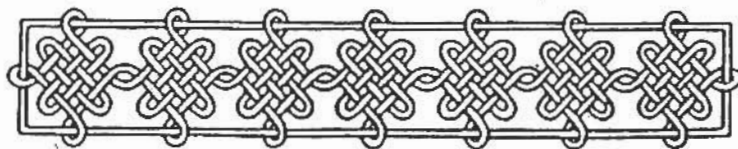


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**SUNDAY/NOV. 26th (Fish, wine & oil)**  
**24<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 7)**

**St. Innocent of Irkutsk**

9:10a.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Hours  
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour;  
Church School (Young Class);  
Question & Answer Period  
6:30p.m. Compline & Akathist to Theotokos  
**Kursk-Root Icon (Nov. 27th)**

**TUESDAY/NOV. 28th**

7:00p.m. 9<sup>th</sup> Day Memorial Service for  
Fr. George Calciu

**WEDNESDAY/NOV. 29th**

6:15p.m. Compline & Akathist to **St. Andrew**  
**(Nov. 30th)**  
7-8:30p.m. Adult Study Class: "Christification  
of the World by the Body of Christ"

**THURSDAY/NOV. 30th (Fish, wine & oil)**

7:00p.m. Vespers

**FRIDAY/DEC. 1st**

**St. Philaret the Merciful**

9:10a.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Hours  
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

**SATURDAY/DEC. 2nd (Fish, wine & oil)**

9:30a.m. Akathist; Confessions  
5:30p.m. Vigil; Confessions

**SUNDAY/DEC. 3rd (Fish, wine & oil)**  
**25<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost (Tone 8)**

9:10a.m. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> Hours  
9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy; Coffee Hour;  
Book-for-the-Month from Library  
6:30p.m. Compline & Akathist to  
**St. Barbara (Dec. 4th)**

**A Hymn of Praise to**  
**St. Philaret the Merciful**

To the merciful one, God shows mercy:  
He never ceases to show mercy.  
He hears the prayers of the merciful:  
He gives gifts a hundredfold.

Philaret the Merciful  
Placed himself wholly in  
God's hands:  
By his compassion, he  
amazed the world;  
He as faithful to God,  
even in suffering.

Philaret did not compete  
For honor or precedence.  
We use this age to purchase  
The Eternal Kingdom and blessedness.

The Lord spoke a wondrous word:  
"Trade until I return!  
When the time is right,  
I will repay you with great riches."

When Philaret became impoverished  
Because of almsgiving beyond measure,  
Because of truth and goodness –  
God visited him from on high:

Visited him and bestowed mercy,  
Bestowed mercy and rewarded him,  
Just as once upon the faithful Job,  
He bestowed mercy and a reward.



- by St. Nicholas of Zicha (+1956)

### ***The Mystery of Holy Confession***

Is offered every Saturday evening after Vigil (7:30p.m.) and most Saturday mornings after the Akathist (10:00a.m.). You may also make arrangement with Fr. James for Confession at another time. Call or email Father James. Anyone wishing to receive Holy Communion on the Nativity Feast (Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>) must avail themselves of Confession in this 40 Day Lent.

### ***The Parish Synodicon: Memory Eternal!***

Nov. 26, 1950 Metrophan Saffron  
Nov. 26, 1953 Sauka Greunther  
Nov. 26, 2002 Mary Gavlick  
Nov. 27, 1979 John Skwarla  
Nov. 27, 1992 Mary Bozinta  
Nov. 28, 1974 Anna Perchisin  
Nov. 29, 1921 Alexander Khvechin  
Nov. 29, 1934 Fr. Peter Shemashko  
Nov. 29, 1981 Mary Fetchina  
Nov. 30, 1930 Athanasius Klebanovich

### ***The Nativity 40 Day Lent***

Began on Nov. 15<sup>th</sup> and ends on Dec. 25<sup>th</sup>. A fast is observed from meat, dairy, fish, wine and oil products. Certain days of more festal character, fish, wine and oil or just wine and oil are permitted. Your parish wall calendar indicates these times. We should strive to adhere to the general rules as best we can. Particular questions and concerns may be addressed to your priest.

