имеем сокрушение, а в Пасху исполняем радости, так как в настоящей жизни должны мы нести покаяние, чтобы в будущей жизни достигнуть вечных благ» *(Блаженный Августин)*.

«Каждый в земной жизни должен творить милостыню, вздыхать о грехах и проливать слезы. Но если в этом нам часто мешают прелести мира, то по крайней мере в дни поста исполним сердца наши сладости закона Божия» *(Блаженный Августин)*.

«Нерадивый, ничего не заготовивший в свое время, целый год терпит голод; так тот, кто постом, чтением Священного Писания, молитвою пренебрежет в настоящее время, тот не сможет собрать для души

духовную пшеницу и небесное питание и потерпит вечную жажду и тяжкую бедственность» *(Блаженный Августин)*.

«Чем более дней поста, тем лучше лечение; чем продолжительнее поприще воздержания, тем обильнее приобретение спасения» *(Блаженный Августин)*.

«Сорокадневный пост – это не изобретение человека, но воля Бога, и это нечто таинственное и недоступное постижению» *(Святой Петр Хризолог)*.

«В законе написано, что Бог повелел сынам Израилевым каждый год давать десятину из всего, что они приобретали, и, делая так, они имели благословение во всех делах своих. Зная сие, святые апостолы установили, чтобы мы отделяли десятину от самых дней жизни нашей и посвящали ее Богу, дабы и мы таким образом получили благословение на все дела наши и ежегодно очищали грехи, сделанные нами в течение года. Рассудив так, они осветили нам семь недель Четыредесятницы» *(Преподобный авва Дорофей)*.

«О необходимости соблюдать посты нам указывает Евангелие на примере Спасителя, постившего сорок дней в пустыне (см.: Мф. 4: 1-3). На вопрос учеников об исцелении бесноватого отрока Иисус ответил: “Сей род ничем не может изъити, токмо молитвою и постом” (Мф. 17: 21). В Евангелии есть также указание на соблюдение постов в среду и пятницу: “Приидут же дние, егда отъимется от них жених, и тогда постятся в тии дни” (Мф. 9: 15)» *(Святитель Феофан Затворник)*.

«Апостол Павел указал венец нетленный, и всем, кто захочет восхитить его, предписал умерщвлять и поработать тело. Никакого другого средства не поместил. Тут умерщвление тела, а там – венец нетленный. Хочешь последнего – возмись за первое» *(Святитель Феофан Затворник)*.

«Кто не распинает плоти, тот не Христов, не христианин. И вся жизнь у нас должна проходить в умерщвлении и порабощении плоти. Иначе тотчас попадешь в неключимые, а потом и участи их подвергнешься: «неключимого раба ввезите во тьму кромешную, тут будет плачь и скрежет зубов». Чтобы по забвению или по увлечению делами мы не подпали сей участи, святая Церковь напоминает нам об этом умерщвлении плоти каждую неделю – средою и пятком, а в каждое время года продолжительными постами» (*Святитель Феофан Затворник*).

О правильном понимании Великого поста

«Постись Богу следующим образом: не лукавствуй в жизни своей, но служи Богу чистым сердцем, соблюдай Его заповеди, ходи в Его повелениях и не допускай никакой злой похоти в сердце твоём. Веруй в Бога, имей страх Божий и удержишься от всякого злого дела. Делая это, ты совершишь великий угодный Богу пост и будешь жить с Богом» (*Пастырь Ерма*).

«Пища излишняя делает тело чрезмерно нагруженным кораблем, который при малом движении волн идет ко дну» (*Авва Леонтий*).

«Никогда не может достигнуть совершенной чистоты тот, кто надеется приобрести ее одним телесным постом, если не познает, что воздержание нужно для того, чтобы после усмирения плоти постом он мог легче вступить в брань с прочими страстями» (*Авва Серапион*).

«Молитва – бессильна, если не основана на посте, и пост – бесплоден, если на нем не создана молитва» (*Преподобный Марк Подвижник*).

«Пост не допускает злопамятства. А собирающие в память огорчения и сделанное им зло, хотя по-видимому молятся и постятся, но подобны людям, которые черпают воду и выливают ее в разбитую бочку» (*Преподобный Ефрем Сирий*).

«Что делает пост? Врачует болезни, иссушает мокроту, прогоняет демонов, истребляет лукавые помыслы, соделывает сердце чистым. Если кого сильно тревожит (борет) нечистый дух, то пусть знает то врачевство, которое находится в словах Господа: “Сей род не может выйти иначе, как от молитвы и поста”» (*Святитель Афанасий Великий*).

