

## From the Front Cover

Saint Thekla was born in the city of Iconium. The daughter of wealthy and highly respected parents, she was known for her extraordinary beauty. When she was 18 years old, her parents made plans for her to be engaged to a young man named Thamyris. It just so happened that during this time, Paul the Apostle and his friend and co-worker, Barnabas, arrived in the city of Iconium [Acts 13:49-14:10]. Thekla's mother, Theokleia, refused to let Thekla join the crowds which gathered to hear the Apostle Paul preach. But Thekla found that if she sat near her bedroom window she could hear everything the apostle said. She sat there for three days and three nights listening to Paul preach the word of God.

When her mother and her fiancé saw that Thekla was becoming interested in the new Faith, they went to the governor of the city and complained about Paul and his preaching. The governor saw that others were upset also and did not want a riot in the town. So, in order to make the angry citizens of Iconium happy, the governor had Paul put in prison to wait for a trial. When Thekla heard of Paul's arrest, she secretly went to the prison, used her golden bracelets to bribe the guard, and was able to go to the apostle's cell. When she saw the Apostle Paul, she knelt before him and kissed the chains which bound his hands and feet. She remained there for three days listening to his message of the Good News of Jesus Christ.

When Thekla announced that she had decided not to marry and to dedicate her life to serving Christ, her mother became very angry and asked the governor to threaten Thekla with severe punishment. Escaping punishment, Thekla went to the edge of the city where she found the Apostle Paul and his companions hidden in a cave. She told him of her trial and the miraculous escape from punishment.

After this, Thekla went with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Thekla refused his offer of marriage, and so she was condemned to death for being a Christian. Twice they set loose hungry wild animals upon her, but they would not touch the holy virgin. Instead, they lay down meekly and licked her feet.

With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Thekla then settled in a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. When Thekla was already a ninety-year-old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. Envious of Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they came near her, Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and a rock split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. Thus did Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

Shortly after her death a community of virgins went to live in her mountain cell, building a small chapel to en-shrine her body. This Convent of Saint Thekla still exists today near the village of Ma'loula, Syria.



The Proto-Martyr Thekla,  
Equal-to-the-Apostles

The Weekly Bulletin - September 24, 2023



## Saint Mary Orthodox Church of West Palm Beach

*A Parish of the Diocese of Miami and the Southeast of the  
Antiochian Orthodox Archdiocese of North America*

**The Most Reverend Metropolitan Saba, Primate**

**The Right Reverend Nicholas, Auxiliary Bishop for Diocese of Miami and the Southeast**

**The Very Reverend Father Peter Shportun, Priest / Pastor**

**Church Address: 1317 Florida Mango Road, West Palm Beach, Florida 33406**

**(561) 965-5007 (Church Office) (561) 632-7066 (Fr. Peter's Cellular)**

**Email: [stmaryschurch@bellsouth.net](mailto:stmaryschurch@bellsouth.net) Website: [stmaryschurchwpb.org](http://stmaryschurchwpb.org)**

**Church Office Hours: Tuesday – Friday 10:30 AM to 2:30 PM, by appointment**

**Banquet Hall Rentals: Maribel Perez – (561) 721-5696**

### Welcome!

Whether you are a parishioner or a visitor, we are glad you have chosen to pray with us at Saint Mary's. As a friendly reminder, please observe the following upon entering the church for prayer.

- If you arrive after the services begin, try to enter the Church quietly and observe what is happening. Try not to interrupt the service by your entrance.
- Please silence your cellular telephones.
- Please place your offerings in the basket on the table in the Church Narthex (Entrance), or the Offering Tray when passed.
- You are invited join us in the Banquet Hall for coffee and refreshments following the Sunday Divine Liturgy.

### Reflections on the Saints

**+Saint Silouan the Athonite**

"Many think that the saints are far from us. But they are far from those who distance themselves from them, and very close to those who keep the commandments of Christ and have the grace of the Holy Spirit. In the heavens, all things are moved by the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is on earth too. He lives in our Church. He lives in the Mysteries. He is in the Holy Scriptures. He is in the souls of the faithful. The Holy Spirit unites all things, and therefore the saints are close to us. And when we pray to them, then the Holy Spirit hears our prayers, and our souls feel that they are praying for us."

## Saint Silouan: A Spiritual Figure for the 20th Century

Saint Silouan was born Simeon Ivanovich Antonov in 1866 to Russian Orthodox parents who came from the village of Sovsk in Russia's Tambov region. At the age of twenty-seven he left his native Russia and came to Mount Athos, where he became a monk at the Monastery of St. Panteleimon and was given the name Silouan, the Russian version of the Biblical name Silvanus.