### ***Helping A Mission Church to Grow***

Christ the Savior Mission on Fenwick Is. In Delaware is six years old. To help them a little, we have agreed to sell their natural candles. A table is set up in the lower hall with a variety of candles and wax melt/tarts. Your offering may be placed in the basket on the table. For more information on the mission, see their website: [www.orthodoxdelmarva.org](http://www.orthodoxdelmarva.org). Fr. John Parsells is the Acting Rector.

### ***Namesday Greetings***

St. Andrew/Nov. 30<sup>th</sup>: Andrew Erkman, Andrew Long, Andrew Keller, Andrea Hunchar: Many Blessed Years!

### ***Remember in Prayer***

Archbishop Jovan of Ochrid (imprisoned); Lydia Seman (former parishioner); Jovanka Nestojko (former parishioner); Tatiana Onuschak (home); Mother Christophora (Ellwood City Monastery); Natalie Gripp (parishioner).; Bill Kuzemchak (parishioner).

### ***Adult Study Class – A four week series***

A class will be offered on the theme: “*To Be a True Human Being Means To Become A God.*” How exactly does this take place? What does Jesus Christ do? What is our part?

Wednesdays, 7-8:30p.m. in the Conference Room.

Nov. 29<sup>th</sup>: Christification of the World by the Church

Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>: The Cosmic Christ

### ***Christmas Cookie Sale – Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>***

Please help us in this annual successful fund raiser. A sign-up sheet for bakers and helpers – both setting up and during the sale – may be found on the vestibule stand. Please indicate your cookie type on the sheet. Questions may be addressed to Terri Filippini.

### ***The Parish Website: [www.ssppoc.org](http://www.ssppoc.org)***

An advanced calendar for the year 2007 is on line. If there are cancellations of parish life activities due to weather or other reasons, they will be posted on the website at least 1 hour before the scheduled time. Please make note of this for the Winter months and check the site before starting out.



### ***Offerings for the Week of Nov. 26<sup>th</sup>***

**Olive Oil** - in memory of Emilia; in memory of Michael; in memory of Joan; for the health of Alexander (namesday and birthday); for the health of Basil (birthday).

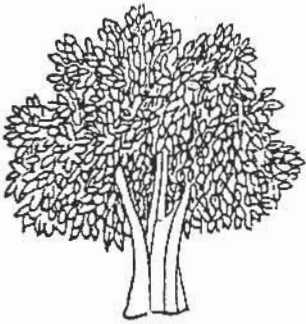
**Wine** - for a safe journey.

## ***LIVING NOW AND NOT IN THE PAST OR THE FUTURE***

One of the least spiritual ways to live is to attempt to avoid the present moment. Our alternatives are limited to two; to live in the past or to live in the future; sometimes we choose them both at once.

Attempting to live in the future is a very common phenomenon. It probably stems from a fairly obvious and common set of behaviors associated with looking forward to things in the future when one is a child. Personal power and responsibility in children is of a very low order, and thus looking forward to growing up very often equates to looking forward to being taken seriously, looking forward to being allowed to make one's decisions, and so on. Thus, one looks forward to finishing school, or starting work, or getting married.

Living in the future allows us to pass through the present moment without being too affected by it. We put up with discomfort, in a million forms, for the sake of a better future. It is actually possible for people to base their entire lives on such a model. Unfortunately, as often as not, once one has reached the thing that one so eagerly awaited it is, in some sense, disappointing, and thus it is necessary to move one's target even further ahead.



Out of the fruit of righteousness  
groweth a tree of life

Once the coping mechanism of living in the future is in place, it is very difficult to adjust it, or to stop it altogether. Life becomes a process of finding things to look forward to – thus avoiding the present moment at all costs. This very often goes on even when the present moment is actually quite pleasant. The danger exists, however, that the present will bring pain – boredom, feelings of inadequacy, and so on – and so it is avoided.

Eventually, a stage of life arrives when the individual realizes that his best days, and most of his opportunities, have already passed. At this point the individual tends to stop living in the future, and gradually starts to live in the past instead. The period in the middle is called “middle age” for good reason.

