



Diocese of Chicago & Mid-America
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Venerable Seraphim the Wonderworker of Sarov

Dear Past and Future Benefactors of the St. John Kochurov Society,

I greet you joyously with the recent feast of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ! In describing the salvation of mankind accomplished through the Incarnation of Christ, our father among the saints John Chrysostom serves as a herald of good tidings in his beloved Nativity Sermon:

“He takes my flesh, to sanctify me; He gives me His Spirit that He may save me.”

This great revelation of God's mercy – *that He took what is ours to give us what is His* – is further manifested in the life of **St. Seraphim of Sarov**, whose memory we celebrate today. He it was who explained to the pious Nicholas Motovilov that **“the true aim of our Christian life consists of the acquisition of the Holy Spirit of God”**. In pursuit of this divine gift, St. Seraphim offered his own soul as a purified temple for the Holy Spirit.

Living as we do in a world which is fixated on the acquisition of material wealth and resources that pass away, St. Seraphim's grace-filled counsels serve as a needful reminder to diligently seek after the inexhaustible and eternal riches of God; his words recall our hearts from captivity to earthly cares, directing them toward heaven.

But how do we truly love God and acquire His Holy Spirit? A principal path given to us is that of **love for our neighbor, in whom we see God's image and encounter His presence**. On the great and fearful Day of Judgment, Our Lord and Savior Himself shall commend the righteous ones who cared for those in need:

'...Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.' (Matthew 25:40)

The Holy Elders of Optina, in their characteristic simplicity and humble love, echo the words of Christ:

“Above all, strive to love your neighbor, for in his love consists love of God.” - St. Macarius

“Love for God is proven by love and mercy for your neighbor.” - St. Ambrose

The **St. John Kochurov Society** exists in our diocese so that we may fulfill one aspect of this charitable duty toward our neighbor, and **it is through your continued membership and patronage that the Society provides critical financial support to our Diocesan Youth, Missions, and Monasteries in need**.

I entreat you from the depths of my heart to faithfully maintain your prayerful and financial support of our common and essential work! May God bless you in return for your charity!

With Gratitude for your Generosity and Love in our Lord Jesus Christ,

+ Archbishop Peter

Peter, Archbishop of Chicago & Mid-America

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Dear Friends of St. John Kochurov,

Once again, I give thanks God and to all of you for **your continued support** in 2018. **Rather than telling you what this meant to all those who benefited from your kindness, I'll let them speak for themselves – see comments below, and their photos & videos on our Facebook! www.Facebook.com/StJohnKochurov** Also, as a committee we took stock of past promises while planning for the future, and we determined that **the most effective way to gratefully acknowledge our members and benefactors - while conserving vital resources and limited volunteer hours** - would be to issue an annual **Members and Benefactors Roll** (see insert). **Bronze, Silver, and Gold Medals (Third, Second, and First Class) will still be issued and awarded.** We hope you will agree that this is a responsible and adequate measure, and we welcome your feedback! We also ask your prayers for our labors, performed in remembrance and honor of our patron St. John Kochurov. Through his holy prayers, may we be guided aright!

Take a moment now to Join, Renew, or Donate today to continue your critical support!

With a donation of \$120.00 per year, either as a single gift or deducted automatically at \$10 per month, you will be included in our membership roll and will be asked to provide the names of loved ones to be commemorated at Divine Liturgies at the Diocesan Holy Virgin Protection Cathedral. **All donations are tax deductible.**

Follow this link to DONATE NOW (on mobile device or computer!) via PayPal, Credit Card, or Debit Transaction: www.sjksdcma.org/donate

With love in the Lord,



Pr. David Companik, SJKS Executive Committee Chairman

Now hear from a few of the grateful beneficiaries of your Christian kindness...

“Living in an almost 100 year old building brings a certain feeling of history. But it also connects one to the physical pains and labors that arise with that. One urgent need that arises currently is the siding of our building that literally starts falling off the building. With the size of the building this of course is a major expense that we are facing which will require serious fund raising before we can embark on this project.

“Thanks to the St. John of Kochurov society we now have a good starting point in this effort. We are grateful for the support of the diocese and the society spiritually and materially. We pray that this start will encourage others to continue in this fundraising effort that we soon can preserve this building by giving it a needed re-do of its shell.” - Igumen Alexander, Ss. Sergius and Herman of Valaam Monastery, Atlantic Mine, MI

*“The support of the St. John Kochurov Society to our diocesan St. Herman conference is critical and much appreciated! We gather about 40 young people from all over our diocese to discuss their spiritual concerns and to nurture their faith. Youth today experience challenges unknown to previous generations and the Church must labor to nourish them and guide them through these spiritual obstacles. **Without the wonderful financial support of SJKS, many of our youth would not be able to attend** and therefore, would not receive this important guidance and support. Moreover, friendships begun at our conferences will bear fruit for years to come, since these very youth will one day be the leaders, clergy and parishioners of our diocese. We fertilize now with hope for fruit today and in the future. May God bless you for your generosity!” - Fr. Daniel Marshall, Rector, St. George Russian Orthodox Church Cincinnati, OH*

*“We would like to thank the St. John Kochurov Society for its generous financial assistance to support the day-to-day needs of our Monastery. **The money given has helped pay utility bills, insurance premiums and property maintenance costs.** We would also like to thank the SJK Society for its support of the current serving priest and for the support of the nuns who have been sent here. We give thanks to the SJK Society for its efforts and for the care it has shown us.” - Fr. Michael Volzhanski, Holy Archangels Orthodox Monastery, House Springs, MO*

*“I'd like to thank you for the wonderful opportunity you gave me to visit ORPR. Among the many memories in my life, it will always be one of the best. It was really marvelous, as I got to have so much fun, learn so much, and meet so many other Orthodox Christian teenagers. This wonderful experience also gave me the chance to learn more about Orthodox church music, as well as reading in church. I enjoyed so much all the activities, the games, sports, hiking, and swimming. At the same time I was able to have interesting talks with experienced priests. **Thank you all so, so much.** I had always wanted to go, but never would have been able to if it weren't for people like you. **God bless you for your generosity! May the Lord help you so you can continue to help people in the wonderful way you helped me.**” - Anna Chisom, ORPR Camp Scholarship*