



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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**Fr Steven Hosking**

Rector

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, September 01, 2019

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### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every

time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all

one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

### Weekly Services

Tuesdays at 8:30a - Daily Matins

Wednesdays at 6:00p - General Confession;

First Wed of the Month

(The Church is open at 4:30p for "Open Doors" - during fasting seasons or by appointment).

Thursday at 8:30a - Daily Matins

Saturday at 5:30p - Great Vespers

Sunday at 9:30a - Divine Liturgy

### Members of our Parish Council are:

Deacon Timothy Skuby - Attached

Greg Jankura - Council President

Michael Kuziak - Council Vice President

Natalie Kucharski - Council Treasurer

Glenn PenkoffLidbeck - Council Secretary

Kyle Hollis - Member at Large

Roderick Seurattan - Member at Large

## **Pastoral Care - General Information**

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

## **Announcements**

We need volunteers to help with the upcoming Tag and Bake Sale. Sign-up sheets can be found on the candle desk. Please consider signing up; any time you can offer would be greatly appreciated.

The Tag Sale will be held on Saturday, Sept 21st (rain or shine) from 9a to 3p.

Please contact Stasia PenkoffLedbeck if you have any questions. Stasiasx2vt@me.com call/text 860-395-9966

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There will be General Confession on Wednesday, Sept 4th beginning at 6pm.

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Here is the link to last week's sermon: [The Church is Holy](#).

## **Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations**



William, Sophia, Robert, Ann, Evelyn, Nina, John, Alex, Vincent, James, Luke, Aaron, Kathryn, Veronica, Richard, Darlyne, Irene, Nancy, Susanne  
All of our College Students: Alex, Sam, Nadia, Isaac and Matthew.

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Many years! to Richard and Phyllis and to Sarah and Justin on the occasion of their anniversary.

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Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;

All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalized, those who have no one to pray for them;

All Orthodox seminarians & families;

all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.

All those who have perished due to hatred and intolerance and all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

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Today we commemorate:

Church New Year (Indiction). St. Simeon the Stylite (the Elder) and his mother, Ven. Martha (ca. 428). Martyr Aithalas of Persia (380). Holy Forty Women Martyrs and Martyr Ammon the Deacon, their teacher, at Heraclea in Thrace (4th c.). Martyrs Callista and her brothers, Evodius and Hermogenes, at Nicomedia (309). Righteous Joshua the Son of Nun (16th c. B.C.). Synaxis of the Most-holy Theotokos in the Miasenga Monastery (commemorating the finding of her Icon there —864).

## Parish Calendar

### Services and Events

September 1 to September 9, 2019

#### **Sunday, September 1**

Liturgical and Education Ministry meeting  
Church New Year  
9:15AM Reading of the 3rd Hour  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### **Monday, September 2**

Voytovich - A

#### **Tuesday, September 3**

Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia  
8:30AM Daily Matins  
9:00AM Book Study  
7:00PM Deanery Meeting

#### **Wednesday, September 4**

Galin  
Righteous Priest Aaron  
Annie Ruperto - B  
4:30PM Open Doors  
6:00PM General Confession

#### **Thursday, September 5**

Holy Prophet Zacharias, Father of the Venerable Forerunner  
8:30AM Daily Matins  
7:00PM Book Study

#### **Friday, September 6**

The Commemoration of the Miracle Wrought by Archangel Michael in Colossae (Chonae)

#### **Saturday, September 7**

The Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos  
5:30PM Great Vespers

#### **Sunday, September 8**

Fellowship and Stewardship Ministry  
Sunday before Holy Cross  
Nativity of the Holy Theotokos  
Maxwell Freeman - B  
Ann Pavlik - B  
9:15AM Reading of the 3rd Hour  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### **Monday, September 9**

The Holy & Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna

## Saints and Feasts

### September 01

#### Jesus (Joshua) of Navi

Jesus (Joshua) of Navi was born of the tribe of Ephraim in Egypt, in the seventeenth century before Christ. When he was eighty-five years of age, he became Moses' successor. He restrained the River Jordan's flow and allowed the Israelites to cross on foot. He caused the sun to stop in its course when he was waging war against the Amorites. He divided the Promised Land among the Twelve Tribes of Israel and governed them for twenty-five years. He wrote the Old Testament book that bears his name, and having lived 110 years in all, he reposed in the sixteenth century before Christ. His name means "God saves."

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### September 01

#### Ecclesiastical New Year

For the maintenance of their armed forces, the Roman emperors decreed that their subjects in every district should be taxed every year. This same decree was reissued every fifteen years, since the Roman soldiers were obliged to serve for fifteen years. At the end of each fifteen-year period, an assessment was made of what economic changes had taken place, and a new tax was decreed, which was to be paid over the span of the fifteen years. This imperial decree, which was issued before

the season of winter, was named Indictio, that is, Definitio, or Order. This name was adopted by the emperors in Constantinople also. At other times, the latter also used the term Epinemesis, that is, Distribution (Dianome). It is commonly held that Saint Constantine the Great introduced the Indiction decrees in A.D. 312, after he beheld the sign of the Cross in heaven and vanquished Maxentius and was proclaimed Emperor in the West. Some, however (and this seems more likely), ascribe the institution of the Indiction to Augustus Caesar, three years before the birth of Christ. Those who hold this view offer as proof the papal bull issued in A.D. 781 which is dated thus: Anno IV, Indictionis LIII -that is, the fourth year of the fifty-third Indiction. From this, we can deduce the aforementioned year (3 B.C.) by multiplying the fifty-two complete Indictions by the number of years in each (15), and adding the three years of the fifty-third Indiction. There are three types of Indictions: 1) That which was introduced in the West, and which is called Imperial, or Caesarean, or Constantinian, and which begins on the 24th of September; 2) The so-called Papal Indiction, which begins on the 1st of January; and 3) The Constantinopolitan, which was adopted by the Patriarchs of that city after the fall of the Eastern Empire in 1453. This Indiction is indicated in their own hand on the decrees they issue, without the numeration of the fifteen years. This Indiction begins on the 1st of September and is observed with special ceremony in the Church. Since the completion of each year takes place, as it were, with the harvest and gathering of the crops into storehouses, and we begin anew

from henceforth the sowing of seed in the earth for the production of future crops, September is considered the beginning of the New Year. The Church also keeps festival this day, beseeching God for fair weather, seasonable rains, and an abundance of the fruits of the earth. The Holy Scriptures (Lev. 23:24-5 and Num. 29:1-2) also testify that the people of Israel celebrated the feast of the Blowing of the Trumpets on this day, offering hymns of thanksgiving. In addition to all the aforesaid, on this feast we also commemorate our Saviour's entry into the synagogue in Nazareth, where He was given the book of the Prophet Esaias to read, and He opened it and found the place where it is written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, for which cause He hath anointed Me..." (Luke 4:16-30).

It should be noted that to the present day, the Church has always celebrated the beginning of the New Year on September 1. This was the custom in Constantinople until its fall in 1453 and in Russia until the reign of Peter I. September 1 is still festively celebrated as the New Year at the Patriarchate of Constantinople; among the Jews also the New Year, although reckoned according to a moveable calendar, usually falls in September. The service of the Menaion for January 1 is for our Lord's Circumcision and for the memorial of Saint Basil the Great, without any mention of its being the beginning of a new year.

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## **September 01**

### **Symeon the Stylite**

Our righteous Father Symeon was born about the year 390 in a certain village named Sis, in the mountain region of Cilicia and Syria. Having first been a shepherd, he entered the monastic discipline at a young age. After trying various kinds of ascetical practices, both in the monastery and then in the wilderness, he began standing on pillars of progressively greater height, and heroically persevered in this for more than forty years; the greater part of this time he spent standing upright, even when one of his feet became gangrenous, and other parts of his body gave way under the strain. He did not adopt this strange way of life out of vainglory, a charge that some of his contemporaries made against him at the first: because he was already famous for his asceticism and holiness before ascending his first pillar (in Greek, style, whence he is called "Stylite"), many pious people came to him wishing to touch his garments, either for healing or for a blessing; to escape the continual vexation they caused, he made a pillar about ten feet high, and then higher and higher, until the fourth and last was about fifty feet high. The Church historian Theodoret of Cyrrhus, an eyewitness of his exploits who wrote of him while Symeon was yet alive, called him "the great wonder of the world." God gave him the grace to persevere in such an astonishing form of asceticism that multitudes came to see him from Persia, Armenia, South Arabia, Georgia, Thrace, Spain, Italy, Gaul, and the British Isles. Theodoret says that he became

so famous in Rome that the Nomadic Arabs by the thousands believed in Christ and were baptized because of him; the King of Persia sent envoys to inquire into his way of life, and the Queen asked to be sent oil that he had blessed. He also was a great defender of sound doctrine, and confirmed the Orthodoxy of the Holy Council of Chalcedon for many who had been beguiled by the teachings of the Monophysites, including the Empress Eudocia, widow of Theodosius the Younger. After a life of unheard-of achievements and struggles, he reposed in peace at the age of sixty-nine, in the year 459.

## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 2 Troparion (Resurrection)**

When You descended to death, O Life Immortal, You destroyed hell with the splendor of Your Godhead.

And when from the

depths You raised the dead, all the powers of heaven cried out://  
"O Giver of life, Christ our God, glory to You!"

### **Tone 2 Troparion (Indiction)**

O Creator of the Universe, You appointed times by Your own power; bless the crown of this year with Your goodness, O Lord! Preserve in safety Your rulers and Your cities://  
and through the intercessions of the

Theotokos, save us!

### **Tone 1 Troparion (St Simeon)**

You were a pillar of patient endurance, having imitated the Forefathers, O ^Venerable One:

Job in suffering and Joseph in temptations. You lived like the Bodiless Ones while yet in the flesh, O Simeon, our Father://  
Beseech Christ God that our souls may be saved!

### **Tone 2 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

Hell became afraid, O almighty Savior, seeing the miracle of Your Resurrection from the tomb!

The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with You, //  
and the world, my Savior, praises You forever.

### **Tone 2 Kontakion (St Simeon)**

Seeking the things of the Highest, and having made a fiery chariot, you were joined to the heights.

Therefore, you have become a companion to the Angels, O Venerable Simeon, //  
and with them you are praying incessantly to Christ God for us all

### **Tone 4 Kontakion (Indiction)**

O Creator and Master of time and the ages, Triune and Merciful God of all: grant blessings for the course of this year, and in Your boundless mercy save those who worship You and cry out in fear://  
"O Savior, grant blessings to all mankind!"

### **Tone 3 Prokeimenon**

Great is our Lord and abundant in power! His understanding is beyond

measure! ((Ps 146/147:5)

v: Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God. (Ps 146/147:1)

### **Tone 7 Prokeimenon**

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. (Ps 115/116:6)

## **Gospel and Epistle Readings**

### **Epistle Reading**

#### **Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 146.5;134.3.**

Great is our Lord, and great is his power.  
Verse: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

### **The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 2:1-7.**

Timothy, my son, first of all, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way. This is good, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, the testimony to which was borne at the proper time. For this I was appointed a preacher and apostle (I am telling the truth, I am not lying), a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

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## **Gospel Reading**

### **Ecclesiastical New Year**

#### **The Reading is from Luke 4:16-22**

At that time, Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up; and he went to the synagogue, as his custom was, on the sabbath day. And he stood up to read; and there was given to him the book of the prophet Isaiah. He opened the book and found the place where it was written, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." And he closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. And he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." And all spoke well of him, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.

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## **Wisdom of the Fathers**

And while one calls on Jerusalem, saying, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion, for lo! thy King cometh to thee meek, riding upon an ass, and a young colt;" another proclaims His second coming also, saying on this wise, "The Lord, whom ye seek, will come, and who will abide the day of His coming? Leap ye as calves set free from bonds." And another again, amazed at such things, said, "This is our God; there shall none other

be accounted of in comparison of Him."

## **St. John Chrysostom**

*Homily 19 on Matthew 6, 4th Century*

When Jesus had read this passage, He rolled up 'the scroll, gave it to the servant, and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.'... How much would I wish that this assembly gave such testimony. I wish that the eyes of all (of catechumens and faithful of women, men and children) - not the eyes of the body, but the eyes of the soul - would gaze upon Jesus. When you look to Him, your faces will be shining from the light of His gaze."

## **Origen of Alexandria**

*Homilies on the Gospel of Luke, 32.6. (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture. vol. 3: Luke, Intersity Press)*

## **Beyond the Sermon**



On September 1st, we also enter into a new ecclesiastical year in the Orthodox Church—a fitting “time” to start thinking anew about time and all the ways it’s bound up with worship, liturgy and salvation.

So let’s talk about this New Year. Sometimes this is also called the Indiction (we’ll talk about why below). Whatever terminology you prefer, it’s the point in the calendar when the cycle of fixed feast days begins anew.

This is most clearly seen in the narrative arc created by the twelve major feast days of the Orthodox Church. Prior to September 1, the last of these feasts we celebrate is the Dormition of the Theotokos (August 15). Immediately following the ecclesiastical New Year, we will commemorate the birth of the Theotokos (September 8).