Living in the past is equally difficult to alter. Naturally, this is more likely when people are a little older, and actually have something in their lives on which to look back. However, like its partner, it is an avoidance of the present moment, and gradually we want to come to terms with the possibility that living in the present might actually be something we want to encourage.

I have often met immigrants who have kept fond memories of their countries of origin, even though they would never think of returning there to live. Sometimes this fondness takes the form of “If only you could see how important I was back in my village...” This form of backward living is really quite sad, because it indicates a belief on the part of the person making the statement that he (or she) was only “real” or “authentic” there or then, but not here or now.

Nostalgia is another form of this backward living which can sometimes get people into trouble. Sometimes the whole human race seems to look back at a particular period of history as being a golden age of some sort. Not uncommonly, it is a religious belief of one sort or another that encourages this view. However, no matter how attractive the past looks, it is not possible to live in the past just by wishing to do so.

This system would be fine, though distinctly inauthentic, if it were not for the fact that we can only actually live in the present moment. It is very important to come to terms with this fact. Otherwise life will actually be lived at a secondhand level in which nothing is real, everything is imagination or memory, and we are forced to create our own reality. This is the one tendency which must be avoided at all costs. We must be realistic and come to terms with God's reality. In that reality, there are two things that are always true:

1. We can only make decisions in the present moment, and
2. We can only encounter God in the present moment.

- by Fr. Meletios Webber from his book, "Steps of Transformation" (Conciliar Press)



**A COMMENTARY ON PSLAM 118**  
**by St. Theophan the Recluse**

**v. 12: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.**

The third abode for the commandments in our nature is our mind, the light and the guide in our life. It must see the whole province of truth, it is not the source of truth, but the receiver of it.

**v. 13: With my lips have I declared all the judgments of Thy mouth.**

The word is the abode of thought and feeling: Out of their abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. How little do we speak about faith in our conversations. And yet there is so much to say about it: the deeds of our Saviour, the Apostles, the Church, the Lives of the Saints, and the ways of God's Providence.

**v. 14: In the way of Thy testimonies have I found delight, as much as in all riches.**

The feelings and likings of those who love God are in the ways of God's testimonies: in churches, hospitals, in devout occupations, in patience, in fights with sin and temptations. They find more pleasure to pass their time in such ways than in acquiring riches.

**v. 16: On Thy statutes will I meditate: I will not forget Thy words.**

Another type of occupation for a God-loving soul is to memorize the words of God, in order to always have them present in one's mind, by repeating them, especially the psalms. The Hebrew word which corresponds to "meditate" used here, means to rotate something with delight in one's mind and mouth, like one delights in having something sweet.

# THE ADVENT SEASON



A season of six weeks opens the Christmas period. The season begins on November 15. It is said that this period originated in Gaul (today's France) in the fourth century and the duration of the season varied from four to seven weeks, until an ecumenical council established the season to be 40 days before Christmas as a fasting period — Advent).

Although as Orthodox Christians we do not call this period Advent as it is called in the Roman Catholic Church, the name seems to be proper; it consists of two Latin words: "ad venire", meaning "to come to." Advent's message is that God is coming to the World in the person of Jesus Christ.

This coming of Christ into the world can be understood as a past experience, a present experience or a future experience.

## Past Experience

We may think of Christ Who came into the world 2000 years ago as the fulfilment of the promises of the Old Testament. This is a past experience and what we do every year at Christmas time is only a commemoration, an anniversary of that event. It is good to believe that God came to Earth on Christmas day, twenty one centuries ago; it is good to stress the divinity of Jesus at a time when many believe that Jesus was just a good guy, a revolutionist, a victim of the social condition of His time. Some call Him a genius, a superstar, but many do not even consider Him God.

Many Christians are not convinced of the necessity of God's Incarnation, which was not only for the salvation of the human race, because God could have saved the world in other ways too, but His Nativity is the crowning of God's act of creation. The entire Universe has been transfigured, sanctified, deified, for the entire Universe participated in His Incarnation. He included in His body all the physical and chemical elements that constitute the bodies of men, plants, animals and of all the Universe. When the Bible talks about the creation of man out of dust it involves necessarily the idea that man is comprised out of all the elements of the universe — he is a synthesis of the Universe, a crowning of God's act of creation. That is why God became man, so He can transform and sanctify the entire Universe.

