



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

**Address:** PO Box 134, 108 E Main St, Clinton, CT 06413-0134

**Phone:** 860-664-9434

**Web:** <http://www.stalexischurch.org>

**Email:** [stalexis@ dneoca.org](mailto:stalexis@ dneoca.org)

**Fr Steven Hosking**

Rector

**Phone:** 860-866-5802 (Message)

**Email:** [frsteve@stalexischurch.org](mailto:frsteve@stalexischurch.org)

**Dn Timothy Skuby**

Attached

**Phone:** (808) 341-1813

**Email:** [dntimothy@stalexischurch.org](mailto:dntimothy@stalexischurch.org)

Services Schedule

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

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Bulletin for Sunday, September 06, 2020

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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

During this COVID era, services dates and times are subject to change. Please read the schedule provided withing the bulletin itself for the dates and times of services, and whether they will be held "in person" or streamed via Zoom.

### **Members of our Parish Council are:**

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large  
Dori Kuziak - Council Secretary  
Natalie Kucharski - Council Treasurer  
Glenn PenkoffLidbeck - Council President  
Kyle Hollis - Member at Large  
Roderick Seurattan - Council Vice President

### **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**

What will it take for you to return to Church?

It's a simple question, but very difficult to answer: What will it take for you to return to Church?

I am honestly interested in your answers. Please give this question some thought and provide me with your answer, by phone, text or email.

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### Annual Meeting

We are still in need of nominations for the following: 2 positions on the parish council, 1 representative for the Diocesan Assembly, 1 representative for the All-American Council. Please talk with Fr Steven or Dori Kuziak if you are willing to be nominated for any of these positions.

### Status

As a reminder, according to the ByLaws of the Parish, if you are not receiving the sacraments, you are considered a NON-voting member of the community. A VOTING member is someone who receives the sacraments and has received Communion at least once during the past year AND contributes to the parish with their Time, Treasure and (or) Talent. Please refer to the ByLaws ([available here](#)) or consult with Fr Steven should you have any questions about your status within the parish.

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Please be sure to double check the times of services on the schedule! If you wish to attend Liturgy, be sure to email Fr Steven to ask for a blessing. It is imperative that we have an accurate count of attendees.

**Services will still be held via Zoom.** The invitation for which I am including below: [HERE](#)

Topic: All Services

Join Zoom Meeting

[https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4716784843?  
pwd=dzB0MTY1cnVIUUFWNXBCako1ekZ0ZzC](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4716784843?pwd=dzB0MTY1cnVIUUFWNXBCako1ekZ0ZzC)

Meeting ID: 471 678 4843

Passcode: 1994

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,4716784843#,,,,,0#,,1994#

US (New York)

+13017158592,,4716784843#,,,,,0#,,1994#

US (Germantown)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

+1 301 715 8592 US (Germantown)

+1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 346 248 7799 US (Houston)

Meeting ID: 471 678 4843

Passcode: 1994

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdFMlKJ5Cc>

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I am also including the link where texts for services may be download:

[HERE](http://bit.ly/St-Alexis) - <http://bit.ly/St-Alexis>

[https://stalexischurch-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/schosk\\_stalex\\_e=0VpHla](https://stalexischurch-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/schosk_stalex_e=0VpHla)

## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Metropolitan  
Theodosius, Archpriest  
Dennis, Deacon  
Timothy, Evelyn,  
Katheryn,  
Anne, Veronica, Richard,  
Nancy, Susann, Carol,  
Luke, Aaron, Alexander,  
Gail, Vincent, Nina,  
Ellen, Maureen  
Elizabeth, Christopher,  
Joshua, Jennifer Petra,  
Olivia, Jessica ,Sean,  
Sarah, Justin, Arnold, Michael, Kirk, Carol-  
Anne, Anthony, Natasha, Janice, Gene, John

The newly departed and ever memorable  
Becky and Robert;

And in remembrance of Archbishop Nikon.

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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 institutionalize, 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.

Many Years! to Ann Pavlik, Max Freeman and Katie Jankura on the occasion of their birthdays.