«Берегитесь измерять пост простым воздержанием от пищи. Тот, кто воздерживается от пищи, а ведет себя неподобающе, уподобляется диаволу, который хотя ничего не ест, однако ж не перестает грешить» (*Святитель Василий Великий*).

«Воздержание от пищи само по себе недостаточно к тому, чтобы сделать пост похвальным, а надобно, чтобы и в прочем соответствовало поведение, то есть речи, и обращение, и сближение должно иметь с теми, от кого можно получить пользу, так чтобы воздержание от пищи было дополнением подвижничества» (*Святитель Василий Великий*).

«Если заповедан пост, то смотри не презирай его. И хотя бы голод понуждал тебя ежедневно к тому, чтобы уклониться от поста, побеждаясь невоздержанием, но ты лучше приготавливай себя к небесному наслаждению» (*Святитель Амвросий Медиоланский*).

«Мы постимся не для того, чтобы оказать какое-либо благодеяние пострадавшему за нас Господу, но для того, чтобы усвоить (исповедать) для спасения своего страдание Господне, которое Он благоизволил претерпеть за нас. Таким образом, пост наш будет для Бога благоприятен» (*Святитель Епифаний Кипрский*).

«Постящемуся более всего нужно обуздывать гнев, приучаться к кротости и снисходительности, иметь сокрушенное сердце, изгонять нечистые пожелания представлением того неусыпающего огня и нелицеприятного суда, быть выше денежных расчетов, в милостыне показывать великую щедрость, изгонять из души всякую злобу на ближнего» (*Святитель Иоанн Златоуст*).

«Постящемуся надлежит быть спокойным, тихим, кротким, смиренным, крепким, презирающим славу настоящей жизни. Постящийся с великим усердием должен творить молитвы и исповедания перед Богом. Видишь, в чем состоит истинный пост» (*Святитель Иоанн Златоуст*).

«Ты постишься? Напитай голодных, напои жаждущих, посети больных, не забудь заключенных. Утешь скорбящих и плачущих; будь милосерден, кроток, добр, тих, долготерпелив, незлопамятен, благоговеен, истинен, благочестив, чтобы Бог принял и пост твой и в изобилии даровал плоды покаяния» (*Святитель Иоанн Златоуст*).

THE FIRST WEEK OF GREAT LENT: MORE PASTORAL ADVICE

[The First Week of Great Lent: Pastoral Advice. Part 1](#)

Fr. Dimitry Shishkin, cleric of the Church of the Three Holy Hierarchs, Simferopol:

[Lent](#) is a time of conscious effort, which helps us acquire another view on the world—that which the Lord calls the Kingdom of God within us. We know the Greek word “metanoia”—“repentance”—literally means “change of consciousness.” Man is called to a transfiguration of his own life. It is no

accident that the Gospel preaching of Jesus Christ begins with the words, *Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand* (Mt. 4:17). But sometimes we don't completely understand what repentance is. We think it's a brief event of the inner life, a moment of contrition for sins, beyond which lie ordinary days and our usual routine. Of course, such "sudden" repentance is a gift from God, and it is capable of inverting the structure of the human soul. But repentance can also be understood as a path of gradual, patient transformation of life. And this path is impossible without [fasting](#).

This is what's important to understand: Lent is not only, and even not so much abstinence from non-fasting food. There are people who don't eat meat at all, and there are those who abstain from food for the sake of physical beauty, and there are those who eat sparingly due to scarcity of funds. The former usually say: "Oh, my whole life is one unending fast!" But here's the thing: Fasting is voluntary abstention from everything that prevents you from drawing near to God, and it's not meat, of course, but our passions, of which gluttony is but one of them. We are fascinated by things that often we simply don't pay any attention to. For some that's turning off the television for a couple of months, or not playing computer games or listening to music—that's a *podvig* in no way smaller, and maybe even bigger than the refusal of meat. Everyone has his own weaknesses and propensities that not only weaken the soul, but peg it to the ground. The soul loses its taste for the spiritual life and becomes, if I may say so, "carnal." It gets used to a number of comfy sweets, and in these sweets loses the memory of itself and of its Heavenly calling.

