



# LET GOD ARISE

*Journal of Holy Resurrection Monastery in Niangua, Missouri*



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"Awake O sleeper, arise from the dead, for Christ will shine on you."



Everywhere we turn, we hear the word "woke." Well, the Orthodox Church has been speaking about wokeness since the very beginning. When Saint Paul wrote, "Awake O sleeper, arise from the dead, for Christ will shine on you,"<sup>1</sup> there is no doubt that he connected the revelation of the Risen Christ with the Prophet Isaiah who heralded the Lord's message: "Awake, awake, put on your strength, O Zion."<sup>2</sup> In summary, the Prophet Isaiah continues, thus says the Lord: "You shall be redeemed without money" and "you shall know the Lord's Name and that it is I who speak, here I am." In our Tradition, being

awake leads to the knowledge and experience of God vis à vis communion and salvation.

When I hear the words awake or woke, I think of attentiveness which is essential for all prayer. It is the hub that guards every aspect of our being and guides us along the way of life. Attentiveness is the particular focus that leads to vigilance,<sup>3</sup> which is a heightened attentiveness at all times. Attentiveness and remembrance<sup>4</sup> work hand in hand, fueling each other. Attentiveness guards and guides our exterior senses, thinking, will, and the eye of our soul, the *nous*, which is our interior communication center with the Divine.



The goal is to have unbroken attentiveness, vigilance, which is a tall order in times when the average attention span ranges from 2 seconds to 20 minutes. Even when all the variables are just right, as in a monastery, achieving unbroken attentiveness and stillness requires effort. In the world, where there is constant bombardment, this becomes more of a struggle. Work and family require different types of attention. Those types of attention are necessary and blessed in the situations in which we find ourselves. As examples, when we are repairing something electrical or mechanical or operating machinery, we need to be attentive to what we are doing so as to not endanger ourselves or others. When we are caring for children, for their sakes we can't afford to be distracted. So what is the path forward?

<sup>1</sup> Eph 5.14

<sup>2</sup> Is 52

<sup>3</sup> Also called watchfulness or *nepsis*.

<sup>4</sup> Sometimes called mindfulness.



The truth is that as human persons, we are capable of so much. We do a task while listening to music, speaking with someone, thinking of stuff, remembering what we forgot, turning on or shutting off something, possibly all of the above while driving a car. Hmmm! Imagine functioning like this spiritually by adding layers of spiritual attentiveness to everything: doing a task, praying the Jesus Prayer, singing a favorite troparion, remembering a snippet from the wonderful sermon we heard on Sunday, possibly all of the above while driving a car, cooking, shoveling the snow, changing the baby's diaper, playing a game with children, etc. If you already do this, then please share this torch with another.

Around the monastery, there are now solar lights that turn on at night to 50%, but when motion is detected, they switch to 100%. We need to be somewhat like that, always on, and able to turn up the intensity when needed, to not only be watchful against the things which would do us harm but to seek the true Light and Life at all times and in every person and place. This is the importance of regular attendance at Church services, Confession, reception of Holy Communion, and daily prayer time to cultivate attentiveness: to form a firm, active foundation in our hearts. I know that I repeat the same things again and again, but this is the path. There is no other way nor shortcut. Prayer is a craft with steps that hopefully becomes an art within, and we become the beautiful expression of God's life interiorly that is extended to all.

**ICYMI** The prayer basics are attendance at Church Services, preparation and reception of the Sacraments are a priority. If there is no established place for prayer time at home, make one: an icon, a candle, Orthodox prayer book, maybe a prayer rope. Set times for prayer in the morning and evening and stick with those. Ask your priest for advice. Read daily from the Holy Scriptures and a spiritual book. Use sound and video wisely and enjoy silence from time to time.

Salvation history is replete with the accounts of God's attentiveness in seeking communion with us. How "God the Word, who was in the beginning with God, seeing our nature powerless to guard unharmed its ancient fellowship with Him,"<sup>5</sup> worked through various people – Patriarchs, Prophets, holy men and women and with His powerful arm through the Exodus and all the events leading up to the birth of Christ, so that the Word of God incarnate, God with us, "for our sakes has become that which He was not."<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The Festal Menaion, trans. by Mother Mary and Archimandrite Kallistos Ware [South Canaan, PA: St Tikhon's Monastery Press, 1998], 277.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 268. "For our sakes has become that which He was not" is in regard to His human nature. The hymn continues: "Without departing from His own nature (*meaning His Divine nature*) He has shared in our substance. Desiring to fill the world on high with citizens, Christ has undergone a twofold birth."



Our attentiveness to Him needs to be as diligent and unwavering. This is not an impossible feat for we have been shown over and over again that God is wonderful in His Saints who were attentive, awake from sleep, and receptive to the Light of Christ. Everyone has been excited about the upcoming glorification of our Righteous Mother Olga, and rightly so, because she is a perfect example of everything mentioned here. She started with the basics, cultivated attentiveness in all aspects of her life as a wife, a mother, and a helper to all in need so that the Light of Christ illumined all brilliantly from within her: her presence, prayers, words, and deeds. We are all called to be Saints, extraordinary in the ordinary, daily to follow this simple path which leads to love of our Lord with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourself.



Consistent practice of the basics with attention, leads to attentiveness in prayer and our daily lives, which leads to even more attentiveness. Why? Because this is our communion with God, when we are "enlivened by the Holy Spirit and exalted in purity, illumined by the Holy Trinity in a sacred mystery,"<sup>7</sup> and when the Divine life within us becomes an undercurrent of every thought and every activity. As it increases flow, it becomes as a river that naturally overflows, creates channels and then various streams that enter every fiber of our being. How could we not want to partake constantly of this sweet and refreshing Life-giving water for our souls? For anyone who has not tried this, please taste because you have never had anything like it! For those who experience this delight, good strength, and perseverance!