An ardent ascetic, he received the grace of unceasing prayer and saw Christ in a vision. After long years of spiritual trial, he acquired great humility and inner stillness. He prayed and wept for the whole world as for himself, and he put the highest value on love for enemies. Thomas Merton, a twentieth-century Catholic monk, described Silouan as "the most authentic monk of the twentieth century." Saint Silouan died on September 24, 1938. He was glorified by the Ecumenical Patriarchate in 1987.

Though barely literate, he was sought out by pilgrims for his wise counsel. St. Nikolaj Velimirovic was one such pilgrim. His writings were edited by his disciple and pupil, Archimandrite Sophrony. Father Sophrony has written the life of the saint along with a record of St. Silouan's teachings in the book *Saint Silouan the Athonite*.

Although it is natural and usual to love those who love us and to do good to those who do good to us (Mt 5:46-47; Lk 6:32-33), to love our enemies is distasteful to our nature. One can say that it isn't in our power but is an attitude that can only be the fruit of grace, given by the Holy Spirit. This is why Saint Silouan the Athonite writes, *"The soul that has not known the Holy Spirit does not understand how one can love one's enemies, and does not accept it."*

Saint Silouan always taught that love of enemies is impossible without grace: *"Lord, You have given the commandment to love enemies, but this is difficult for us sinners if Your grace is not with us"; "Without God's grace we cannot love enemies"; "He who does not love his enemies, does not have God's grace." "The Lord has commanded us to love our enemies, and the Holy Spirit reveals this love to us." "When you will love your enemies, know that a great divine grace will be living in you."*

Saint Silouan would say that for Christ there are no enemies – there are those who accept *"the words of eternal life,"* there are those who reject and even crucify; but for the Creator of every living thing, there can be no enemy. So it should be for the Christian, too, who *"in pity for all must strive for the salvation of all."*

# IMITATING CHRIST

By Abbot Tryphon

## Becoming the Image of Christ to Others

If we are to be true to our calling as the children of God, we must live in imitation of Christ. We must imitate His meekness and humility. We must love others just as did He. We must be willing to be transformed, and made whole, that others might see in us, the Light of Christ.

Each and every hour must be closely scrutinized, that we make sure the Image of the Saviour shines forth as we interact with others. In our journey to God, time must not be wasted, for we never know the day or hour when we will be held accountable. Tomorrow is never early enough, for the day of our repentance must be today! Tomorrow can not be the day we start treating others with love, for tomorrow may never come.

If we find ourselves growing angry towards a family member, or a coworker, we must sincerely repent at that very moment, and with Christ's help, turn ourselves around. If we see another person abused, now is the time to act. If we see an someone needing help paying for groceries, now is the time to reach into our own pocket book. If a homeless person approaches us for help, we must not refuse to give them at least a dollar, and a kind word of encouragement. If a stranger is in need of a word of encouragement, we must not let our own needs be a deterrent to our becoming a vehicle of the mercy of Christ.

Church services, personal prayer, and fasting, are all required components of the Christian life, but are never enough if we wish to be saved. We must see ourselves as "our brothers keeper", for if we do not love our neighbor, we will not inherit the Kingdom of God. As daunting as this all may sound, it is never impossible, for we have the help of the Holy Spirit. Only the Holy Spirit can ignite our soul for love of God, and the love of neighbor, but we must cooperate by working to make our hearts open to Christ.

Christianity is not meant to be an easy path, for how can anyone hear the words of Our Saviour, requiring that we love even our enemies, and not know how hard this journey will be. Yet if we take up our cross, hourly, we will have victory over our fallen nature, and we will be given the power to love everyone, even as we love ourself, and the love of God will grow stronger in our own heart, ever remembering the words of scripture, "Without Me you can do nothing [John 15:5]".

*The Very. Rev. Abbot Tryphon is Igumen of All-Merciful Savior Monastery on Vashon Island, Washington. This and other article may be found on his website [abbottryphon.com](http://abbottryphon.com)*

## First Sunday of Luke

- ♦ Proto-Martyr Thekla, Equal-to-the-Apostles;
- ♦ + Venerable Silouan of Athos

*The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom is celebrated on this day. The service text may be found beginning on page 91 in the Red Service Book in the pews.*

## - Divine Liturgy Variables -

### Resurrectional Apolytikion in Tone 7

Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world the Great Mercy.

