Marriage. Children. A new job. Illness. Moving house. Long commutes. Exhaustion. Days that seem too full to hold one more thing.

Few Christians consciously decide to abandon their prayer rule. More often, life simply changes, and what once seemed steady and natural gradually begins to unravel. Morning prayer becomes hurried. Evening prayer is postponed until we are too tired to stand. Little by little, the familiar rhythm disappears almost without our noticing.

And yet we do notice.

Somewhere within, we sense that something precious has been lost.

Prayer is our conversation with God, and its heart is sincerity and attention. Marriage, children, work, illness, travel, old age—each season places different demands upon us. The form our prayer rule takes may therefore need to change as well.

Its purpose, however, never changes. A prayer rule exists to preserve our daily meeting with God.
How, then, can we safeguard that meeting when life becomes crowded, unpredictable, or simply exhausting? How do we find the time and strength to pray when our circumstances seem to leave no room for it?

A Prayer Rule Takes Different Forms

There may be seasons when prayer comes naturally and the daily rule seemed firmly established. Then, without warning, everything can collapse. We may find ourself unable to rise even for the simplest prayers, let alone any serious spiritual struggle. Sometimes such periods lasted not for days but for years. How do those who faithfully pray morning and evening, read the Psalter. They seem almost like saints.

In church, we pray according to the Church's liturgical order. At home, however, there is no single prayer rule that fits every Christian in every circumstance.

That does not mean our personal prayer is left entirely to our own preferences. Rather, unlike the Church's common worship, the form of our private prayer rule must be shaped with discernment according to the circumstances of our life.

Yet one thing remains indispensable. Unless we establish some personal "rule of the cell"—however simple and however modest—it becomes remarkably easy for prayer itself to disappear.

Alongside the Church's common prayer, there must be some part of our life that belongs to God alone: "*But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father Which is in secret*" (Matthew 6:6, KJV).

When There Never Seems to Be Enough Time

In seasons like these, one simple principle often helps: Let your first thought belong to God.

It sounds easy. In reality, it takes practice.

Even before getting out of bed, quietly turn your heart towards Him. It may be nothing more than, "Glory to Thee, O Lord," or, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner." Let that become the foundation upon which the rest of the day is built. Everything else can follow according to your circumstances.

The truth is that time for prayer often has to be won back. Yet even in the busiest of lives, it usually exists.

Perhaps nowhere is this clearer than in the countless minutes we surrender to our phones and screens. Most of us know the struggle well. We promise ourselves to spend less time scrolling, watching, or filling our minds with distractions, only to discover how quickly they reclaim our attention.

Some measure of relaxation is natural, especially in a world that leaves so many people exhausted. But it should not quietly consume the time that belongs to the soul.

Prayer does not always require us to find more time. Often it begins by redeeming the time we already have.

Five minutes here, another five minutes there—even these small fragments can become moments of prayer. Today, many prayer books are available on our phones. The same technology that so often distracts us can also remind us to turn our thoughts back to God.

To be continued

St. Volodymyr Ukrainian Orthodox Church

1810 Sidney Street Pittsburgh, PA 15203

Web **www.stvladimirpgh.org** **FaceBook** **StVladimirUOCPghPa**

V. Rev. Father John Haluszczak, Pastor **(412) 513-9148** **otetsivan@gmail.com**

Subdeacon Nathan Haluszczak Reader: Nicholas Sampson
Choral Directors: Mauri Druash-Gladys, Kira Senedak, and Pani Anne Haluszczak

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2026

11th Sunday after Pentecost / Martyr Archdeacon Laurence, Pope Sixtus, Deacons Felicissimus Agapitus, and Romanus

The Martyrs Archdeacon Laurence, Pope Sixtus, Deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus, and the soldier Romanus were citizens of Rome, and suffered in the year 258 during the reign of Emperor Valerian. St Sixtus was born in the city of Athens, and at first he was a philosopher, but later he became a follower of Christ. When he arrived in Rome, he showed himself to be a wise and devout member of the Church. Over a period of time, he passed through the various ranks of the clergy, and became the Bishop of Rome following the martyric death of St Stephen. Several Roman Hierarchs preferred to die rather than offer sacrifice to idols. Soon, St Sixtus was also arrested and imprisoned together with his deacons Felicissimus and Agapitus.