People usually bring long "scrolls" of sins to [Confession](#) at the beginning of Lent, issued from penitential books. But besides such extended confessions, it would be good for each person to identify a few of their main sins—that which especially hinders you from drawing closer to God. Perhaps it's anger, or an inclination towards judging, idle chatter... Everyone has his own. Noting these sins, paying special attention to them, you can begin to fight them with God's help.

Any battle with sin begins with attention to yourself, to your inner life. When the Lord calls us to "watch" (Mk. 13:37), He's talking specifically about this heartfelt attention. Satan manifests himself to man through the

sinful movements in his soul, called “suggestions.” If a man is attentive to himself and knows what he intends to fight with, then he will not miss these moments of flashes of sinful thoughts and feelings in the soul. Then begins the real war. We must firmly reject these suggestions, not agree with them, and say in our souls: “I don’t think that, and you, Satan: Depart from me!” Moreover, the stronger the “attack” of the sinful thoughts and feelings, the more attentive and earnest must be our prayer. In such strong passions, such as anger, lust, pride, everything happens very quickly—in a split second the soul ignites with a sinful feeling. St. John of Kronstadt advises: “The speed of the enemy’s attacks is opposed by the speed of the mind and heart’s turning to God, not allowing yourself for even a moment to enjoy his deception, but casting your gaze upon the Lord.” In such moments there is no place for reasoning—you just have to pray, and the most fitting are short prayers like “Lord, have mercy!” which you can repeat many times. In general, when the soul is inflamed by a sinful feeling or a storm of sinful thoughts, you must give yourself wholly into the hands of God.

A man often falls into despair from the attacks of sinful thoughts and feelings. But you should know that at the appearance of a suggestion in the soul, no matter how absurd and vile it is, there is no sin yet. This is how Satan acts on the soul. And if someone decisively rejects this vileness, there is no sin, no matter how long this violence against the soul lasted and no matter how fierce it was. This internal battle is necessary for the purification of the soul, for confirmation in faith, and is possible for a man anywhere, wherever he may be—whether at home, at work, or on the street.

It is surprising, but failures, defeats in this fight give a man an undoubted benefit, in that they allow him to know his weaknesses experientially, and come to a broken and humble state of spirit, when man understands that without God he truly can do nothing.

So, the soul gradually develops the habit of an active battle against sin. This battle is difficult, but without it, the meaning of fasting is lost: the transfiguration of the soul, the acquisition of grace, the attainment of unity with God.

* * *

Fr. George Kazantsev, Secretary of the Missionary Committee of the Kaluga Diocese, spiritual father of the Kaluga Orthodox Missionary Society, administrator of the voluntary “Mercy” service:

The meaning of any fast is self-restraint, that is, the voluntary refusal of a significant part of our earthly, sensual lives. In this sense, the first week doesn't differ from the rest. Its importance is in that it is a time of transition—of acclimation to the [fasting](#) regime, therefore, you can spend it more strictly than the whole Lent, so fasting would then be easier. But the measure of strictness, everyone should define for himself in consultation with his spiritual father. Zeal for the *podvig* of fasting should be combined with humble consideration of the measure of our abilities. Our own measure should arise from the combination of zeal and consideration. We mustn't orient ourselves according to fashion or the advice of a neighbor. Naturally, we should be guided by the demands of the Church and not allow ourselves to frivolously relax, willfully weakening the fast, supposedly because of the impracticability of the Church's requirements. It's now fashionable to give yourself a break, and argue about the impossibility for our weakness to fully fast. If we *a priori* accept the Fast with such an attitude, then nothing will work out. If you ask God for help, that He would grant you to pass through the field of Lent successfully with reason, then everything will work out. Finding your measure of abstinence is one of the most important tasks of Great Lent.

It is important during Lent to limit the informational impact (television, internet). Such restraint often becomes more difficult than the limitation of food. As for our cares and concerns, we often multiply them for ourselves. We can safely forget about some of them during Lent.

And most importantly, I believe, is to give yourself the task during Lent of overcoming some specific sin, even if its small. Without this, Lent goes by in vain. You can set a schedule of reading for yourself during Great Lent—for example, to read part of Holy Scripture, some book from the ascetic works of the holy fathers—for example Abba Dorotheos, St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov), or St. Theophan the Recluse. Lent should be a time of familiarizing yourself with reading Patristic literature.

THE KIZLYAR MARTYRS, IN PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

Lyudmila, Vera, Nadezhda, Irina, Vera

The [funeral](#) of our sisters in Christ, the parishioners of the Church of the Great Martyr George the Victorious martyred on February 18 on [Forgiveness Sunday](#), Lyudmila, Vera, Nadezhda, Irina, and Vera, was held in Kizlyar on Tuesday. Here we present several testimonies from the place of the tragic events about the farewell to the Kizlyar martyrs, what they were like in life, and about previously unknown details of the incident.

“In them we have acquired intercessors before the throne of God”

Fr. Paul Kalikin, rector of the Kizlyar Church of St. George:

Our parishioners who were loyal to Christ and strong in faith were killed: the cousins Lyudmila Georgieva Scherbakova and Vera Gavrilovna Morgunova, and Nadezhda Sergeevna Terliyan, Blessed Ira (Irina Sosikovna Melkomova), and Vera Sergeevna Blinnikova. Then we remembered that none of us so wept, forgiving one another at the Rite of Forgiveness, as they, whom the Lord called to Himself that evening through a martyric death.

On Sunday, when the service had just ended, and I went to take off my vestments, people started leaving the church. That’s when shots rang out...

Blessed Ira used to collect alms at the church. She always had bags with her, and much of what she was given she would share with other poor people. She started hitting the killer with these bags.

Then one of the Cossacks, Sergei Anatolievich Presnyakov, who was walking his elderly mother to the car, tried to draw the fire onto himself: He ran towards the attacker, trying to distract him, shouting, “Shoot me! Are you scared? You can only shoot at old women?”

Turning sharply, the killer shot Irina point blank. Then he began shooting at the servant of God Sergei...

During that time, we managed to gather the people back into the church. As soon as everyone was inside, the doors were shut. The priests placed everyone farther away from the windows.

I called the police but couldn't get through because the people in the surrounding homes saw out their windows what was happening and immediately started calling the police, and, probably all the lines were congested. Then I called the first number from my list of incoming calls—just before the service the head of the Kizlyar Region Alexander Maximovich Pogorelov had called me to ask forgiveness.

I saw through a window how the killer was pulling on the door handles and broke inside. He had a completely crazed, glazed-over look.

Meanwhile, the church workers closed the remaining rooms downstairs. We asked everyone to lie on the floor in the church. The sacristan climbed the bell tower and started ringing the bells.

The bells probably scared the killer and he started leaving, still shooting. We saw him leave the church property, walking along the fence, still shooting. The police met him there. A shootout began. The killer was killed.

Since then, people have been coming, not just from our community and city, but also from all the surrounding communities, and even from the central provinces of Russia, to bid farewell to the dead.

Even before their bodies were brought to the church, our ruling hierarch—Archbishop Varlaam of Makhachkala and Grozny—was in St. George's Church from early in the morning on Monday, praying together with all of us and helping to resolve the organizational issues. When they brought their bodies, he served a litiya. Then began the reading of the Psalter—everyone who was able took part in this, not just priests, but singers and parishioners too. People were coming day and night in a never-ending stream to bid farewell. They have brought a lot of flowers, and they're still bringing flowers, now to their graves. It's already dark, and people are still coming and coming—to pray and to honor the memory of the newly-departed.

Vladyka blessed for all those killed to be buried next to the church. Today, Tuesday of the first week of Great Lent, they were buried. The funeral started at 12:00 and lasted for an hour-and-a-half or two hours. About 5,000 gathered to bid farewell. The people were weeping.

We said goodbye to some very bright and active sisters of our community. They led many of their relatives and close friends to faith, to the Church.

Lyudmila Georgievna Scherbakova was an honored doctor of the Dagestan Republic and a famous cardiologist in the city. She would run to help people as soon as they asked. We have an elderly priest at church—how many times she helped him!

Vera Gavrilovna Morgunova was her cousin; she didn't have her own family and they lived together in one apartment, and together they passed away to the Lord. Vera was an employee of the regional administration and headed the Committee for War Veterans, Homefront Workers, and Labor Veterans of the Kizlyar Region. She was, like her cousin, always ready to help those who needed her. She was someone that everyone around here listened to. Her word was respected. Many parish questions, including urgent economic ones, were settled by Vera's advice.

The cousins often went on pilgrimages together. They always took someone else with them in their car—they tried to share their joy. Vera usually drove. They would travel around the beautiful places of the Caucasus.

Nadezhda Sergeevna Terliyan, who was also murdered that night, headed the church's pilgrimage service.

