


**Skete of the Most Holy Theotokos
 and Ever-Virgin Mary,
 Queen of All**
 The Healer of Cancer

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Flowers
 now
 blooming
 on the
 Skete
 grounds!



Lent/Pascha 2023

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Christ is in our midst!

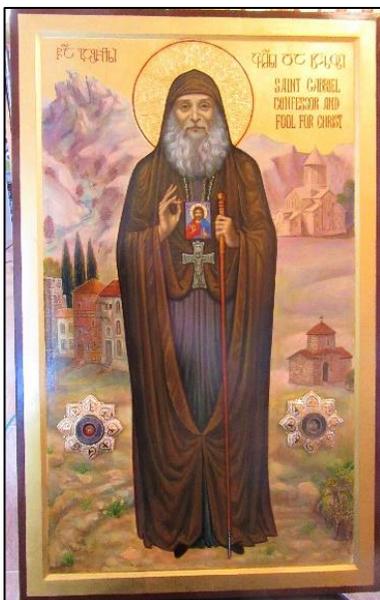
Lent is my favorite Season. The additional liturgical services, the intensity of focus, the deep introspection, greater askesis, fasting, silence, reading of the Lenten Synaxarion – all of these things really benefit me spiritually.

Always during the Great Fast God places in front of me people who are truly *in need of the Skete*. This Lent, it has been a working woman who recovered from cancer and needs help getting back on her feet – and wants to work; a desperate teen who needs someone who will just listen to her and not judge; and several women who are feeling hopeless. Then in addition come an increased number of pilgrims who wish to venerate the Skete's holy relics and the icon Queen of All, the Healer of Cancer brought from Mount Athos. Women come who are trying to discern God's will for their life. When people come to the Skete, I bring to mind the last words spoken to me by my elder of blessed memory, Schema-Archimandrite John, "It's all about love! Can't you see? It's all about love!" All of these people are seeking Christ, and all of them have been guided to the out-of-the-way Queen of All Skete.



▲ Archpriest Constantine Desrosiers visited the Skete during Cheesefare Week.

And so I wish to thank all of you who have so lovingly embraced the Queen of All Skete through your prayers, volunteer work, and financial assistance, and have made its construction possible that it may be a haven for the faithful. For an update:



- An icon of Saint Gabriel the Fool-for-Christ of Georgia, written in the Republic of Georgia, has arrived and holds two magnificent reliquaries, one with a 1st-class relic and the other a rock from his tomb.
- The kitchen is mostly completed. The backsplash goes in after Pascha, then the stove can be hooked up and the kitchen will be finished! The kitchen is important because it enables hospitality to pilgrims.
- An icon of the Diveyevo nuns is situated in a special arched niche, with a border being painted by iconographer Paraskeve Kalvesmaki. The border was designed by Schemanun Amphilochia, although never used. It incorporates dogwood flowers, which is appropriate as that is the State tree of Virginia! The Skete is blessed with six holy relics of the nuns.



- The trapeza is nearly completed, needing painting of doors, baseboard and trim. Tables and chairs would be helpful, however, for now a folding table is fine. The ceiling will come at a later date, which will be a tongue-and-groove drop ceiling.
- A minisplit has been installed in the chapel, the generous gift of a pious family. This enabled the incorrect ductwork to be removed and now the parabolic-arch ceiling is being constructed. With God's help and as funding permits, *the chapel may be completed by year's end!* Again - a goal is to avoid debt, so it is as God wills.
- Upper cabinets were installed in the office, to hold all the supplies, stationery, envelopes, etc. This helped to get a lot of items out of boxes, off the floor, and made a big difference.
- The Sacristy storage closet beneath the stairs has shelving built in and is taking shape.
- The oval frames and reliquaries, 40 of them, have been received to begin production of a reliquary in the chapel.
- In one of the nun's cells: a desk, chair, desk lamp and bookshelf were purchased, and a storage trunk refinished.



As we journey towards Pascha, I want to express my heartfelt gratitude to all who have assisted the Skete to arrive at this point so the chapel construction may begin. As I try to express how deeply appreciative I am for your generosity, I find that no words suffice. It's all about love! Thank you.

By the time you receive this letter, the Skete's website will have some new articles posted: one by Father Constantine on Russian royalty; a translation of the Homeric Gospel read at the Agape Vespers; notes from Gerontissa Theonymphe on Saint Spyridon; a translation of a prayer for the blessing of an aircraft; a fresh list of needs; and more!

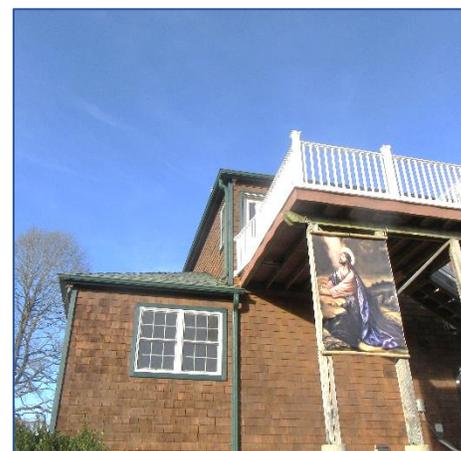
Please keep me in your holy prayers, and know that you are kept in prayer at the Skete.

And please, if it is within your ability, I beseech you to keep the Queen of All Skete in mind for your Lenten almsgiving, which you may easily access on our website: www.queenofallskete.org.

In our Lord Jesus Christ,

Mother Andrew

From the Gift Shop: (top right) silver/gold embellished icon of St. George, 7.5"x10.2", \$440. (bottom right) one of a kind! 1913-14 cancelled stamps from Imperial Russia, includes: Emperors Alexander II, Alexander III, Nicholas II, Peter I (the Great), Catherine II (the Great), \$398.



▲ \$900-worth of lumber being cut for framing the chapel's arched ceiling. Please, consider a gift to help build the chapel for the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, "Queen of All", the Healer of Cancer.