St. Paul says that God did not want to become angel; He became man, making Himself like us in all aspects except sin. Sin was not given to us by God; sin is a fruit of our own choice.

The Bible also says that man was created in the image of God. It is a logical consequence of the act of creation. If man is like God than God had to become man in order to demonstrate the truthfulness of His creation.

As a young man I was revolted against God. I loved Jesus Christ very much, I loved His personality, His sacrifice, I loved the theology of love, but I could not understand the "Ten Commandments": "do not do this, do not do that, you shall not, you shall not, you shall not." It was easy for me to see why the Jews did not keep the Commandments. It was easy for God to say: "do this, do that, do not do this, do not do that." But we are people, we live in the flesh, we fight temptations. There seemed to be an abyss between man and God that could not be bridged. Only later I understood that Christ, through His Incarnation bridged the gap between man and God. He became man to show us that the "Ten Commandments" can be fulfilled even in our human condition; they are not impossible for us. "I am the Truth, I am the Way, I am the Life" If man was created in the image of God then God must resemble man, He must have everything man has, except He does not have sin.

## Present Experience

Most people do not understand that the coming of God is a present experience. They think that Christmas is just a commemoration like Lincoln's birthday or Washington's birthday. Christmas is not a birthday. God must be understood eternally. Past and future do not exist in God's Person. When Moses asked God "what is your name", the answer was "I am

the Existing." He who lives eternally. And if God is infinite, His acts, His gestures, are like himself — eternal.

For instance, when we say that God has created the world, we understand that His work continues. The world is not finished and will never be; God knows no rest; He works continuously always creating new species of plants, animals, inspiring developments in science and so on.

When we say that God was Incarnate that means He Incarnates in each one of us, everyday, making us similar to Him. God may come to you this Christmas in the form of rebirth, either for the first time, if you did not believe in Him, or as a renewed birth with a deeper understanding of His divinity.

## Future Experience

As a future experience, Christmas means that Christ will return unpredictably at the end of the world. "He will come again, in glory to judge the living and the dead."

Since Advent promises the sure coming of the Lord, its message is "prepare, be ready." The Lord is coming whether the world is ready or not. Then how does Advent suggest that we be prepared? Through repentance, prayer and patience.

Advent is a time to become aware of one's sins; it is a penitential season, originally known as the "winter lent." During this season weddings are not allowed, not for the wedding itself, because marriage is a sacrament, but because of the social aspect of the marriage.

In the Winter Lent period, before Christmas, we must be filled with spiritual joy and hope. Advent stresses; not so much fulfillment, as anticipation of fulfillment: the Lord is coming. We must be like a bride, anticipating the wedding day. It is the quiet joy of anticipation and not the joy of celebrating a past event.

Of all the seasons, Advent is the most difficult to observe because of the competition with the commercial world. The secular world, in fact, celebrates Christmas during Advent, not on Christmas day. On Christmas day everything is over. Even the churches fall pray to this secularization by decorating the churches and singing Christmas carols weeks before Christmas.

The coming of Christ is a culmination of a historical process coming down through the history of Israel. This is the climax of the plan of salvation. The Old Testament is a record of God's preparing the world for the coming of His son. So Advent is the Old Testament period of the church year. The child born in a manger in Bethlehem was none other than the Son of God, the promised "Messiah." Advent makes sense only as a time of preparation for the Messiah. This child is "very God of very God." In Him God invaded the history of mankind.

Because it is possible for Him to be born again in our hearts, at Christmas, it is important that we strictly observe this lent and be spiritually prepared for His coming. ■