Vera Sergeevna Blinnikova became a parishioner of this church somewhere around 2015. She was a very kind person. At the dismissal, when the service was over, she would always come up and thank me for the service. She took care of her disabled husband who is now left without her support.

I remember, when I had just been appointed as rector in August last year, I had a feeling of indecision—a new place, you know, and how will things go? I was then immediately surrounded here by parishioners, among whom were the sisters to whom we have bade farewell:

“Father, we won't abandon you—we're your helpers!”

They were always in prayer, in labors—caring for others. They took an active part in the life of the parish; you could often see them at work on the beautifying of the church territory.

Such unity is one of the signs of a real Orthodox community. Their deaths are a great loss for everyone.

All of the murdered sisters were always faithful helpers of priests in service to God and man.

As soon as they transferred me here, literally within two or three days, Blessed Irina came up to meet me.

“You’re our new priest?” she asked.

“Yes.”

“We’re going to be friends.”

Truly, she always found some kind word of support. There was so much warmth and love in her! Despite the fact that she roamed, she had no shelter, what concern she had for everyone!

She always asked, “How’s your family, how are your children?”

I hadn’t managed to move my children from Makhachkala to the new home yet, but when I brought them here for a service, she treated them to some kind of candy that had been given to her. She also spent the money she gathered on food for others.

Recently, on the Meeting of the Lord, one of our parishioners, running into Blessed Irina not far from the church, asked, “Irochka, how are you?”

“Good,” she answered.

“Where are you going?”

“I’m going to church.”

“There’s a service today?”

“There is.”

“And tomorrow too?”

“Yes,” and then, after a pause, she added, “You know, Pelagia Vasilievna, I’m going to leave you soon; I’m going very far and I won’t return here anymore.”

We recalled these words at their funeral...

When we buried our sisters, there was sorrow, but there was Paschal joy at the same time: We are all certain that the Lord has granted them the Kingdom of Heaven, and we, residents of Kizlyar, of the Republic of Dagestan, have acquired in them intercessors before the throne of God. You know, they were all lying there smiling. They were smiling exactly like a living person smiles: We didn't lose our Paschal feeling when we looked at the departed. We all held on thanks to this Paschal joy. Christ is Risen!

“We lost a great friend, and you might even say—a mother”

Galina Alexandrovna Kim, Director of the Kizlyar Region administration:

I knew Vera Gavrilovna Morgunova very well. We didn't just work together in the same building. She was always aware of what was going on in my family, was always interested in how my children were, my grandchildren, if they were healthy. She was such an attentive and kind woman. She participated in all the events we held in the region, and all of our citizens respected her. In a word, I don't know anyone who isn't calling, isn't crying, isn't worried and isn't outraged right now by what was done, and all these events.

We lost a great friend, and you might even say—a mother.

She headed the Council for Veterans in our region; she was very active and energetic in general. Vera Gavrilovna was a deeply-believing Orthodox person and came to our church (there are two churches in our city) for all the Orthodox feasts. She organized pilgrimages to Orthodox places around Russia. She was constantly bringing Orthodox souvenirs and icons from these places for her administration employees and would give them to us as gifts. We all have these icons on our desks... Forgive me, I'm crying... She would often tell our employees about the meaning of Church feasts, and generally supported Christians.

Vera Gavrilovna was also one of the most active participants in the program for the stabilization of the situation in the region and of the city's self-defense, when the terrorist Salman Raduev attacked Kizlyar in 1996. She very actively participated then in defense and was recognized for it with an award. She was a courageous person, of the greatest courage...

She didn't have a husband or a family. She lived with her cousin, Lyudmila Georgievna Scherbakova. Her cousin died together with her. They lived harmoniously and always helped one another, they went to church together, and organized pilgrimages.

In short, she was always happy and kind, always in a good mood, and would always say, "For all of us, in Russia, and in Dagestan, everything will be alright." May God grant her the Heavenly Kingdom! We will remember her always. We have four veterans of the Great Patriotic War remaining, and I can't even imagine how hard it is for them. We lost half of ourselves...

"They were all among our best parishioners, every one of them"

Hieromonk John (Anisimov), secretary of the Diocese of Makhachkala and Grozny:

Nadezhda Sergeevna Terliyan was a physical education teacher for many years, and taught a course on volleyball in a children's sports school. She was constantly organizing pilgrimages to [Valaam](#), to [Diveyevo](#). Last summer, thanks to her, we went to the [relics of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker in Moscow](#).