In other words, bookending the Church year are the beginning and end of the Theotokos’ life on earth.

This parallels in temporal terms the Christological significance of the mother of God—just as she bore Christ in her womb, her lifespan “bears” Christ in liturgical time.

Spoiler alert: as you’ve probably noticed, within these “bookends” of the Church year, not everything flows chronologically through the year. Mostly, it does proceed logically through the birth, life, death and resurrection of Christ, but there are some notable exceptions. For example, the feast of the Transfiguration of Christ (6 August) always occurs after Pascha.

Likewise, the feast of Annunciation (25 March) occurs after the birth of Christ, at least if we are looking at things strictly through a “September 1st to August 31st” kind of lens. Traditionally, though, Annunciation is seen as anticipating

the next following Christmas; between March 25 placing Christ is exactly 9 months, the gestation period of a baby. (The Church calendar can be complicated, but at least it's biologically accurate!)

It's also worth mentioning that not all aspects of the Church year start over on September 1st—the sequence of Sunday Gospel readings, for example, recommences at Pascha. (Actually, Pascha is really at the heart of the entire Church calendar, much more than September 1st or any other feast day is. But that's a post for another day.)

For now, let's return to the Church New Year.

Why September 1st?

The short answer is that this was the civil New Year in the eastern Roman Empire and, eventually, the Byzantine empire. Among other things, tax payments were calculated from this date and it makes sense for the Church to conform itself to this norm.

But there's a longer story, too. We could title it "More than You Ever Wanted to Know about the Ecclesiastical New Year." Also, it may cause temporal vertigo.

We'll start in the Roman Empire around the time of Christ. It was a land of many New Year's dates.

In some provinces of the Western part of the empire, New Year's was set to January 1st, which coincided with the end of the pagan Saturnalia games of late December. But in certain eastern provinces, the new year was set on September 23rd—the birthday of Caesar Augustus (d. AD 14), founder of the

Roman Empire.

In those days, the new year served two basic purposes. I've already mentioned its role in yearly taxes. But every 15 years, the new year also signaled the start of a new Indiction, i.e. a new period of tax assessment. Every fifteen years, the tax rates would be reset based on new population levels and other factors.

Sounds kind of boring, but these Indictions were important for reasons other than taxes.

Here, we have to remember that there was yet no universal reference point for signalling your place within a given era. Today, we use the Anno Domini system (AD, or CE) to mark the number of years (this year is AD 2016, for example).

But this system wasn't implemented until the sixth century, when St. Dionysius Exiguus (aka Dionysius the Humble)—a scythian monk—came up with a new computation for a possible year when Christ had been born.

St. Dionysius the Humble (d. 544) inaugurated Anno Domini years while calculating the date of Easter.

Prior to the Anno Domini years, one of the ways people gauged their year in time was with indictions—the first year after an indiction was "first indiction," the second year was "second indiction," and so forth.

Unfortunately, they didn't number the indictions themselves, so each Indiction was its own new era. But hey, something was better than nothing, right?

So, when you wrote the date on official documents, you'd write the calendar date plus the numbered year within the current indiction cycle, a written formula that later became compulsory in the Byzantine Empire.

This is why the Church new year is sometimes referred to as the "Indiction."

Where was I with all of this? (Vertigo is already kicking in.)

I mentioned that this New Year's in the east was on September 23rd. In the fifth century, though, 462 to be precise, Justinian I issued a decree that shifted the date of Indiction to September 1st. (In other vestiges of the Roman Empire, it stayed on or near the 23rd for reasons I'm not sure of, except that this is sometimes called the Bedian Indiction.)

Whatever the case, 1 September became the "new" new year in the territories of the emerging Byzantine empire. It also became the New Year of the Church.

Why is any of this significant?

For most of us, September 1st doesn't ring any huge spiritual bells—we're busy getting ready for school to begin again or traveling for labor day. It falls off our radar, too, because many parishes don't have a special service to commemorate this time in the Church. There's no procession, there's no great feast to mark the turning of one year into the next.

And yet, I think we can see September 1 as a time the Church signals us to begin anew.

Any kind of new year—whether civil or ecclesiastical—is an invitation to extricate ourselves from the loop of time temporarily. As we transition to a new year, we have the sense of stepping out of the old and into the new. Of stopping the normal, ongoing flow of time.