Arhimandrite Roman Braga

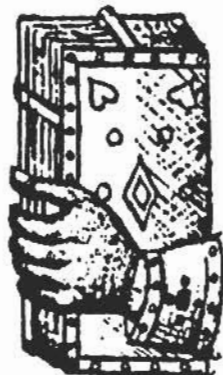
## THE BURNING BUSH

A Monastic Journal

Winter  
2006

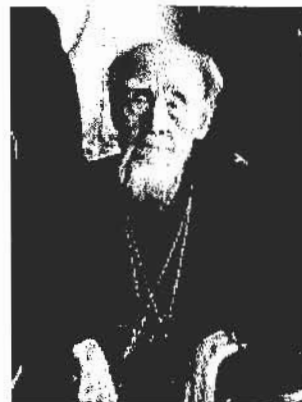
Volume 19

Number 3



## The Senior Priest of the Western American Diocese Turns 110!

On Sunday, November 19, the senior priest of the Western American Diocese, Protopresbyter Elias Wen, turned 110. Father Elias was born in the XIX century, in 1896, in Beijing, China. As a boy he received baptism at the Chinese Orthodox Mission. After studies at the Orthodox School run by the Mission, he entered into the seminary which he completed in 1918. The seminary was responsible for preparing missionaries for the Chinese people.



Following the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church was unable to continue its missionary efforts in China and so Father Elias, who received a complete theological education, decided to dedicate himself to serving Russian Orthodox refugees in China. In order to accomplish this, he first learned Russian and Church Slavonic.

In 1924 Father Elias was ordained deacon and on November 26, 1931, Archbishop Simon ordained him priest. Thus 2006 also marks Father Elias' 75th Anniversary of the priesthood. It is very probable that he is the senior (by ordination) clergyman of the entire Russian Church, both in Russia and abroad!

Father Elias served a number of parishes in Shanghai. After the new Cathedral "Surety of Sinners" was built he was assigned the position of Dean of the Cathedral and in 1946—the Rector of the Cathedral. In the cathedral he served together with Archbishop John (Maximovitch).

In 1949 Father Elias was sent to Hong Kong to organize a parish there. Because communists occupied Shanghai, he was unable to return there.

In 1957 Father Elias was transferred to the Western American Diocese and assigned to the Holy Virgin Cathedral of the Mother of God "Joy of All Who Sorrow", to which he is still attached. During his active duty at the Cathedral, Father Elias, besides celebrating the services, sang and read on the kliros daily.

In the course of his pastorate Father Elias, who's mind is still clear and has an excellent memory, would recount to the Cathedral clergy events from church life in China, his memories of Saint John, old Russian liturgical practice and the history of the Holy Virgin Cathedral. It has been about seven years since Protopresbyter Elias Wen has last served.

At present Father Elias lives with his son. He is regularly communed by the Cathedral ecclesiarch, Archpriest Sergei Kotar. Every year on the Feast of the Prophet Elias, Father Elias has a festal lunch for the Cathedral clergy.

On Sunday, November 19, the Cathedral clergy visited Father Elias and greeted him on behalf of the Cathedral parishioners, diocesan clergy and flock.



OCA News

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## In Memoriam: The Rev. George Calciu-Dumitreasa

Article posted: 11/22/2006 1:20 PM

**ALEXANDRIA, VA [OCA Communications]** — The Reverend George Calciu-Dumitreasa, rector of Holy Cross Church here, fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, 21 November 2006, after a short but difficult illness.

Born in 1925 in Mahmudia, Tulcea, Romania, father George studied at the Faculty of Medicine in Bucharest from 1946 until 1948, when he was imprisoned by the communist authorities for his Orthodox Christian morals and deep religious convictions. Sent for "reeducation" — a tactic used by the communist regime in an attempt to erase Christianity from Romania's youth — he remained in prison until 1964, when he was released as a result of a general amnesty.

After his release from prison, he studied at the Faculty of Literature and Philosophy, from which he received a degree in French, after which he began work on his doctorate. During this time, strengthened by his sufferings in prison, he also studied theology and was ordained to the priesthood in January 1973.

Father George remained vocal in his criticism of the atheistic government and its allies, preaching the true faith and Christian morals to all who would listen. Many young people were drawn to his message. He taught French and New Testament studies at the Theological Seminary in Bucharest until he was abruptly dismissed in 1978 for speaking out in defense of religious freedom and human rights.

In 1979, Father George was again arrested and sentenced to 10 years in prison. Severely mistreated and isolated from even family, news of his imprisonment aroused protests from the West, which eventually resulted in his early release in 1984. Still living under persecution by government and cooperative Church authorities, he managed to emigrate to the US in 1985 and was accepted into the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America the following year. Since 1989, he has served as rector of Holy Cross Church, serving the community there with love and dedication until his final breath.