Today we commemorate:

Commemoration of the Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossæ. Martyrs Eudoxius, Zeno, and Macarius (311-312). St. Archippus (Arkhipp) of Herapolis. Martyr Romulus, and with him many others (107-115). Hieromartyr Cyril, Bishop of Gortyna (3rd-4th c.). Martyrs Cyriacus, Faustus the Presbyter, Abibas the Deacon, and 11 others, at Alexandria (ca. 250). St. David of Hermopolis, Egypt (4th c.). Hieromartyr Priest Maxim Sandovich (1914).

## Parish Calendar

### Services and Events

September 6 to September 14, 2020

#### Sunday, September 6

13th Sunday of Matthew  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, September 7

The Forefeast of the Nativity of the Theotokos  
6:30PM Vespers for the Nativity of the Theotokos

#### Tuesday, September 8

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady

the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Maxwell Freeman - B

Ann Pavlik - B

8:30AM Liturgy for the Nativity of the Theotokos

#### Wednesday, September 9

The Holy & Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna

6:30PM Evening Prayers

#### Thursday, September 10

Menodora, Metrodora, & Nymphodora the Martyrs

8:30AM Daily Matins followed by Book Study

#### Friday, September 11

Theodora of Alexandria

#### Saturday, September 12

Apodosis of the Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

Kathryn Jankura - B

5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, September 13

Sunday before Holy Cross

6:30PM Vespers for the Exaltation of the Cross

9:30PM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, September 14

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Isaac Freeman - B

### Saints and Feasts

## September 06

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

The feast today in honour of the Archangel Michael commemorates the great miracle he wrought when he delivered from destruction a church and holy spring named for him. The pagans, moved by malice, sought to destroy the aforesaid church and holy spring by turning the course of two rivers against them. But the Archangel appeared and, by means of the Cross and a great earthquake that shook the entire area, diverted the waters into an underground course. Henceforth, the name of that place changed from Colossae to Chonae, which means "funnels" in Greek.

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## September 08

### **The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary**

According to the ancient tradition of the Church, the Theotokos was born of barren and aged parents, Joachim and Anna, about the year 16 or 17 before the birth of Christ. Joachim was descended from the royal line of David, of the tribe of Judah. Anna was of the priestly tribe of Levi, a daughter of the priest Matthan and Mary, his wife.

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## September 09

### **The Holy & Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna**

Today, the day following the Nativity of the most holy Theotokos, we celebrate the synaxis of Saints Joachim and Anna, honouring them as her parents.

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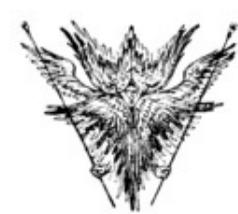
## September 11

### **Theodora of Alexandria**

This saint lived in the fifth century. Out of remorse for the adultery that she committed with another man, she fled from her husband's house, renamed herself Theodore, clothed herself as a man, and pretending to be a eunuch, entered a monastery of men. Her identity as a woman was discovered only after her death.

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## Hymns of the Day



### **Tone 4 Troparion (Resurrection)**

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel the joyous message of Your Resurrection, they cast away the ancestral

curse  
and elatedly told the apostles:  
"Death is overthrown!  
Christ God is risen, //  
granting the world great mercy!"

### **Tone 4 Troparion (Archangel Michael)**

O Michael, commander of the heavenly hosts,  
we who are unworthy beseech you:  
by your prayers encompass us beneath the  
wings of your immaterial glory, and faithfully  
preserve us who fall down and cry out to you://  
“Deliver us from all harm, for you are the  
commanders of the Powers on high!”

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the  
Holy Spirit,

#### **Tone 4 Kontakion (Resurrection)**

My Savior and Redeemer  
as God rose from the tomb and delivered the  
earth-born from their chains. He has shattered  
the gates of hell,  
and as Master,//  
He has risen on the third day!

now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

#### **Tone 2 Kontakion (Archangel Michael)**

O Michael, commander of God’s armies and  
minister of the divine glory,  
prince of the bodiless angels  
and guide of mankind;  
ask for what is good for us, and for great  
mercy,// as the supreme commander of the  
Bodiless Hosts.

#### **Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him  
in the highest! Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

### **Gospel and Epistle Readings**

#### **Epistle Reading**

##### **Prokeimenon. 4th Tone. Psalm 103.24,1.**

O Lord, how manifold are your works. You  
have made all things in wisdom.