I think this is why people are inclined to make resolutions on January 1st. Stepping outside the endless loop of time makes us feel like we can exit the circuit of our own vices and bad habits.

Perhaps fittingly, the Church observes numerous other typological new "Beginnings" on this date. If you attend a matins service on September 1st, you will likely hear that today, we commemorate the entrance of Christ into the Synagogue to announce His mission to mankind (Luke 4:16-22). Likewise, in keeping with a Talmudic tradition, it is also believed that the Hebrews entered the Promised Land at the beginning of September. These events, like the start of a new year, invite us out of the staleness of old existence and into the promise of newness, the hope of salvation.

Quoting Isaiah 61:1-2, the Savior proclaimed, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim release to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord..." <https://oca.org/saints/lives/2016/09/01/501-church-new-year>

For me, September 1st provides a juncture at which to rekindle the discipline of gratitude.

A parish I used to attend started a beautiful custom of celebrating the Akathist of Thanksgiving (aka "Glory to God for All Things") on the eve of September 1st each year. Written in the midst of the persecutions that followed the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, it's a humbling and moving cycle of hymns that praise God for all manner of events in our lives and in the life of the world.

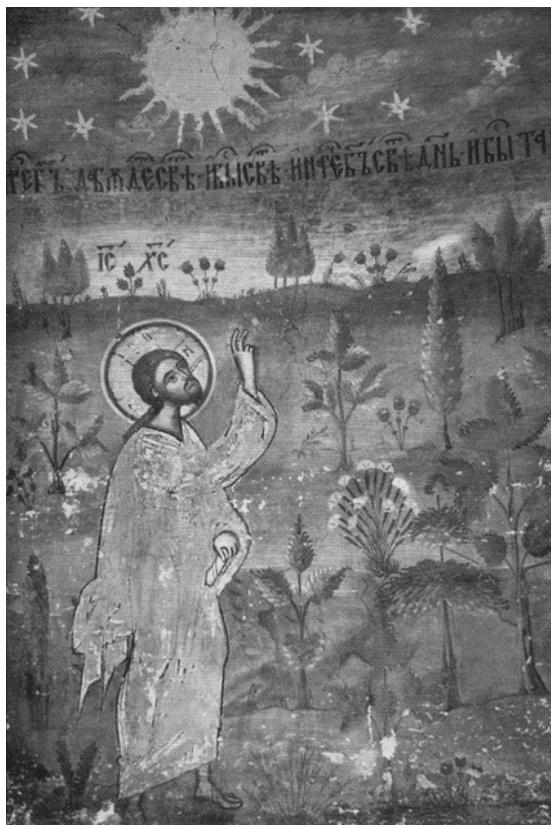
Sadly, I moved away and am no longer able to attend this parish, and haven't ever come across another church that does this. But I've started reading through this Akathist on my own or with family whenever September 1st rolls around.

Glory to Thee for Thine eternity in this  
fleeting world  
Glory to Thee for Thy mercies, seen and  
unseen  
Glory to Thee through every sigh of my sorrow  
Glory to Thee for every step of my life's  
journey  
For every moment of glory  
Glory to Thee, O God, from age to age.

This is just the beginning of a beautiful-and  
dare I say timely-Akathist.

I invite you to join me in making its words our  
own as we begin this new year. May we move  
forward in gratitude and peace. Happy New  
Year!

Nicole M. Roccas



## A New Year Prayer

Our Holy Father,  
God of our yesterdays, our today, and our tomorrows.  
We praise You for Your unequaled greatness.  
Thank You for the year behind us and for the year ahead.  
Help us in Your new year, Father, to fret less and laugh more.  
To teach our children to laugh by laughing with them.  
To teach others to love by loving them.  
Knowing, when Love came to the stable in Bethlehem, He came for us.  
So that Love could be with us, and we could know You.  
That we could share Love with others.  
Help us, Father, to hear Your love song in every sunrise,  
in the chirping of sparrows in our backyards,  
in the stories of our old folks, and the fantasies of our children.  
Help us to stop and listen to Your love songs,  
so that we may know You better and better.  
We rejoice in the world You loved into being.  
Thank You for another new year and for new chances every day.  
We pray for peace, for light, and for hope, that we might spread them to others.  
Forgive us for falling short this past year.  
We leave the irreparable past in your hands,  
and step out into the unknown new year knowing You will go with us.  
We accept Your gift of a new year and we rejoice in what's ahead,  
depending on You to help us do exactly what You want.  
In Jesus name, We pray,  
Amen