Vera Gavrilovna Morgunova was the Deputy Head of the administration of the Kizlyar Region for many years. The last few years she sponsored veterans of the Kizlyar Region. She also was a very active and great helper for all the priests, and helped people a lot. Her cousin, Lyudmila Georgievna, was an honored doctor, and a person who also dedicated her entire life to people. I am from Kizlyar, and when my grandmother had a stroke, Lyudmila Georgievna treated her.

She was inseparable from her cousin in life, and they died together. They had left the church and were headed for their car (Vera Gavrilovna drove the car), and he started shooting at them.

And Irina Melkomova just always sat at the church asking alms. But when she saw this guy starting to shoot at Vera Gavrilovna and Lyudmila Georgievna, she pounced at him and started beating him with the bags that people would put money in. He shot her point blank. But during this time, they managed to close the doors of the church, and, perhaps, thanks to her, other people were saved.

That is how she revealed herself before death... They were all among our best parishioners, every one of them...

THE WAY TO A HAPPY LIFE. A HOMILY GIVEN AT THE VIGIL SERVICE FOR THE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY, SRETENSKY MONASTERY

[His Holiness Patriarch Kirill](#)

On March 23, 2013, the eve of the first Sunday of Great Lent—the Sunday of the Triumph of Orthodoxy, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia lead the Vigil service at Sretensky Stavropegic Monastery in Moscow. At the end of the service, abbot of the monastery Archimandrite Tikhon thanked His Holiness for finding the opportunity to celebrate this important service with them, and also for his Patriarchal support and blessing upon the monastery’s plans to build a new church dedicated to the New Martyrs of Russia, which will called the Church “On the Blood, on the Lubyanka”. The first hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church thanked Fr. Tikhon for his kind words, the Stretensky choir for its fine singing, and the worshippers for assembling in such numbers on this occasion. His Holiness also gave a homily.

* * *

Dear Fr, Tikhon! Dear fathers, brothers, and sisters!

I am happy to have the opportunity to conclude the first week of Great Lent with the solemn All-Night Vigil in Sretensky Monastery. This was a very special week, particularly for those who were able to attend church. But even for those who were not able, the very remembrance, the very thought that we have entered the arena of the Holy Forty Days Fast has undoubtedly left a beneficial mark upon our thoughts and deeds. It is during the first week of Great Lent that many people make important decisions to change in their lives.

I would like to say a few words about just such changes. Sin, which manifests itself in many vices, always brings evil to people. This can be easily proven. We all know that the nature of sin manifests itself especially and with particularly fullness in such vices as pride, falsehood, and rancor. We also know that pride gives birth to other vices, such as wrath and

envy. And now let us ask ourselves: Can wrath and envy bring a person peace, rest, joy, and quiet? No, it can't. Nevertheless, this is a manifestation of pride that many do not even consider a sin.

Well, and what about falsehood? The products of falsehood are hypocrisy, flattery, and duplicity. Can a person be happy if he lives a double life, broken in half, deprived of inner integrity, thinking one thing yet saying another? Such a person can be neither happy nor strong.

And what about rancor? Rancor is a very particular manifestation of sin. The Lord created man in His own image, but there is no evil rancor in God. This means that the rancor in us is not from God—it is from the dark powers. If a person is totally overcome by evil rancor, if it forms his thoughts, feelings, and deeds, then he becomes deeply unhappy.

Let us strain our memory to the maximum and try to recall: Have we seen at least one rancorous person who was happy? He may be outwardly successful, he may be rich and highly-placed, but can he really be happy and living a peaceful, serene, joyful life surrounded by his loved ones? A rancorous person has no loved ones, because love and evil rancor are not compatible.

So, what do we have? Sin brings unhappiness to people, and it could not be any other way.

Vices sometimes have an appearance of a sort of pleasure, or, as the holy fathers say, they bring people ephemeral pleasure. But in the final analysis, this all turns into disasters, sorrows, and pain for people. Thus, embarking on the path of virtues means embarking upon the path that leads us to a happy life; and walking the path of sin means walking right into trials, sorrows, and misfortune. Therefore, those who over the course of these past seven days have made the decision to change their lives from sinful to virtuous have made the right decision. But those who have not made that decision, especially with regard to certain more painful vices, should make that decision over the course of Great Lent.

Well, and what about a virtuous life? How do we achieve that life? It is not so easy—to do it we need to meet several conditions. Today I would like to ponder with you on one of the conditions necessary for the formation of a virtuous way of life.

