By the power of Christ and the grace of the Holy Spirit, Christians can and must transform their deaths into acts of life. They must face the tragedy of death with faith in the Lord, and defeat the “last enemy—death” (1 Cor 15.26) by the power of their faith.

None of us lives to himself, and none of us dies to himself. If we live, we live to the Lord; if we die, we die to the Lord, so whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord’s. For this to end Christ died and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living (Rom 14.8–9). Truly, truly I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life; he does not come to judgment, but has passed from death to life (Jn 5.24, cf. Jn 6.29–58). I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in Me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die (Jn 11.25–26). For Christians, as for all men, death remains a tragedy. When confronted by death, like all men, and like Jesus Himself and His apostles, Christians can only mourn and weep (cf. Jn 11.33, Mt 27.37–38, Mk 14.33–34, Lk 22.42–44, Acts 8.2). But for Christians, filled with faith in Christ and His Father, the tragedy of death can be transformed into victory.

Holy Actions:

- **Missions Team** The team will continue to collect food pantry items for Edinboro University Food pantry. See Anna R. or Debbie K. for more details.

  —From Sister Theonymphi: “Thank you so much for your generosity! We’re meeting with the local women’s prison here on Tuesday and are making a plan to distribute bags to women exiting jail. Stay tuned on our social media.” Also, missions should have the White Field Farm Co. skin care products benefitting the HOPE Project available for sale in the hall in the next few weeks.

  —Also, there are OCMC summer mission trip scholarships available for anyone interested. See board in hall for more information on trips or see www.ocmc.org

**Holy Services:**

**Thursday, May 16th — Daily Vesper Services**

**UPCOMING:**

**TODAY Mothers Day Luncheon** — Sunday, May 12th Coffee Hour Hospitality Team meeting — Tuesday, May 14th at the Hall Parish Council Meeting — Wed. May 15th — 6pm Parish Ministry Teams meeting — Sat. May 18th 11am-1pm Heirloom Garden Plants will be available on May 19th

**Film Showing of Case for Christ with discussion** — Wed. May 22nd 6pm Mother—Baby Shower for Kyra and Anna (and…!) — Saturday, May 25th at 3pm — Hosted by the Ladies Altar Society — Bring a nourishing gluten-free dish to share. Kyra is registered at Amazon and Target.

Panahidka/Luncheon for Vern Baldwin — Sunday May 26th

The noble Joseph, when he had taken down Thy most pure Body from the Tree, wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spicings.
and placed it in a new tomb. But Thou didst arise on the third day, O Lord, granting the world great mercy.

**Holy Scripture:**

**Acts 6:1-7 (Epistle)**

Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

**Mark 15:43-16:8 (Gospel)**

Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. So when he found out from the centurion, he granted the body to Joseph. Then he bought fine linen, took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen. And he laid Him in a tomb which had been hewn out of the rock, and rolled a stone against the door of the tomb. And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, that they might come and anoint Him. Very early in the morning, they came to the tomb when the sun had risen. And they said among themselves, "Who will roll away the stone from the door of the tomb for us?" But when they looked up, they saw that the stone had been rolled away — for it was very large. And entering the tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who is crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the linen cloths, and bestowing peace to the Myrrhbearing women at the tomb. But go, tell His disciples and said, "It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word." And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them. Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

**Holy Words:**

**On Death – Fr. Thomas Hopko**

There is no person who will not die. The preparation for death is at the center of the spiritual life. Lord, let me know my end, and what is the measure of my days; let me know how fleeting my life is! Behold, Thou hast made my days a few handbreadths, and my lifetime is as nothing in Thy sight. Surely every man stands as a mere breath! Surely man goes about as a shadow! Surely for nought are they in turmoil, man heaps up, and knows not who will gather! (Ps 39–4–6).

That man should die is not the will of God, for as the scripture says, "God did not make death." God did not make death, and takes no pleasure in the destruction of any living thing. He created all things that they might have being (Wisdom of Solomon 1:13).

For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord God; so turn and live (Ezek 18:32).

Death is the result of sin. It is the final victory of the devil, the result of his destructive activity. If man had not sinned, he would not have died. His body may have changed and evolved over great periods of time, but it would not have been separated from his spirit to return to the dust, and man’s soul itself would not have been corrupted, losing power over its body and becoming its slave. This is the meaning of the sin of Adam, that man has emerged on the face of the earth, made in God’s image and inspired with His Spirit, and has chosen death instead of life, evil instead of righteousness, and so through defilement of his nature in rebellion against God, brought corruption and death to the world (cf. Gen 3, Rom 5:12–21).

"Sin spread to all men because all men sinned" (Rom 5:12); and in sinning man brought death to the children who partake of this mortal nature and life. In a sin-bound world, no person escapes, even those who are personally guiltless and innocent, for all are caught up in the sins of the world.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me (Ps 51:5).

Even the all-pure Virgin Mary who gave birth to Christ in the flesh could not escape the snares of death. For all her innocence and spiritual perfection, she too needed salvation from death by her Son, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Savior (cf. Lk 1:47). According to the Orthodox Christian faith, Jesus Christ alone, of all men, as the incarnate Son and Word of God, need not have died. His death alone of all human deaths was perfectly voluntary. He