Verse: Bless the Lord, O my soul.

##### **The reading is from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians 16:13-24.**

Brethren, be watchful, stand firm in your faith,  
be courageous, be strong. Let all that you do  
be done in love. Now, brethren, you know that  
the household of Stephanas were the first  
converts in Achaia, and they have devoted  
themselves to the service of the saints; I urge  
you to be subject to such men and to every  
fellow worker and laborer. I rejoice at the  
coming of Stephanas and Fortunatus and  
Achaicos, because they have made up for your  
absence; for they refreshed my spirit as well  
as yours. Give recognition to such men. The  
churches of Asia send greetings. Aquila and  
Prisca, together with the church in their  
house, send you hearty greetings in the Lord.  
All the brethren send greetings. Greet one  
another with a holy kiss. I, Paul, write this  
greeting with my own hand. If any one has no  
love for the Lord, let him be accursed. Our  
Lord, come! The grace of the Lord Jesus be  
with you. My love be with you all in Christ  
Jesus. Amen.

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#### **Gospel Reading**

##### **13th Sunday of Matthew**

**The Reading is from Matthew 21:33-42**

The Lord said this parable, "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. When therefore the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

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## Wisdom of the Fathers

Many things does He intimate by this parable, God's providence, which had been exercised towards them from the first; their murderous disposition from the beginning; that nothing had been omitted of whatever pertained to a heedful care of them;...

## St. John Chrysostom

*Homily 68 on Matthew 21, 4th Century*

And observe also both His great care, and the excessive idleness of these men for what pertained to the husbandmen, He Himself did ... and He left little for them to do; to take care of what was there, and to preserve what was given to them.

## St. John Chrysostom

*Homily 68 on Matthew 21, 4th Century*

## Beyond the Sermon



## Remembering Archbishop Nikon

by Father Sergius Halvorsen



Archbishop Nikon

I first met [Archbishop Nikon](#) in Pennsylvania at a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy. Since I was not serving, I went in to

the altar for clergy communion. After receiving Metropolitan Herman's blessing, I stepped aside to put on my vestments and I found myself standing next to a big, tall hieromonk with rugged features, and a deeply lined, unsmiling face. In the mental calculus of meeting a stranger, I wondered if this was someone that I should even talk to. He wasn't serving, but was standing in the altar, attentively observing the service, and I honestly didn't know if I should even disturb him. But, before receiving communion, I said, "I'm sorry Father, but I don't think we've met," and I introduced myself. He responded, "Hello. I'm Father Nikon, they say they want to make me a bishop, so I'm here to watch and learn." He gently shrugged his shoulders, and his rugged lined face, broke into a completely unexpected, playfully bashful smile. It was the kind of smile that said, "This is all a bit overwhelming, but it's going to be OK."

The second time I saw him was shortly after his episcopal consecration. I was asked to serve with then Bishop Nikon as he made a pastoral visit to a local parish in Connecticut. I had been a deacon for a few years and I had just enough experience serving the hierarchical Divine Liturgy so that I would occasionally be asked to serve as the first deacon when a more senior deacon was unavailable, but I did not have enough experience to be truly comfortable. So, whenever I served with a bishop, I was always nervous, hoping and praying that I'd remember everything, and more importantly, that I'd be able to do it all. But as the Liturgy began, I quickly realized that since His Grace had only recently been consecrated to the episcopacy, he and

I were in a similar situation: neither of us was completely familiar with the hierarchical liturgy. There were a few moments when it seemed that we were both a bit unsure of exactly what we should be doing—subtle looks back and forth that said, "Wait, is it my turn now, or is it yours...no wait, am I supposed to be here, or over there...?" But while there may have been some uncertainty about the rubrics, one thing was absolutely certain: Bishop Nikon was making everyone feel completely at ease. From the pastor of the parish, whose chronic illness posed challenges that I cannot even imagine, to the subdeacons, to the altar boys, and of course to me, the nervous, not-so-confident deacon: Bishop Nikon went out of his way to make everyone feel completely at ease. He was kind, humble, patient, and greeted every unforeseen moment graciously and with a gentle sense of humor, and yes, there were several moments when he looked at us with that playfully bashful smile that said, "This is all a bit overwhelming, but it's going to be OK." In the years after that, as I had the pleasure to serve and work with Vladyka Nikon in the Diocese of New England, I learned that the spirit of humble, gentle, compassion with which he served the Liturgy, characterized his entire ministry. He served Christ and His Holy Church by treating people with kindness, humility, patience and grace. Every time I we sang "Eis polla, eti despota" for him, he would always give his blessing, and then say, loud enough so that everyone could hear, "Many years to you as well."