When Archdeacon Laurence visited St Sixtus in prison, he cried out, "Where are you going, Father, without your son? Where do you hasten without your Archdeacon? Never have you offered the Bloodless Sacrifice without me. Take me with you, so that I may join you in shedding our blood for Christ!"

St Sixtus teplied, "I am not forsaking you, my son. I am old and I accept the lesser battle, but greater suffering awaits you. You must achieve the greater victory and triumph over your tormentors. Three days after my death, you shall follow after me."

Then he entrusted Laurence with the Church's treasures and sacred vessels, telling him to distribute these to the poor. He gathered them up and went around the city on foot, to the clergy and impoverished Christians who were in hiding, helping them according to their needs.

When he heard that St Sixtus had been brought to trial with his deacons, St Laurence went there in order to witness the outcome. Seeing that the martyrs were obstinate in their refusal to offer sacrifice to the idols, Valerian ordered them to be taken to the temple of Mars outside the city walls, and put to death if they did not offer incense to the idols. When he saw the pagan temple, St Sixtus prayed for it to be destroyed. There was an earthquake which caused part of the temple to collapse, and the statue of Mars was shattered to pieces. St Laurence cried out, "Father, I have fulfilled your command, and have distributed the treasures of the Church which you entrusted to me."

After hearing about treasure, the soldiers placed him under guard. St Sixtus and the other martyrs were beheaded in front of the temple on August 6, 258. Afterward, the soldiers brought St Laurence to the Emperor, informing him that they had heard the Archdeacon mention something about the Church's hidden treasures. The Emperor ordered him to reveal where the treasures were, and the Archdeacon asked for three days in order to collect them. Then St Laurence gathered all the poor and the needy, and brought them to the Prefect, saying, "Behold the treasures of the Church."

The ruler became very angry at this and ordered Hippolytos who was in charge of the prison, to throw the Archdeacon into the dungeon with other prisoners. There the Saint restored the sight of a man named Lucillus. Hippolytos was amazed at this, and asked to see the Church's treasures. St Laurence told him that if he believed in Christ and was baptized, he would find true wealth and everlasting life. Hippolytos said that if this was true, he would do as he asked.

Continued inside

Remember in Prayer

Lyuba, Cecilia, Lottie, Evalyn, Christine, Avery, Larissa, Nicholas, Pauline, Mark, Terri, Anna Marie, Makayla, Lisa, Natalia, Michael, Tatiana, Mia, Steven, Veronica, James, Mary Ann, Jennifer, Cindy, Bill, Steve, Andrew, Drake, Maryanne, David, Damian, Hanah, Stephen, Stephen, Larissa, Sebastian, Dietrick, Barbara and Janelle, Zina

O Lord, Jesus Christ, the physician of souls & bodies, look down on your suffering servants, relieve them of their pain &suffering in order that they may be able to arise from their sick-bed and glorify your Holy Name. Amen!"

Please join us in celebrating

St. Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Church 100th Anniversary

Saturday September 19, 2026

10:00 AM
Hierarchical Divine Liturgy
St Vladimir Ukrainian Orthodox Church
73 S 18th Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15203

1:30 PM
Grand Concourse Luncheon
100 W Station Square Drive
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

Feast of The Dormition of the Mother of God

Divine Liturgy

Friday August 28
10:00 AM

Bring your flowers to bless

Xenia (Scicolone) Francis

Her birthday is 8/31

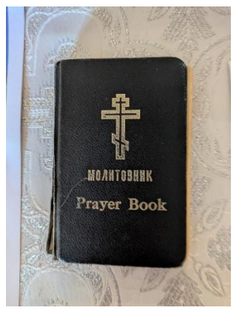
Send cards to

5510 N Himes Ave.
Apt 903
Tampa Fl 33612

CALL FOR PHOTOS

Share your photos of St. Vladimir's parish throughout the last 100 years by uploading them to this Google Photo Album.
We look forward to sharing memories at our celebration!