### Apolytikion of the Protomartyr Thekla in Tone 3

O glorious Thekla, companion of Paul the divine, thou wast enflamed with the love of thy Creator, by the teaching of the divine preacher. Thou didst despise the passing earthly pleasures, and offered thyself to God as an acceptable and pleasing sacrifice, disregarding all suffering. Intercede with Christ thy Groom to grant us His Great Mercy.

### Apolytikion of Saint Silouan in Tone 4

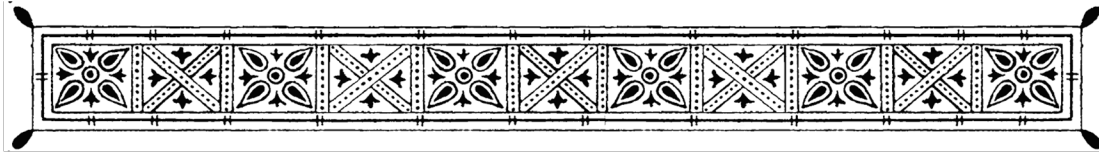
By prayer thou didst receive Christ as thy teacher in the way of humility, and the Spirit bore witness to salvation in thy heart. Wherefore, all peoples called unto hope rejoice in this day of thy memorial, O sacred Father Silouan. Pray unto Christ our God for the salvation of our souls.

### Apolytikion of the Church (Dormition) in Tone 1

In thy birth-giving, O Theotokos, thou didst keep and preserve virginity; and in thy falling-asleep thou hast not forsaken the world; for thou wast translated into life, being the Mother of Life. Wherefore, by thine intercessions, deliver our souls from death.

### Kontakion for Ordinary Sundays in Tone 2

O protection of Christians that cannot be put to shame, mediation unto the Creator most constant, O despise not the suppliant voices of those who have sinned; but be thou quick, O good one, to come unto our aid, who in faith cry unto thee: Hasten to intercession, and speed thou to make supplication, thou who dost ever protect, O Theotokos, them that honor thee.



## THE EPISTLE AND GOSPEL READINGS

### The Epistle (For St. Thekla)

*God is wondrous among His saints. Bless ye God in the congregations.*

### **The Reading from the Second Epistle of St. Paul to St. Timothy. [3:10-15]**

Timothy, my son, you have observed my teaching, my conduct, my aim in life, my faith, my patience, my love, my steadfastness, my persecutions, my sufferings, what befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra. What persecutions I endured! Yet from them all, the Lord rescued me. Indeed, all, who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evil men and impostors will go on from bad to worse, deceivers and deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it and how from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

### الرسالة (للقديسة تقلا)

عَجِيبٌ هُوَ اللَّهُ فِي قَدِّيسِيهِ. فِي الْمَجَامِعِ بَارِكُوا اللَّهَ.

فَصَلِّ مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِّيسِ بُولُسَ الرَّسُولِ الثَّانِيَةِ إِلَى تِيموثَاوَسَ.

يا ولدي تيموثاوس إنَّكَ قَدْ اسْتَقْرَيْتَ تَعْلِيمِي وَسِيرَتِي وَقَصْدِي وَإِيمَانِي وَأَنَا تِي وَمَحَبَّتِي وَصَبْرِي.

واضطهاداتي وآلامي وما أصابني في إنطاكية وأيقونية ولسترة. وأية اضطهاداتٍ احْتَمَلْتُ وقد أَنْقَذَنِي الرَّبُّ مِنْ

جَمِيعِهَا. وَجَمِيعُ الَّذِينَ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يَعْيشُوا بِالنَّقْوَى فِي الْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ يُضْطَهَدُونَ. أَمَّا الْأَشْرَارُ وَالْمُغْوَوْنَ مِنَ النَّاسِ

فَيَزِدَادُونَ شَرًّا مُضِلِّينَ وَمُضَلَّلِينَ. فَاسْتَمِرَّ أَنْتَ عَلَى مَا تَعَلَّمْتَهُ وَأَيَقَنْتَ بِهِ عَالِماً مِمَّنْ تَعَلَّمْتَ. وَأَنْتَكَ مُنْذُ الطِّفْلِ تَعْرِفُ

الْكُتُبَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الْقَادِرَةَ أَنْ تُصَيِّرَكَ حَكِيماً لِلْخَلَاصِ بِالْإِيمَانِ بِالْمَسِيحِ يَسُوعَ.