As the scientists say, man is a social creature. A person is formed through his social interaction with others. A social milieu is a person's life milieu, and therefore his association with others has a great influence on him.

Through social interaction we not only receive information—for example, learning in a school or institute, or simply reading books and acquiring knowledge. Through social interaction we also receive a certain energy—this energy could be called the psychological influence of one person on another. Everyone knows that our association with other people is not a matter of spiritual indifference, because in possessing one or another kind of energy—good or evil—we disseminate it, subjecting those around us to the influence of this energy. Furthermore, through association with others we get our examples in life; and we know how important an example is, in part, for raising children. Without a good example it is impossible to bring a child up to be what we would like him to be.

And what happens when we are surrounded by evil people? St. John Chrysostom makes a remarkable comparison concerning the influence an evil person has on those around him. He says that the harm an evil person causes is no less than the harm caused by the bite of a poisonous snake. This is truly the case. We know very well that we had better not be around people with infectious illnesses, and if we must be around them, we should take great precautions, as do doctors. They put on face masks and gloves, and if the infection is very dangerous, they even wear special suits to prevent the infection from touching any part of their bodies. But what if a person is spiritually infected, if he spreads this infection, yet we do not see it? After all, this infection is invisible and it is not possible to recognize it right away; we recognized it only by its consequences.

St. John Chrysostom also compares the influence evil people have upon spiritually healthy people with the infection of leprosy, and he confirms that the infection of leprosy and the infection of evil people are similar—only, one harms the body while the other harms the soul.

So what should we do? How can we discern the spirits? How can we discern people? One of the conditions for the formation of a virtuous way of life is our choice of close ones, acquaintances, and friends—that especially close circle of people who surround us and who will undoubtedly influence us because of their close contact with us. This is especially important to remember for young people who are open to social contact, who do not yet have any life experience, and often are not immediately able to assess a person, to discern between the truth and a lie, to see hypocrisy, or to understand that a person is spreading a dangerous spiritual contagion. Therefore our choice of surroundings and friends, and especially our choice of a spouse, is enormously significant and goes a long way in determining our ability to walk the path of virtue.

However, in our times, each person's social circle may be unlimited. We live in a so-called "open information society". An enormous flood of information flows over us; and so much of it is evil, destructive, and poisonous. How much spiritual infection there is! What can we do? It is the same as with our choice of friends: we should carefully choose what to read and what not to read, what to watch and what not to watch.

I remember a discussion I once had with some directors of our television channels. When I expressed the concern of many people that there are programs on some channels, which bring direct spiritual injury to the personality and something must be done about it, I heard the following reply: "If you don't want it, don't watch it. Every viewer, every person can choose by pressing a button." Well, I want to repeat what the director of one of our TV channels said: Don't watch it. With the touch of a button, protect yourselves from spiritual infection. I am almost sure that my words will provoke a flood of criticism and someone will say, "What do you mean? People should be open to information; we can't just close ourselves off." The answer is simple: Do not watch it if you see danger in it; do not read it if you feel that sin is being introduced to your soul. And if even secular people who are responsible for the mass media say this, then God Himself commands that we make use of this approach in choosing information.

One time I read a portion of an article written by one of those authors who spread spiritual infection. He was complaining, saying that he and others like him have been writing and writing, speaking and speaking, but people go to church regardless of what they say! He came to the conclusion that probably people just weren't reading what they wrote. Well, I would like to answer that person: I call on people not to read you or any writers or journalists like you, so that people might retain their own autonomy, their inner freedom. This is not weakness, but a wise approach to determining with whom we should and should not associate. I think that the example of a healthy person in an infectious disease ward can help us understand the logic of such reasoning even if a person does not particularly wish that believing Christians would refuse to make use of an informational product that carries the bacilli of incurable spiritual diseases.

Our way of life depends in many respects upon our social interaction—our choice of friends, acquaintances, spouse, and upon what we read and watch. Our times require an especially thoughtful, shrewd, and wise view of the world around us. Without this it is hard to form a virtuous way of life—that very way of life, which leads people not to ephemeral happiness, not to the trinkets that are foisted upon us as if they were authentic valuables, but to the real, authentic values of existence, to those values

that God desires to share with us, having created us in His own image, and having called us to be like unto Him. Amen.

For an audio recording of this homily in Russian, see Pravoslavie.ru.

*[His Holiness Patriarch Kirill](#)
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