Lost



Please see Fr John if you have seen this Prayer book

Hippolytos took St Laurence to his home, where he instructed and baptized the jailer and all his household, consisting of nineteen persons. Soon afterward, Hippolytos was ordered to bring the Archdeacon to Emperor Valerian. Seeing that the Saint had not agreed to offer sacrifice, he ordered that St Laurence be tortured. Still, the Archdeacon refused to sacrifice to the idols. As the Martyr endured these torments, a soldier named Romanus cried, "Laurence, I see a radiant youth standing by you, and wiping your wounds. Entreat Christ, Who has sent His Angel to you, not to abandon me."
Then Valerian commanded Hippolytos to return the Saint to prison. Romanus brought a pitcher of water and asked the Martyr to baptize him. Immediately after the soldier was baptized, he was seized by other soldiers and taken to the Emperor. Before anyone could question him, Romanus shouted, "I am a Christian."

The Emperor ordered him to be taken outside the city and beheaded on August 9.
The next day, St Laurence was placed on a rack, scourged with whips with sharp iron points attached to them, and then was stretched out naked on a red-hot iron gridiron with burning coals underneath it. The Holy Martyr glanced at the ruler and said, "You have already roasted one side of my body, now turn me over turn over the other side so you may taste what you have roasted."
Then he glorified God, saying, "I thank You, Lord Jesus Christ, that You have found me worthy to enter Your gates."

Saint Laurence received the unfading crown of martyrdom on August 10, 258.
That night, St Hippolytos took the Saint's body he wrapped it in a shroud with spices. Then he and the priest Justin brought the relics to the home of a widow named Kyriake, where it remained until evening. Later, many Christians escorted the Saint's body to a cave on the widow's property. After praying all night, they buried the Martyr there with honor. Then Father Justin served the Divine Liturgy, and everyone partook of the Holy Mysteries.
St Hippolytos and the other Christians suffered martyrdom three days after the death of St Laurence, on August 13.

A large part of Saint Laurence's relics are located in the church of St Laurence "outside the walls" in Rome. Other pieces of the holy relics are to be found in the Monasteries of St Panteleimon on Mount Athos, and at Kykkos, Cyprus.

BIRTHDAYS: Wesley Babilya 8/23 and David Kucyk 8/27

The Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary is celebrated on August 28 each year. The Feast commemorates the repose (dormition) or "falling-asleep" of the Mother of Jesus Christ, our Lord. The Feast also commemorates the translation or assumption into heaven of the body of the Theotokos.
At the time of her death, the disciples of our Lord who were preaching throughout the world returned to Jerusalem to see the Theotokos. Except for the Apostle Thomas, all of them including the Apostle Paul were gathered together at her bedside. At the moment of her death, Jesus Christ himself descended and carried her soul into heaven.
Following her repose, the body of the Theotokos was taken in procession and laid in a tomb near the Garden of Gethsemane. When the Apostle Thomas arrived three days after her repose and desired to see her body, the tomb was found to be empty. The bodily assumption of the Theotokos was confirmed by the message of an angel and by her appearance to the Apostles.
This great Feast of the Church and the icon celebrates a fundamental teaching of our faith—the Resurrection of the body. In the case of the Theotokos, this has been accomplished by the divine will of God. Thus, this Feast is a feast of hope, hope in Resurrection and life eternal. Like those who gathered around the body of the Virgin Mary, we gather around our departed loved ones and commend their souls into the hands of Christ. As we remember those who have reposed in the faith before us and have passed on into the communion of the Saints, we prepare ourselves to one day be received into the new life of the age to come.