## LITURGICAL SERVICES AT SAINT MARY'S FOR SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER

### SUNDAY, September 24th

Confessions from 8:30 to 8:50 AM

Matins at 8:50 AM

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

### WEDNESDAY, September 27th

Confessions from 6:00 to 6:30 PM

Vespers Service at 6:30 PM

### SUNDAY, October 1st

Confessions from 8:30 to 8:50 AM

Matins at 8:50 AM

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

\*Fr. Peter's Children's Sermon

\*\*1 Year Trisagion Service for Ernest Shwayri

### WEDNESDAY, October 4th

Confessions from 6:00 to 6:30 PM

Vespers Service at 6:30 PM

### SUNDAY, October 8th

Confessions from 8:30 to 8:50 AM

Matins at 8:50 AM

Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM

### WEDNESDAY, October 11th

Confessions from 6:00 to 6:30 PM

Vespers Service at 6:30 PM

♦ Fr. Peter is also available for Confessions by appointment.

## Tuesday Bible Study

Weekly Bible Study is held each Tuesday, from 7:00 to 8:00 PM, in the Conference Room. Led by Jim Gavrilos, the Fall Bible Study will focus on the Gospel of Mark. All are welcome to participate. Please bring your bibles.

## Weekly Spiritual Discussion

Following each Wednesday Vespers Service, Fr. Peter will host a spiritual discussion concerning our spiritual life and the Orthodox faith. The discussions will be held in the church and be approximately 15 to 20 minutes in duration.

## Teen SOYO Meeting

The first meeting of fall for our Teen SOYO will be held on Sunday, October 1st at 11:45 AM, in the conference room. All our teens are welcome to attend.

## Thank You!

To everyone who contributed towards the 'Summer Boxes of Love.' 18 boxes of non perishable food items as well as baby diapers and supplies were delivered to Boca Helping Hands.

In the next couple of weeks, information about the annual 'Thanksgiving Food Baskets for the Homeless' and the 'Angel Tree' will be announced.

## Online Donations

Thank you for your continued donations to your Saint Mary's Church. In addition to tradition means of giving (Sunday Offering Envelopes or by mail), the church offers Zelle as an online means of fulfilling your 'Annual Pledge.' To use Zelle, please access it through your online bank to:

[stmarywpbfinance@gmail.com](mailto:stmarywpbfinance@gmail.com).

In addition, you may use the online services of Paypal.

For questions and information, please speak with our Parish Council Treasurer Sam Pasley.



## The Gospel [For the First Sunday of Luke]

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (5:1-11)**

At that time, Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret. And He saw two boats by the lake; but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, Jesus asked him to put out a little from the land. And He sat down and taught the people from the boat. And when Jesus had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at Thy word I will let down the nets." And when they had done this, they enclosed a great shoal of fish; and as their nets were breaking, they beckoned to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the catch of fish, which they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; henceforth you will be catching men." And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed Him.

## **الإنجيل (لأحد الأول من لوقا)**

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارَةِ القديسِ لوقا الإنجيليِّ البشيرِ والتلميذِ الطاهرِ.  
في ذلكَ الزمانِ، فيما يسوعُ واقفٌ عندَ بُحيرةِ جَنيسارَتَ، رأى سَفِينَتَيْنِ واقِفَتَيْنِ عندَ شاطئِ البُحيرةِ، وقد انحدرَ مِنْهُمَا الصيَّادُونَ يَغْسِلُونَ الشِّبَاكَ. فَدَخَلَ إِحْدَى السَّفِينَتَيْنِ، وكانتَ لِسِمْعَانَ، وسألهُ أَنْ يَتْبَاعِدَ قَلِيلاً عَنِ الْبَرِّ، وَجَلَسَ يُعَلِّمُ الْجُمُوعَ مِنَ السَّفِينَةِ. وَلَمَّا فَرَّغَ مِنَ الْكَلَامِ، قَالَ لِسِمْعَانَ: "تَقَدَّمْ إِلَى الْغُمَقِ وَأَلْقُوا شِبَاكَكُمْ لِلصَّيْدِ." فَأَجَابَ سِمْعَانُ وَقَالَ لَهُ: "يَا مُعَلِّمُ، إِنَّا قَدْ تَعَبْنَا اللَّيْلَ كُلَّهُ وَلَمْ نُصِبْ شَيْئاً، وَلَكِنْ بِكَلِمَتِكَ أَلْقِي الشَّيْكَةَ." فَلَمَّا فَعَلُوا ذَلِكَ، اخْتَارُوا مِنَ السَّمَكِ شَيْئاً كَثِيراً حَتَّى تَحَرَّقَتْ شَبَكَتُهُمْ. فَأَشَارُوا إِلَى السَّفِينَةِ الْآخَرَى أَنْ يَأْتُوا وَيُعَاوَنُوهُمْ. فَأَتُوا وَمَلَأُوا السَّفِينَتَيْنِ حَتَّى كَادَتَا تَغْرَقَانِ. فَلَمَّا رَأَى ذَلِكَ سِمْعَانُ بُطْرُسُ، خَرَّ عِنْدَ رُكْبَتَيْ يَسُوعَ قَائِلاً: "أَخْرِجْ عَنِّي يَا رَبُّ، فَإِنِّي رَجُلٌ خَاطِئٌ." لِأَنَّ الْإِنْذِهَالَ اغْتَرَاهُ هُوَ وَكُلُّ مَنْ مَعَهُ لَصِيدِ السَّمَكِ الَّذِي أَصَابُوهُ. وَكَذَلِكَ يَعْقُوبُ وَيُوَحْنَّا ابْنَا زَبْدَى اللَّذَانِ كَانَا رَفِيقَيْنِ لِسِمْعَانَ. فَقَالَ يَسُوعُ لِسِمْعَانَ: "لَا تَخَفْ، فَإِنَّكَ مِنَ الْآنَ تَكُونُ صَيَّاداً لِلنَّاسِ." فَلَمَّا بَلَّغُوا بِالسَّفِينَتَيْنِ إِلَى الْبَرِّ، تَرَكُوا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ وَتَبِعُوهُ.