Father George is known around the world for his sufferings and commitment to Christ in the face of persecution. He has written several books, contributed countless articles, and delivered many lectures on the subject over the years. To this day, his example continues to motivate countless faithful, especially young people, toward a renewed commitment to Christ and the Orthodox Church.

Father George is survived by his wife of over 40 years, Preoteasa Adriana, and their son Andrei and family.

### ***An excerpt from Father Georges' account of his interrogation and psychological tortures in prison***

So, they had nothing against me, but they tried to press me, to stretch my mind and my soul. I was beaten, but not too badly. The psychological pressure, however, was unbearable. The interrogation was very simple: night and day I was asked: "What is your name? What is the name of your father, your mother? What is today's date? How old are you?" This was repeated thousands of times. I felt that I became crazy. Of course, I was not able to answer anymore. I forgot my age. I forgot the name of my mother. I forgot what day it was. How was I to know what day it was? When I mixed things up and gave the wrong answer, they accused me of trying to deceive them. "What are you hiding?" they said. "What kind of bad things against the communist regime have you done?"

After three days and nights of this, I refused to answer. They continued interrogating me, and I answered nothing. I just tried to pray to God. It was impossible. I wanted to pray the "Our Father." After three or four verses I forgot the rest: I was not able to pray. Then I remembered that there is a prayer to Jesus Christ: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me." It is a very short prayer. I put my fingers like this over my heart and was praying all the time. I was able to say the whole sentence: "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of

God, have mercy on me.” They were asking me ... and I heard nothing; I heard none of their questions. I was no longer scared. And, little by little, I regained the peace of my soul and heart. I had felt sick, not only psychologically but physically as well, and my heart had been pounding. But through this prayer of Jesus Christ I received peace of soul. Everything in my body became quiet, normal, and I was able to resist.

I told them, “I have no answer for you. You know very well what I did. I did nothing underground.” Like Jesus Christ, I was preaching in the temple. If I preached outside of the temple, it was only because they closed the doors, not because I wanted to go into the streets. I understood that my mission was to preach in the church. If not in the church, then in the yard of the church. So I said, “I have nothing to tell you. You know everything. Perhaps you know more than I know” (And they probably did, since they had hundreds of agents around me.) “If you want to kill me then you can kill me; if you want to let me free, then let me free. I will go and continue preaching because I cannot give up. It is my duty to preach the word of God everywhere, even in prison.” They began to be very furious with me and started to hit me; I did not answer. One of the agents said to me, “I know that you are praying for us now.” And, really, I was praying for them. “I know that you are praying for us, but in the end you won’t be praying for anyone, because we will convince you to give up Jesus Christ.” I did not answer, but in my soul I was determined not to give up.

They judged me. My wife knew nothing about my trial; nobody knew about me. They sentenced me to ten years and sent me to a prison called Jilava. Jilava is a prison eight yards underneath the earth. It was a hospital for crazy inmates. In this hospital for mental illness, they put me with two crazy inmates. They were not that dangerous but the Securitate tried to influence me by their madness so that, little by little, I would change my normal attitude and borrow their deportment.

But this also became known in the West. After three months I was moved to Aiud Prison. Aiud is in the north of Transylvania. It is a very, very old prison with very bad conditions. I was isolated in a cell, absolutely alone for seven months. In fact, I saw no man except the guards. I heard no words except the insults of the guards. They were instructed to insult me all the time. Sometimes they hit me, but not too bad. I was accustomed to this. What was worse was that these guards were instructed to strike me in the most sensitive points of my soul: to insult me as a priest, to curse Jesus Christ, to mock me during my prayers—because I was all the time in prayer. They disturbed me every time I prayed, so as not to let me concentrate or meditate or do my prayers in peace. I was watched all the time through a “Judas” in the door. This was very difficult because I had everything in my cell. I had water in my cell. I had a vessel for physical necessities. And all the time I was watched by them. It was impossible for me to make so much as a gesture, or to go to the vessel for my physical necessities without being watched. That shamed me very much and they knew that. They wanted to torture me psychologically, not by beating.

***May Father George's memory be eternal!***