<sup>7</sup> Matins Hymns of Ascent. Compare this sacred mystery to the Annunciation and the Incarnation of the Word.

## Monastery News

A few highlights since the last publication:

- + Christ is born! Glorify Him! This publication occurs when there is time to write. Thank you for your patience. Hopefully, this list and photos will explain.
- + Mother attended a Deanery gathering in February 2023 to welcome and visit with His Eminence, Archbishop Daniel. She attended the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Holy Annunciation at Annunciation in St James, MO for His Eminence's pastoral visit, and then again in December when His Eminence served Divine Liturgy and ordained Deacon John.

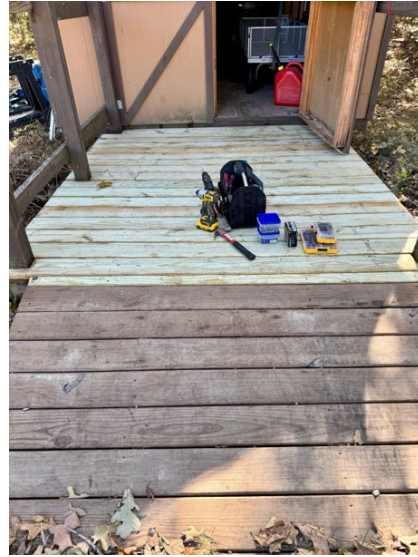


- + Many guests have been offered hospitality. Many Orthodox inquirers visit.
- + Mother has sent monastery reports to the Diocesan Council and to the Diocesan Assembly.
- + The monastery continues without regular Divine Liturgy being served.
- + Repairs resumed as the weather allowed. Mother painted and stained the back deck – lower and upper, and repaired a portion that was rotted. Lighting was added around the monastery. The deck in front of the shed was entirely replaced as the support beams had rotted. In the Spring, after the treated wood is ready, those repaired sections will be stained and sealed. More dead trees were felled and cleaned.





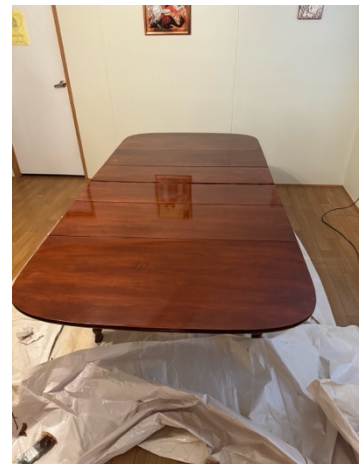




- + A guest room was converted to a monastic cell. The same will be done to another guest room, and the preparations will continue to further improve the downstairs accommodations.
- + A nun has joined Mother. There have been vocation visits and Mother is in contact with interested women



- + A table that was damaged was stripped, new stain and polyurethane applied, and now it serves as the monastic trapeza.



+ The tool shed was organized with the addition of shelving and hooks.

+ The candle work continues. Soon Mother will train the new Sister to assist with this blessed work.

+ Mother and Sister visit local parishes as they are able. The rising cost of gas has made this more difficult. Consider that 2 parishes are an hour away. Two others are 1 hour and 40 minutes, and another 3 hours.

+ The cost of food has put a strain on the monastery. Thank you to the local faithful who bring fish, shrimp, and other staples to defray the cost of the monastery's grocery bill.



+ Thank you again to all who have donated their time, talents, and funds for the furtherance of good things at Holy Resurrection Monastery. An up to date needs list is maintained on the monastery website and was recently updated in November 2023.

+ Please continue prayers for the Diocese of the Midwest: Our Archbishop Daniel, the Diocesan Council, vocations to the priesthood, vocations to Holy Resurrection Monastery, the health of the Fr Peter who serves at the Monastery, all the sick and suffering, and the furtherance of all good things.

+ The Monastery remembers these intentions and many others in our prayers. If you would like to submit names, use the website form, email us, or send the form included in this newsletter by snail or email.

### **Coming up in Spring 2024, God willing**

+ Work on the upper back staircase will continue. The landing deck, the lower steps and the railings require replacement.

+ The new deck in front of the equipment shed and the portion of deck that was replaced near the bells will be stained and sealed.

+ A monastery sign will be purchased, constructed, and installed.

+ Mother and Sister will have subscriptions to a local health service for regular checkups, care in the event of an illness visit, and simple emergencies. These cost \$100 per person monthly.



- + Install a window with a screen in the candle shop.
- + Extend electricity to the shed.
- + Construct monastic seating in the chapel.
- + The rotted railroad ties that serve as retention near the chapel will be replaced with stone. The same will occur in two other places where rotted ties surround flower beds.
- + We hope to begin a prayer walk with kiots and icons.



+ Please keep those candle orders coming! Many thanks to all the parishes who order. Orders are received by phone, email, text, or the website. [holyresurrectionmonastery.org](https://holyresurrectionmonastery.org) Thank you in advance for supporting the monastery!

+ The Monastery's Donation page now has an option for a one-time or a monthly gift. In addition to your prayers, please consider supporting the monastery in this manner.

<https://holyresurrectionmonastery.org/donate/>



## Service Schedule

*Also see the Calendar online via the website.*

### **Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday**

5:30am Matins

4:30pm Vespers

### **Saturday**

6:30am Matins

4:30pm Vigil

### **Feasts**

4:30pm Vigil on the Eve

Sunday Divine Liturgy at the Monastery is not scheduled while Fr Peter is recovering.

Everyone is asked to use common sense. If you think that you are sick, please stay home and get well.



Use email, snail mail, or submit prayer lists via the website form.

### Prayer List

(first names only, no nicknames)

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