***\*\*The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual.***

After receiving Communion, please read the 'Prayers of Thanksgiving After Holy Communion' on pages 128–131 in the Red Service Book in the pews.

# This Sunday (September 24th)

## Holy Bread offered

Offered by Leah Chalhoub for the health and well-being of her mother Debra Chalhoub.

## Altar Candle

♦ In glory of the Most Holy Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

## Sunday School Classes

Sunday School Classes began on Sunday, September 10th, and will continue each Sunday morning until May.

As last year, Sunday School Classes will begin following Communion, and will last approximately 30 minutes. This year we will have three classes: Ages 4-6; 7-10; Pre Teen and Teen Class.

## Coffee Hour

Is hosted by Leah Chalhoub in honor of her mother Debra Chalhoub birthday.

**\*\*Sunday Coffee Hour hosts are needed for the fall months. If you would like to host a Sunday Coffee Hour, please speak to Jane Pasley or Khouryia Myriam.**

## Ladies Society Meeting

The first meeting of fall for the Ladies Society will be held during Coffee Hour (approximately 11:45 AM) in the hall. All ladies are welcome to attend and participate.

# Please Remember in Your Prayers

## For the Living

*"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." James 5: 14*

*For the Good Health of the Servants of God:* Archpriest Michael & Matushka Annette Zaparyniuk, Michael, Priest Andrew Short, Sub-Deacon William Hall, Jodet Rae, Leon & Judy Chalhoub, Johnny & Joyce Chalhoub, Raouf Saballeil, Sabah, Craig Miller, Emma, Lauren Moreland, Lama Chalhoub.

*For the Shut-ins of our Church Community:* Gloria Yedlinsky, Lidia Pawlcuk, Zakia Salloum.

For all Christians and people suffering from violence, war, persecution, captivity, hunger, and homelessness throughout this world.

*For those serving in our armed forces here and abroad:* Christopher Smith, Jonathan Shportun, Alexios Gavrilos.

## For the Departed

*"With the spirits of the righteous made perfect, give rest O Lord to the souls of Thy servants..."*

Roy Samra (newly departed 9/13/23), Gail Camileri (6/26/23), Angie Smith (6/23/23), Archdeacon Joseph Harb (3/8/23), George Freije (10/26/22), Ernest Shwayri (9/29/22).

# Seven Day Prayer Candles

**\*\*When offering a Seven Day Prayer Candle, please list only the names that you are praying for, and are asking the church community to pray for. Please do not include greetings, birthday and anniversary wishes, etc.**

## Replacement of our Church Flooring Complete

Over the past several weeks, the tiles and carpeting in the church have replaced. Porcelain tiles and new baseboards have been placed in the Church Narthex, Solea and Altar. New carpeting has been installed in the Sanctuary and Sacristy.

Thank you to Mark Samra for overseeing this project, as well as the many volunteers who offered their time moving pews and liturgical furniture.

The total cost of this project is \$30,000, with over \$10,000 in donations received to date. Additional donations are needed to cover the balance of the total cost. Any donation is greatly appreciated. Please see Mark Samra or Sam Pasley to offer your donation to this project.