At the end of that first Liturgy that I served with Bishop Nikon, he gave me his blessing,

and thanked me profusely for coming to serve with him. Then he said, "Father Deacon, come here for just a minute." We walked to his car where he was packing up his things, and he pulled out the bouquet of flowers that the parish had given him as they greeted him in the narthex. He said, "Father, please take these home and give them to your wife. Please tell her that I send my blessing, and that I'm grateful to her for sharing you on a Sunday morning." This was the first of many times that Bishop Nikon went out of his way to express his love and care for my family and every time we spoke, he would always ask about my wife and my children. Once when a family member had a bit of a health scare, I was sitting in my car, in a parking lot, beside myself with fear and anxiety, and I called him to ask for his prayers. Naturally, he told me that he'd pray for us. But in that moment, I knew he was sincere in his prayer, because he was such a good listener. When you talked with Bishop Nikon, he really listened to you, and he let you know that he heard and understood you. Now, there is a not-so-subtle irony to all of this, because Archbishop Nikon was notoriously hard of hearing. It seemed like he was always in a losing battle with his hearing aids—tweaking and adjusting them, while they whistled and squeaked—and there were plenty of times when you would tell him something and he would ask you to repeat yourself. But people who are not listening to you, people who don't care what you are saying, people who don't care what you're going through, they never ask you to repeat yourself, because they don't care. But if Archbishop Nikon didn't understand something you said, he would ask you

to repeat yourself, squinting his eyes in concentration, with his hand up to his ear, leaning in closer, hoping to catch what you were saying. He cared about what you were going through, and he wanted to hear. Perhaps being physically hard of hearing forced Archbishop Nikon to be a more attentive listener; maybe it forced him to listen carefully, to make sure that he understood what his people were telling him, and to assure them that he heard and understood their concerns, ideas, hopes and fears. Vladyka may have been hard of hearing, but whatever his ears lacked was more than made up for by his heart.

One of the reasons Vladyka Nikon was such a good listener, was because he was always present. He seemed to be on the road constantly: traveling to parishes to serve and preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ; to be present at every possible gathering of the faithful. He particularly loved visiting the diocesan Youth Rally, and he'd leave his house before dawn to make the drive up to the camp in New Hampshire, spend the entire day with the Rallyers, and then drive all the way home in the evening. In the years that he spent caring for the Diocese of the South, his travel schedule was even more intense, and he logged God-knows-how-many miles by air and by car. Brother clergy would tell me that it was not uncommon to arrive at church for a service to find Archbishop Nikon waiting in his little black car, not impatient or testy, but simply there: present. No matter the "grandeur" of the particular event, it could be a major Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, or a panikhida for the father of a priest in his diocese, Vladyka was always there: he was present

for his people. He lived out this desire to be present, almost to a fault and on several occasions he worked himself to the point of extreme exhaustion. Some of us took it upon ourselves to tell him to slow down, “Vladyka, you are my bishop, and I know that I’m not in a position to tell you what to do, but I’m telling you, ‘Take some time off!’ please. Stay home, get some rest. We know you love us, but we want you to be well.” Archbishop Nikon’s commitment to spend time with his people, even at the expense of his health, is a striking icon of Christian love. He was not perfect—those who knew him well, knew his weaknesses and his failings, and he was quick to admit them, and ask forgiveness—yet he seemed to care more for the wellbeing of those he served, than for himself: his ministry embodied a profoundly Christlike selflessness that placed the wellbeing of the neighbor before his own.

The last time I saw Archbishop Nikon was in the summer of 2019, and he was living in a convalescent facility. Walking into his room, I was stunned to see him so frail. But in usual Archbishop Nikon fashion, he was there waiting for me. He knew I was coming, so he had gotten ready and was sitting up on the side of his bed ready to receive me when I got there. So many years after our first meeting in Pennsylvania, that big, tall, imposing man was now a shadow of his former self, yet even in that condition, he was no longer a stranger: he was my archbishop, my father in Christ, and my trusted friend. As we talked, he said over and over, how much he wished that he could regain his strength so that he could once again visit the parishes in his diocese

and spend time among his brothers and sisters in Christ. In his usual self-deprecating humor, he said, “But father, right now I’m so weak, if I put on all those vestments, I probably couldn’t even stand.” As always, he asked me about my family, and he took such joy in hearing about what my wife and children were doing. At one point, his tone changed, and he looked me straight in the eyes and said, “Father, I’m ready for my wife to come and take me home.” For a split second I thought perhaps in his weakness he had become disoriented, but then I knew exactly what he was saying. His beloved wife Sarah had departed this life almost twenty years earlier. He had had their wedding rings mounted on the top of his favorite episcopal walking staff, and those who knew him, knew that her spirit was never far from his. Maybe that grief of losing someone so dear was one of the things that made him such a good bishop. As the Psalmist says, a broken and contrite heart is an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord. So, sitting on the side of his hospital bed, in that care facility in Boston, on that July afternoon, when he said that he was ready for his wife to come take him home, I knew he was telling me that the time of his earthly sojourn was drawing to a close, and that he welcomed the opportunity to be reunited with his loved ones in Christ.

Barely a month after that last visit, I found myself at Holy Trinity Cathedral in Boston at Archbishop Nikon’s funeral. There were so many priests present for the service that most of us stood in the nave, fully vested, lined up on either side of our beloved Archbishop Nikon who lay in repose in the center of the Church. Unlike that first time

that he and I served together (when we were both so concerned about the details of the service) I found myself in a very unusual situation for a priest: my only job was to stand still and pray. Looking at Archbishop Nikon, my mind was filled with all of the moments that we spent together: the challenges we had to deal with, the sorrows we faced, the trust that grew between us, and the genuine friendship and the Christian love that we shared. A bishop is like an adoptive father: he comes into your life, and there is a formal, working relationship. At first, you don't have a personal relationship. But when your bishop is a man of faith, when he is loving and kind, when he comes to ministry with a broken and contrite heart, when he embodies the love of Jesus Christ, then he becomes a father. That is what made saying good bye to Archbishop Nikon so very hard for so many of us, we were not simply burying our diocesan bishop, we were saying goodbye to our father in Christ and commending him into the hands of God. As these thoughts ran through my mind, I remembered one of the most beautiful teachings of our Orthodox Christian faith: in the same way that we can ask for the prayers of the living, we can, and should, ask for the prayers of those who have departed this life. So in my heart, I began to pray, "Holy Father Nikon, pray to God for us." Then suddenly, I could practically hear his voice, that gravelly deep voice, with that subtle touch of gentle irony that was such an endearing part of his ministry, and I could swear that I almost heard him say, "Father, what kind of bishop do you think I am? Do you think that I'm going to stop praying for you just because I'm dead?"

And then, in my mind's eye, I could see that expression on his face, that playfully bashful smile that said, "This is all a bit overwhelming, but it's going to be OK."

At Archbishop Nikon's funeral, a good friend and I were talking, and suddenly he broke down in tears, and sobbed, "I'm just going to miss him so much...so very much!" Over the past year, with my own personal struggles and the struggles that we've all faced through the pandemic, I've thought so many times about how much I miss Archbishop Nikon, and I've thought how much I wish that he were still with us. But I've also thought of how much he gave us. How he left us his amazing witness of Christian faith, and the witness of his simple and profound example of Christlike love. Most importantly, I am reminded that inasmuch as I draw close to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, I am once again close to our beloved Archbishop Nikon who continues to pray for us.

Thank you, Lord, for sending Archbishop Nikon to care for us, to share Your love with us to and lead us. Thank You for granting us an archpastor who helped us to take up our cross and follow You. Grant rest and blessed repose O Lord, to your servant, the ever-memorable Archbishop Nikon, and make his memory to be eternal!