



The Orthodox Church in America
DIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA AND EASTERN PENNSYLVANIA
The Most Rev. Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia

March 2, 2017

Update on Appeal to help Fr. John and Matushka Kyra Nightingale

Dear to God,

Christ is in our midst! Blessed Clean Week. As we continue our Lenten Journey, I wanted to update you on the **Appeal To Help Fr John and Matushka Nightingale**, especially since Great Lent is a time when we are called to focus on almsgiving. In my previous letter, I informed you Fr John had fallen after a Presanctified Liturgy over a year ago. He has not returned home since that fall at the church. While he has regained sensation in his arms and legs, he is unable to walk and has minimal use of his arms and hands. Technically, he would be considered a quadraplegic, rather than a paraplegic as previously noted. Since the appeal letter went out on January 31, 2016, we have received \$37,278.00 for which they are most grateful.

By way of reminder, please see the following from my earlier letter:

Last year during Great Lent, after the Presanctified Liturgy, Fr. John was not feeling well and went out to the porch for fresh air. At some point he passed out and fell over the railing injuring his, neck, vertebrae and spinal cord. He has been in the hospital since that time receiving therapy. Initially, he lost all use of his arms and legs. After months of therapy, Fr. John is now able to feed himself, but still unable to walk. Due to the lack of strength in his arms and legs he is unable to transfer himself from his bed to a wheel chair and is due to return home at this time. He will require nursing assistance and a lift to transfer him from the bed to a wheel chair. Medically, he is considered a paraplegic.

Matushka Kyra has driven back and forth to the VA Hospital in the Bronx weekly for almost a year as well as care for her elderly parents. Additionally, she worked with contractors to construct a doorway and ramp into the house at a cost of \$10,000.00. She has also had a 1st floor bathroom installed that is handycap accessible for a cost of \$14,000.00. The V.A. will cover approximately \$6000.00 of the bathroom renovation. Although, Fr. John is unable to drive, he is also in need of a van with a lift, which will cost approximately \$65,000.00.

Fr. John has been an excellent priest for our Diocese. He is a Vietnam Veteran, who served as a paratrooper. After his military service he lived in California and later Alaska. In Alaska, he worked as Hospice Chaplain for a number of years, before attending St Tikhon's Seminary. After his ordination to the priesthood, Fr. John served as a supply priest regularly and turned over the complete stipend to the Diocese without keeping a penny for his time and travel. During his tenure as a supply priest and acting rector he even purchased service books for the parishes he was serving as well as vestments. He has faithfully tithed to his parish for years. At the V.A., hospital in the Bronx he has provided pastoral care to other patients, while being a patient himself.

Matushka Kyra continues driving back and forth to the VA Hospital in the Bronx as well as caring for her elderly parents. Since my last letter, they returned Fr. John's leased car which cost an additional \$3000 for early termination and purchased a van, putting down \$15,000 from their savings. From the donations we received, \$25,855.05 went to pay off the remaining balance on the van. We also paid a bill of \$750.00 from an electrician for wiring the bathroom. At this point, they also need to install a lift (hoist) to transfer Fr John back and forth from the bed and wheel chair. This will cost approximately \$6000. The VA will pay for three days of nursing care, but all other days will be paid out of pocket.

Please keep Fr. John and Matushka Kyra in your God-pleasing prayers. Matushka Kyra continues to care for her parents on a daily basis and Fr John will be discharged from the VA in the coming weeks.

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We are grateful to the clergy who drove to the VA Hospital in the Bronx to serve the Unction Service for Fr John. Once he returns home, other clergy will visit and serve the Unction Service again. Fr. John remains in good spirits and hopes to be able to visit nursing homes and hospitals upon his return, when someone is available to drive him.

As in my previous letter, *'let us remember the Church challenges us to fast, not only from certain foods, but from sin as well. Traditionally, there is also a renewed focus on caring for those in need, especially from the money saved from eating more simply. As Orthodox Christians, I appeal to you to assist the Nightingale family to meet some basic human needs. While we pray for his continued recovery, we also know it is in the Lord's hands. Therefore, let us do what we can. If we live close by, let us visit so that he does not feel forgotten or isolated'*. As we know, even caregivers need time to shop, cook, do laundry and a regular break just to rest and pull herself together. If we have nursing skills, let us offer to assist Matuska Kyra, as she cares for her parents and her husband. If we can give sacrificially to assist with the installation of a lift, the ongoing expenses of nursing care as well as any other unexpected expenses. Most importantly, pray for Fr. John and Matuska Kyra and visit them upon his return home.

All donations may be sent directly to the Diocesan Office. Please make the check out to the Diocese of Philadelphia and send it to 144 St. Tikhon's Road, Waymart, PA 18472, earmarked "Fr. John Nightingale". Every donation will be acknowledged by our Office and the full amount passed on to cover as much of the expenses as we are able to raise. Thank you for your consideration of this very worthy cause and thank you for the donations already sent.

Your unworthy Father in Christ,

+ Mark

+ Mark, Archbishop of Philadelphia and the Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania