

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.



ORTHODOX CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

OCA – Diocese of New York & New Jersey

The Most Reverend Michael, Archbishop of NY & the Diocese of NY/NJ

V. Rev. Dr. Matthew Searfoorce, Temporary Rector

Sub-Deacon Edward Dawson Sub-Deacon Vlashi

Parish Council President: Andrew Romanofsky

Parish Council Vice President: Sub-Deacon Edward

HYMNS OF THE DAY

[Troparion in Tone 6 \(Resurrection\)](#)

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee.

[Troparion in Tone 8 \(Fathers\)](#)

Thou art most glorious, O Christ our God! Thou hast established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth. Through them Thou hast guided us to the true Faith. O greatly compassionate One, glory to Thee!

[Troparion in Tone 4 \(Holy Prince Vladimir\)](#)

O holy Prince Vladimir, thou wast like a merchant in search of fine pearls. By sending servants to Constantinople for the Orthodox Faith, thou didst find Christ, the priceless Pearl. He appointed thee to be another Paul, washing away in baptism thy physical and spiritual blindness. We celebrate thy memory, asking thee to pray for all Orthodox Christians of Russia and for us, thy spiritual children.

[Kontakion in Tone 6 \(Resurrection\)](#)

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

[Kontakion in Tone 8 \(Fathers\)](#)

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one Faith for the Church. Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology, it defines and glorifies the great mystery of piety.

[Kontakion in Tone 8 \(Holy Prince Vladimir\)](#)

O most glorious Vladimir, in thine old age thou didst imitate the great Apostle Paul: he abandoned childish things, while thou didst forsake the idolatry of thy youth. Together with him thou didst reach the fullness of divine wisdom: thou wast adorned with the purity of holy baptism. Now as thou standest before Christ our Savior, pray that all Orthodox Christians may be saved!

Prayer Requests

For Health of:

Linda & Richard Dantine, on their anniversary, offered by their family with love.

In Memory of:

Anne (our mother), offered by Linda & Richard Dantine.

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SAINTS AND FEASTS OF THE DAY

JULY 15, 2018

7TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: FATHERS OF THE 1ST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS. HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES GREAT PRINCE VLADIMIR (IN BAPTISM BASIL), ENLIGHTENER OF THE RUSSIAN LANDS.



Fathers of the First Six Councils

The Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Ecumenical Councils.

In the Ninth Article of the Nicea-Constantinople Symbol of Faith proclaimed by the holy Fathers of the First and Second Ecumenical Councils, we confess our faith in “One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church.” By virtue of the catholic nature of the Church, an Ecumenical Council is the Church’s supreme authority, and possesses the competence to resolve major questions of church life. An Ecumenical Council is comprised of archpastors and pastors of the Church, and representatives of all the local Churches, from every land of the “oikumene” (i.e. from all the whole inhabited world).

The Orthodox Church acknowledges Seven Holy Ecumenical Councils:

The First Ecumenical Council (Nicea I) (May 29, and also on seventh Sunday after Pascha) was convened in the year 325 against the heresy of Arius, in the city of Nicea in Bithynia under Saint Constantine the Great, Equal of the Apostles.

The Second Ecumenical Council (Constantinople I) (May 22) was convened in the year 381 against the heresy of Macedonias, by the emperor Theodosius the Great.

The Third Ecumenical Council (Ephesus) (September 9) was convened in the year 431 against the heresy of Nestorius, in the city of Ephesus by the emperor Theodosius the Younger.

The Fourth Ecumenical Council (Chalcedon) (July 16) was convened in the year 451, against the Monophysite heresy, in the city of Chalcedon under the emperor Marcian.

The Fifth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople II) (July 25) “Concerning the Three Chapters,” was convened in the year 553, under the emperor Justinian the Great.

The Sixth Ecumenical Council (Constantinople III) (January 23) met during the years 680-681, to fight the Monothelite heresy, under the emperor Constantine Pogonatos.

The fact that the Seventh Ecumenical Council (Nicea II) is not commemorated today testifies to the antiquity of today’s celebration. The Seventh Council, commemorated on the Sunday nearest to October 11, was convened at Nicea in the year 787 against the Iconoclast heresy, under the emperor Constantine and his mother Irene.

The Church venerates the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils because Christ has established them as “lights upon the earth,” guiding us to the true Faith. “Adorned with the robe of truth,” the doctrine of the Fathers, based upon the preaching of the Apostles, has established one faith for the Church. The Ecumenical Councils, are the highest authority in the Church. Such Councils, guided by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and accepted by the Church, are infallible.

The Orthodox Church’s conciliar definitions of dogma have the highest authority, and such definitions always begin with the Apostolic formula: “It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us...” (Acts 15: 28).

The Ecumenical Councils were always convened for a specific reason: to combat false opinions and heresies, and to clarify the Orthodox Church’s teaching. But the Holy Spirit has thus seen fit, that the dogmas, the truths of faith, immutable in their content and scope, constantly and consequently are revealed by the conciliar mind of the Church, and are given precision by the holy Fathers within theological concepts and terms in exactly such measure as is needed by the Church itself for its economy of salvation. The Church, in expounding its dogmas, is dealing with the concerns of a given historical moment, “not revealing everything in haste and thoughtlessly, nor indeed, ultimately hiding something” (Saint Gregory the Theologian).

A brief summary of the dogmatic theology of the First Six Ecumenical Councils is formulated and contained in the First Canon of the Council of Trullo (also known as Quinisext), held in the year 692. The 318 Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council are spoken of in this Canon I of Trullo as having: “with unanimity of faith revealed and declared to us the consubstantiality of the three Persons of the Divine nature and, ... instructing the faithful to adore the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit with one worship, they cast down and dispelled the false teaching about different degrees of Divinity.”

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The 150 Holy Fathers of the Second Ecumenical Council left their mark on the theology of the Church concerning the Holy Spirit, “repudiating the teaching of Macedonius, as one who wished to divide the inseparable Unity, so that there might be no perfect mystery of our hope.”

The 200 God-bearing Fathers of the Third Ecumenical Council expounded the teaching that “Christ, the Incarnate Son of God is One.” They also confessed that “she who bore Him without seed was the spotless Ever-Virgin, glorifying her as truly the Mother of God.

The 630 Holy Fathers of the Fourth Ecumenical Council decreed that “the One Christ, the Son of God... must be glorified in two natures.”

The 165 God-bearing Holy Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council “in synod anathematized and repudiated Theodore of Mopsuestia (the teacher of Nestorius), and Origen, and Didymus, and Evagrius, renovators of the Hellenic teaching about the transmigration of souls and the transmutation of bodies and the impieties they raised against the resurrection of the dead.”

The 170 Holy Fathers of the Sixth Ecumenical Council “taught that we ought to confess two natural volitions, or two wills [trans. note: one divine, and the other human], and two natural operations (energies) in Him Who was incarnate for our salvation, Jesus Christ, our true God.”

In decisive moments of Church history, the holy Ecumenical Councils promulgated their dogmatic definitions, as trustworthy delimitations in the spiritual battle for the purity of Orthodoxy, which will last until such time, as “all shall come into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God” (Eph. 4: 13). In the struggle with new heresies, the Church does not abandon its former dogmatic concepts nor replace them with some sort of new formulations. The dogmatic formulae of the Holy Ecumenical Councils need never be superseded, they remain always contemporary to the living Tradition of the Church. Therefore the Church proclaims:

“The faith of all in the Church of God hath been glorified by men, which were luminaries in the world, cleaving to the Word of Life, so that it be observed firmly, and that it dwell unshakably until the end of the ages, conjointly with their God-bestown writings and dogmas. We reject and we anathematize all whom they have rejected and anathematized, as being enemies of Truth. And if anyone does not cleave to nor admit the aforementioned pious dogmas, and does not teach or preach accordingly, let him be anathema” (Canon I of the Council of Trullo).

In addition to their dogmatic definitions, the Holy Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils exerted great efforts towards the strengthening of church discipline. Local Councils promulgated their disciplinary canons according to the circumstances of the time and place, frequently differing among themselves in various particulars.

The universal unity of the Orthodox Church required unity also in canonical practice, i.e. a conciliar deliberation and affirmation of the most important canonical norms by the Fathers of the Ecumenical Councils. Thus, according to conciliar judgment, the Church has accepted: 20 Canons from the First, 7 Canons from the Second, 8 Canons from the Third, and 30 Canons from the Fourth Ecumenical Synods. The Fifth and the Sixth Councils concerned themselves only with resolving dogmatic questions, and did not leave behind any disciplinary canons.

The need to establish in codified form the customary practices during the years 451-680, and ultimately to compile a canonical codex for the Orthodox Church, occasioned the convening of a special Council, which was wholly devoted to the general application of churchly rules. This was convened in the year 692. The Council “in the Imperial Palace” or “Under the Arches” (in Greek “en trullo”), came to be called the Council in Trullo. It is also called the “Quinisext” [meaning the “fifth and sixth”], because it is considered to have completed the activities of the Fifth and Sixth Councils, or rather that it was simply a direct continuation of the Sixth Ecumenical Council itself, separated by just a few years.

The Council in Trullo, with its 102 Canons (more than of all the Ecumenical Synods combined), had a tremendous significance in the history of the canonical theology of the Orthodox Church. It might be said that the Fathers of this Council produced a complete compilation of the basic codex from the relevant sources for the Orthodox Church’s canons. Listing through in chronological order, and having been accepted by the Church the Canons of the Holy Apostles, and the Canons of the Holy Ecumenical and the Local Councils and of the holy Fathers, the Trullo Council declared: “Let no one be permitted to alter or to annul the aforementioned canons, nor in place of these put forth, or to accept others, made of spurious inscription” (2nd Canon of the Council in Trullo).

Church canons, sanctified by the authority of the first Six Ecumenical Councils (including the rules of the Seventh Ecumenical Council in 787, and the Constantinople Councils of 861 and 879, which were added later under the holy Patriarch Photius), form the basis of THE RUDDER, or KORMCHAYA KNIGA (a canon law codex known as “Syntagma” or “Nomokanon” in 14 titles). In its repository of grace is expressed a canonical norm, a connection to every era, and a guide for all the local Orthodox Churches in churchly practice.

New historical conditions can lead to the change of some particular external aspect of the life of the Church. This makes creative canonical activity necessary in the conciliar reasoning of the Church, in order to reconcile the

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external norms of churchly life with historical circumstances. The details of canonical regulation are not fully developed for the various eras of churchly organization at all once. With every push to either forsake the literal meaning of a canon, or to fulfill and develop it, the Church again and again turns for reasoning and guidance to the eternal legacy of the Holy Ecumenical Councils, to the inexhaustable treasury of dogmatic and canonical truths.



Equal of the Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, in Holy Baptism Basil, the Enlightener of the Russian Land

The Holy Great Prince Vladimir, Equal of the Apostles. Few names in the annals of history can compare in significance with the name of Saint Vladimir, the Baptizer of Rus, who stands at the beginning of the spiritual destiny of the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people. Vladimir was the grandson of Saint Olga, and he was the son of Svyatoslav (+ 972). His mother, Malusha (+ 1001) was the daughter of Malk Liubechanin, whom historians identify with Mal, prince of the Drevlyani. Having subdued an uprising of the Drevlyani and conquered their cities, Princess Olga gave orders to execute Prince Mal for his attempt to marry her after he murdered her husband Igor, and she took to herself Mal's children, Dobrynya and Malusha. Dobrynya grew up to be a valiant brave warrior, endowed with a mind for state affairs, and he was later on an excellent help to his nephew Vladimir in matters of military and state administration.

The "capable girl" Malusha became a Christian (together with Great Princess Olga at Constantinople), but she preserved in herself a bit of the mysterious darkness of the pagan Drevlyani forests. Thus she fell in love with the austere warrior Svyatoslav, who against the will of his mother Olga made her his wife. The enraged Olga, regarding as unseemly the marriage of her "housekeeper" and captive servant to her son Svyatoslav, heir to the Great Kiev principality, sent Malusha away to her own native region not far from Vybut. And there in about the year 960 was born the boy with the Russian pagan name Volodimir, meaning peaceful ruler, ruling with a special talent for peace.

In the year 970 Svyatoslav set out on a campaign from which he was fated not to return. He had divided the Russian Land among his three sons. At Kiev Yaropolk was prince; at Ovrucha, the center of the Drevlyani lands, was Oleg; at Novgorod was Vladimir. In his first years as prince, we see Vladimir as a fierce pagan. He headed a campaign, in which the whole of pagan Rus is sympathetic to him, against Yaropolk the Christian, or in any case, according to the chronicles, "having given great freedom to the Christians", on July 11, 978 he entered into Kiev, having become the "sole ruler" of the Kiev realm, "having subdued the surrounding lands, some by peaceful means, and the unsubmissive ones by the sword."

Though Vladimir indulged himself in a wild, sensuous life, he was far from the libertine that they sometimes portray him as being. He "shepherded his land with truth, valor and reason", as a good and diligent master, of necessity he extended and defended its boundaries by force of arms, and in returning from military campaigns, he made for his companions and for all Kiev liberal and merry feasts.

But the Lord prepared him for another task. Where sin increases, there, in the words of the Apostle, grace abounds (Rom. 5: 20). "And upon him came visitation of the Most High, and the All-Merciful eye of the Good God gazed upon him, and shone forth the thought in his heart, of understanding the vanity of idolous delusion, and of appealing to the One God, Creator of all things both visible and invisible." The matter of accepting Baptism was facilitated through external circumstances. The Byzantine Empire was in upheaval under the blows of the mutinous regiments of Bardas Skliros and Bardas Phocas, each of whom sought to gain the imperial throne. In these difficult circumstances the emperors, the coregent brothers Basil the Bulgar-Slayer and Constantine, turned for help to Vladimir.

Events unfolded quickly. In August 987 Bardas Phocas proclaimed himself Emperor and moved against Constantinople, and in autumn of that same year the emissaries of Emperor Basil were at Kiev. "And having exhausted his (Basil's) wealth, it compelled him to enter into an alliance with the Emperor of the Russians. They were his enemies, but he besought their help," writes one of the Arab chronicles of events in the 980s. "And the Emperor of the Russians consented to this, and made common cause with him."

As a reward for his military help, Vladimir asked for the hand of the emperors' sister Anna, which for the Byzantines was an unheard of audacity. Princesses of the imperial lineage did not marry "barbarian" rulers, even if they were Christians. At the same time the emperor Otto the Great was seeking the hand of Anna for his son, and he was refused. However, in Vladimir's case Constantinople was obliged to consent.

An agreement was concluded, according to which Vladimir had to send the emperors six thousand Varangians, and to accept holy Baptism. Under these conditions he would receive the hand of the imperial daughter Anna. Thus in the strife of human events the will of God directed the entering of Rus into the grace-filled bosom of the

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Ecumenical Church. Great Prince Vladimir accepted Baptism and sent the military assistance to Byzantium. With the aid of the Russians, the mutineers were destroyed and Bardas Phocas killed. But the Greeks, gladdened by their unexpected deliverance, were in no hurry to fulfill their part of the bargain.

Vexed at the Greek duplicity, Prince Vladimir “hastened to collect his forces” and he moved “against Korsun, the Greek city,” the ancient Chersonessos. The “impenetrable” rampart of the Byzantine realm on the Black Sea fell. It was one of the vitally important hubs of the economic and mercantile links of the empire. This blow was so much felt, that its echo resounded throughout all the regions of Byzantium.

Vladimir again had the upper hand. His emissaries, the commanders Oleg and Sjbern soon arrived in Constantinople for the imperial daughter. Eight days passed in Anna’s preparation, during which time her brothers consoled her, stressing the significance of the opportunity before her: to enable the enlightening of the Russian realm and its lands, and to make them forever friends of the Byzantine realm. At Taurida Saint Vladimir awaited her, and to his titles there was added a new one: Caesar (Tsar). The haughty rulers of Constantinople had to accede also in this, to bestow upon their new brother-in-law the imperial insignia. In certain of the Greek historians, Saint Vladimir is termed from these times as a “mighty basileios-king”, he coins money in the Byzantine style and is depicted on it with the symbols of imperial might: in imperial attire, and on his head the imperial crown, and in his right hand the sceptre with cross.

Together with the empress Anna, there arrived for the Russian See Metropolitan Michael ordained by holy Patriarch Nicholas II Chrysoberges. He came with his retinue and clergy, and many holy relics and other holy things. In ancient Chersonessos, where each stone brings to mind Saint Andrew the First-Called, there took place the marriage-crowning of Saint Vladimir and Blessed Anna, both reminiscent and likewise affirming the oneness of the Gospel of Christ in Rus and in Byzantium. Korsun, the “empress’s dowry”, was returned to Byzantium. In the spring of 988 the Great Prince and his wife set out through the Crimea, Taman and the Azov lands, which had come into the complexion of his vast realm on the return trip to Kiev. Leading the princely cortege with frequent Services of Thanksgiving and incessant priestly singing they carried crosses, icons and holy relics. It seemed, that the Ecumenical Holy Church was moving into the spacious Russian land, and renewed in the font of Baptism, Holy Rus came forth to meet Christ and His Church.

Then followed an unforgettable and quite singular event in Russian history: the morning of the Baptism of the Kievans in the waters of the River Dneipr. On the evening before, Saint Vladimir declared throughout the city: “If anyone does not go into the river tomorrow, be they rich or poor, beggar or slave, that one shall be my enemy.” The sacred wish of the holy Prince was fulfilled without a murmur: “all our land glorified Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit at the same time.”

It is difficult to overestimate the deep spiritual transformation of the Russian people effected by the prayers of Saint Vladimir, in every aspect of its life and world-view. In the pure Kievan waters, as in a “bath of regeneration”, there was realized a sacramental transfiguration of the Russian spiritual element, the spiritual birth of the nation, called by God to unforeseen deeds of Christian service to mankind.

“Then did the darkness of the idols begin to lift from us, and the dawn of Orthodoxy appear, and the Sun of the Gospel illumined our land.” In memory of this sacred event, the regeneration of Rus by water and the Spirit, the Russian Church established the custom of an annual church procession “to the water” on August 1. Later, the Feast of the Procession of the Honorable Wood of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord, which Russia celebrated with the Greek Church, was combined with the Feast of the All-Merciful Savior and the Most Holy Theotokos (established by Saint Andrew Bogoliubsky in the year 1164). In this combination of feasts there is found a precise expression of the Russian theological consciousness, for which both Baptism and the Cross are inseparable.

Everywhere throughout Holy Rus, from the ancient cities to the far outposts, Saint Vladimir gave orders to destroy the pagan sanctuaries, to flog the idols, and in their place to clear land in the hilly woods for churches, in which altars would be consecrated for the Bloodless Sacrifice. Churches of God grew up along the face of the earth, at high elevated places, and at the bends of the rivers, along the ancient trail “from the Variangians to the Greeks” figuratively as road signs and lamps of national holiness. Concerning the famed church-building activity of Saint Vladimir, the Metropolitan of Kiev Saint Hilarion (author of the “Word on Law and Grace”) exclaimed: “They demolished the pagan temples, and built up churches, they destroyed the idols and produced holy icons, the demons have fled, and the Cross has sanctified the cities.”

From the early centuries of Christianity it was the custom to raise up churches upon the ruins of pagan sanctuaries or upon the blood of the holy martyrs. Following this practice, Saint Vladimir built the church of Saint Basil the Great upon a hill, where a sanctuary of Perun had been located, and he built the stone church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos (Desyatinnaya) on the place of the martyrdom of the holy Varangian Martyrs (July 12). The magnificent temple was intended to become the cathedral for the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus, and thus the primal altar of the Russian Church. It was built in five years, and was richly adorned with

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frescoes, crosses, icons and sacred vessels, brought from Korsun. The day of the consecration of the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, May 12 (in some manuscripts May 11), was ordered by Saint Vladimir to be inserted into the Church calendar as an annual celebration. This event was linked with other events celebrated on May 11, and it provided the new Church a twofold sense of continuity. Under this day in the calendar is noted the churchly Founding of Constantinople “dedicated by the holy emperor Saint Constantine as the new capital of the Roman Empire, the city of Constantine is dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos (330). On this same day of May 11, the church of Sophia, the Wisdom of God was consecrated at Kiev (in the year 960 under Saint Olga). Saint Vladimir, having had the cathedral church consecrated to the Most Holy Theotokos, followed the example of Saint Constantine in dedicating the capital city of the Russian Land (Kiev) to the Queen of Heaven.

Then a tithe or tenth was bestowed on the Church; and since this church had become the center of the All-Russian collection of churchly tithes, they called it the Tithe church. The most ancient text of the grant, or church rule by holy Prince Vladimir spoke thus: “For I do bestow on this church of the Holy Mother of God a tenth of all my principality, and also throughout all the Russian Land from all the princely jurisdiction a tithe of squirrel-pelts, and from the merchant, a tithe of the week, and from households each year, a tenth of every herd and every livelihood, to the wondrous Mother of God and the wondrous Savior.” The grant also specified “church people” as being free from the jurisdictional power of the prince and his “tiuni” (officials) and placed them under the jurisdiction of the Metropolitan.

The chronicle has preserved a prayer of Saint Vladimir, with which he turned to the Almighty at the consecration of the Dormition Tithe church: “O Lord God, look down from Heaven and behold, and visit Your vineyard, which Your right hand has planted. And make this new people, whom You have converted in heart and mind to know You, the True God. And look down upon this Your church, which Your unworthy servant has built in the name of the Mother Who gave birth to Thee, the Ever-Virgin Theotokos. And whoever prays in this church, let his prayer be heard, through the prayers of the All-Pure Mother of God.”

With the Tithe church and Bishop Anastasius, certain historians have made a connection with the beginnings of Russian chronicle writing. At it were compiled the Life of Saint Olga and the account of the Varangian Martyrs in their original form, and likewise the “Account, How in the Taking of Korsun, Vladimir came to be Baptized.” Here also originated the early Greek redaction of the Lives of the Holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb.

During the time of Saint Vladimir, the Kiev Metropolitan See was occupied successively by the Metropolitan Saint Michael (September 30), Metropolitan Theophylactus, who transferred to Kiev from the See of Armenian Sebaste (991-997), Metropolitan Leontius (997-1008), and Metropolitan John I (1008-1037). Through their efforts the first dioceses of the Russian Church were opened: at Novgorod (its first representative was Saint Joachim of Korsun (+ 1030), compiler of the Joachimov Chronicle), Vladimir-Volyn (opened May 11, 992), Chernigov, Pereslavl, Belgorod, and Rostov. “And thus throughout all the cities and villages there were set up churches and monasteries, and the clergy increased, and the Orthodox Faith blossomed forth and shone like the sun.”

To advance the Faith among the newly enlightened people, learned people and schools were needed to help prepare them. Therefore, Saint Vladimir and the holy Metropolitan Michael “commanded fathers and mothers to take their young children and send them to schools to learn reading and writing.” Saint Joachim of Korsun set up such a school at Novgorod, and they did the same in other cities. “And there were a multitude of schools of scholars, and of these were there a multitude of philosophers.”

With a firm hand Saint Vladimir held in check enemies at the frontiers, and he built fortified cities. He was the first in Russian history to set up a “notched boundary,” a line of defensive points against nomadic peoples. “Volodimir began to set up cities along the Desna, along the Vystra, along the Trubezha, along the Sula and along the Stugna. And he settled them with the Novgorodians, the Smolyani, the Chuds and the Vyatichi. He made war against the Pechenegs and defeated them.” But the real reason for his success was the peaceful Christian preaching among the pagans of the steppes.

In the Nikol’sk Chronicles under the year 990 was written: “And in that same year there came to Volodimir at Kiev four princes from the Bulgars and they were illumined with Divine Baptism.” In the following year “the Pecheneg prince Kuchug came and accepted the Greek faith, and he was baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and served Vladimir with a pure heart.” Under the influence of the holy prince several apparent foreigners were also baptized. For example, the Norwegian “koenig” (king) Olaf Trueggvason (+ 1000) who lived several years at Kiev, and also the renowned Torvald the Wanderer, founder of a monastery of Saint John the Forerunner along the Dneipr near Polotsk, among others. In faraway Iceland the poet-skalds called God the “Protector of the Greeks and Russians.”

In addition to the Christian preaching, there were the renowned feasts of Saint Vladimir. After Liturgy on Sundays and Church Feasts there were put out abundant feasting tables for the Kievans, they rang the bells, choirs sang praise, the “transported infirm” sang bylini-ballads and spiritual verses. On May 12, 996, for example, on the

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occasion of the consecration of the Tithe church, the prince “made a bright feast.” He distributed goods “to many of the poor, and destitute and wanderers, and through the churches and the monasteries. To the sick and the needy he delivered through the streets casks and barrels of mead, and bread, and meat, and fish, and cheese, desiring that all might come and eat, glorifying God”. Feasts were likewise celebrated in honor of the victories of Kievan warriors, and the regiments of Vladimir’s retinue: of Dobrynya, Alexander Popovich, Rogda the Bold.

In the year 1007 Saint Vladimir transferred the relics of Saint Olga to the Tithe church. Four years later, in 1011, his spouse and companion in many of his undertakings, the Blessed Empress Anna, was also buried there. After her death the prince entered into a new marriage with the young daughter of the German Graf Kuno von Enningen, granddaughter of the emperor Otto the Great.

The era of Saint Vladimir was a crucial period for the formation of Orthodox Rus. The unification of the Slavic lands and the formation of state boundaries under the domain of the Rurikovichs resulted from a strenuous spiritual and political struggle with neighboring tribes and states. The Baptism of Rus by Orthodox Byzantium was a most important step in its self-definition as a state. The chief enemy of Vladimir became Boleslav the Brave, whose plans included the extensive unification of the West Slavic and East Slavic tribes under the aegis of Catholic Poland. This rivalry arose back when Vladimir was still a pagan: “In the year 6489 (981). Volodimir went against the Lakhs and took their cities, Peremyshl, Cherven, and other cities, which be under Rus.” The final years of the tenth century are likewise filled with the wars of Vladimir and Boleslav.

After a brief lull (the first decade of the eleventh century), the “great stand-off” entered into a new phase: in the year 1013 a conspiracy against Saint Vladimir was discovered at Kiev. Svyatopolk the Accursed, who was married to a daughter of Boleslav, yearned for power. The instigator of the conspiracy was Boleslav’s cleric, the Kolobzheg Catholic bishop Reibern.

The conspiracy of Svyatopolk and Reibern was an all-out threat to the historical existence of the Russian state and the Russian Church. Saint Vladimir took decisive measures. All the three involved were arrested, and Reibern soon died in prison.

Saint Vladimir did not take revenge on those that “opposed and hated” him. Under the pretense of feigned repentance, Svyatopolk was set free.

A new misfortune erupted in the North, at Novgorod. Yaroslav, not yet “the Wise,” as he was later to be known, in the year 1010 having become ruler of Novgorod, decided to defect from his father the Great Prince of Kiev. He formed his own separate army, moving on Kiev to demand the customary tribute and tithe. The unity of the Russian land, for which Saint Vladimir had struggled all his life, was threatened with ruin. In both anger and in sorrow Saint Vladimir gave orders to “secure the dams and set the bridges,” and to prepare for a campaign against Novgorod. His powers were on the decline. In the preparations for his final campaign, happily not undertaken, the Baptizer of Rus fell grievously ill and surrendered his soul to the Lord in the village of Spas-Berestov on July 15, 1015. He had ruled the Russian realm for thirty-seven years (978-1015), twenty-eight of these years after his Baptism.

Preparing for a new struggle for power and hoping for Polish assistance, and to play for time, Svyatopolk attempted to conceal the death of his father. But patriotically inclined Kievan nobles, by night, secretly removed the body of the deceased sovereign from the Berestov court, where Svyatopolk’s people were guarding it, and they conveyed the body to Kiev. At the Tithe church the coffin with the relics of Saint Vladimir was met by Kievan clergy with Metropolitan John at the head of the procession. The holy relics were placed in a marble crypt, set within the Saint Clement chapel of the Dormition church beside the marble crypt of Empress Anna.

The name and deeds of the holy Equal of the Apostles Saint Vladimir, whom the people called the Splendid Sun, is interwoven with all the successive history of the Russian Church. “Through him we too have come to worship and to know Christ, the True Life,” testified Saint Hilarion. His deeds were continued by his sons, and grandsons and descendants, rulers of the Russian land for almost six centuries, from Yaroslav the Wise, who took the first steps towards the independent existence of the Russian Church, down to the last of the Rurikovichs, Tsar Theodore Ioannovich, under whom (in 1589) the Russian Orthodox Church became the fifth independent Patriarchate in the dyptichs of Orthodox Autocephalous Churches.

The festal celebration of the holy Equal of the Apostles Vladimir was established under Saint Alexander Nevsky, in memory of the intercession of Saint Vladimir on May 15, 1240, for his help in gaining the renowned victory by Nevsky over Swedish crusaders.

But the first veneration of the holy prince began in Rus rather earlier. The Metropolitan of Kiev Saint Hilarion (+ 1053), in his “Word on Law and Grace,” spoken on the day of memory of Saint Vladimir at the saint’s crypt in the Tithe church, calls him “an apostolic sovereign”, like Saint Constantine, and he compares his apostolic evangelisation of the Russian Land to the evangelisation by the holy Apostles.

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Martyrs Cyricus and Julita (Ulita) of Tarsus

The Holy Martyrs Cyricus and Julita lived in the city of Iconium in the province of Lykaoneia in Asia Minor. Saint Julita was descended from an illustrious family and was a Christian. Widowed early on, she raised her three-year old-son Cyricus (Quiricus). During the emperor Diocletian's persecution of Christians, Saint Julita departed the city with her son and two trustworthy servants, leaving behind her home, property, and servants.



Concealing her noble rank, she hid out first at Seleucia, and then at Tarsus. There around the year 305 she was recognized, arrested and brought to trial before the governor, Alexander. Strengthened by the Lord, she fearlessly answered the judge's questions, and firmly confessed her faith in Christ.

The governor gave orders to beat the saint with rods. During her torments Saint Julita kept repeating, "I am a Christian, and will not offer sacrifice to demons."

The little boy Cyricus cried, seeing his mother being tortured, and wanted to go to her. The governor Alexander tried to sit him on his lap, but the boy broke free and shouted, "Let me go to my mother, I am a Christian." The governor threw the boy down from the high tribunal and kicked him down the stone steps. The boy struck his head on the sharp edges and died.

Saint Julita, seeing her lacerated son, gave thanks to God that He had permitted her child to be perfected before her, and to receive the unfading crown of martyrdom. After many cruel tortures Saint Julita was beheaded with a sword.

The relics of Saints Cyricus and Julita were uncovered during the reign of Saint Constantine the Great (May 21). A monastery was built near Constantinople in honor of these holy martyrs, and a church was built not far from Jerusalem.

We pray to Saints Cyricus and Julita for family happiness, and the restoration of sick children to health.

Martyr Abudimus of the Isle of Tenedos

No information available at this time.

GOSPEL AND EPISTLE READINGS

Prokeimenon, Tone 4 (*Song of the Fathers*):

Blessed art thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name forever! (*Song of the three Holy Children, v. 3*)

vs. For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us! (*Song of the three Holy Children, v. 4*)

Prokeimenon, Tone 3 (*St Vladimir*):

Sing praises to our God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! (*Psalms 46:7*)

Epistle Reading

The reading is from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Romans 15:1-7

Brethren, we who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves; let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to edify him. For Christ did not please himself; but, as it is written, "The reproaches of those who reproached thee fell on me." For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that by steadfastness and by the encouragement of the scriptures we might have hope. May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome one another, therefore, as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

Hebrews 13:7-16 (*Holy Fathers*)

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Brethren, Remember your preceptors, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Galatians 1:11-19 (St Vladimir)

Brethren, I make known to you, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's brother

Alleluia, Tone 1 (Holy Fathers):

The Lord, the God of gods, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting. (*Psalm: 49:1*)
vs. Gather to Me, My venerable ones, who made a covenant with Me by sacrifice! (*Psalm 49:5*)

Alleluia, Tone 6 (St Vladimir):

I have exalted one chosen out of My people. (*Psalm 88:20*)

Gospel Reading

The Reading is from Matthew 9:27-35

At that time, as Jesus passed on from there, two blind men followed him, crying aloud, "Have mercy on us, Son of David." When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." And their eyes were opened. And Jesus sternly charged them, "See that no one knows it." But they went away and spread his fame through all that district. As they were going away, behold, a dumb demoniac was brought to him. And when the demon had been cast out, the dumb man spoke; and the crowds marveled, saying, "Never was anything like this seen in Israel." But the Pharisees said, "He casts out demons by the prince of demons." And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

John 17:1-13 (Holy Fathers)

Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: "Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was. I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. Now they have known that all things which You have given Me are from You. For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me. I pray for them. I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them. Now I am no longer in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to You. Holy Father, keep through Your name those whom You have given Me, that they may be one as We are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Your name. Those whom You gave Me I have kept; and none of them is

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lost except the son of perdition, that the Scripture might be fulfilled. But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

John 10:1-9 (St Vladimir)

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this illustration, but they did not understand the things which He spoke to them. Then Jesus said to them again, “Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture.



Daily Inspirations by Abbott Tryphon

Hospice or Hospital?

Spiritual pain control or spiritual healing?



Since the Church is the hospital for the soul, it is important we take full advantage of all the resources for healing found within the Church. Confession is the all important beginning for this healing process to begin. The grace imparted during a good confession opens wide the gates of God’s grace, and we begin our inner journey towards reconciliation.

Becoming a frequent communicant of the Holy Mysteries of Christ’s Body and Blood, imparts to us the grace needed for the healing of the soul, and frees the soul from the the bondage that comes from the sin that has weighted us down.

Strictly keeping a Prayer Rule, as directed by our priest or spiritual father, also contributes to the healing process. Reading spiritually uplifting books, as well as the lives of the saints, greatly contributes towards the transformation that can be ours if we take our faith seriously. As well, the fasting rules of the Church are designed to help us become whole, and further the healing process that began when we first made a commitment to living a life in Christ.

If we fail to follow these time tested spiritual practices that are meant to bring about healing of body and soul, we will not find the healing that is available to us. Instead, we will find ourselves treating the Church as though she were simply a hospice, where we get a quick fix for the pain and sin that keeps us from becoming whole, and find ourselves with short term results that only mask the sin and sickness that rule our lives.

It is up to us to decide if we will allow the Church to be a hospital that brings about the cure, or simply a hospice that masks the pain and sin. The choice is ours, and it is a choice that should not be put off, lest the hour come when we are called to account before the Throne of God, and we stand before Him with an unhealed heart.



Daily Reflection
Keep Things Simple



“I appeal to you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual/divinely-reasonable worship (λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν). Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. For by the grace given to me I bid every one among you not to be high-minded above/beyond what needs to be minded (μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ’ ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν), but to think with sober judgment (φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν), each according to the measure of faith which God has assigned him.” (Rom 12: 1-3)

The message I carry away from this passage today is, “Keep things simple!” By and in the Word (“Logos”) of God, we are given the Way of offering “worship” to Him, and that Way is “logic-al” (logike) or “divinely-reasonable,” made accessible to all of us “according to the measure of faith” God has assigned every one of us. But it’s not always easy, to keep things simple, particularly for those of us who tend to overthink things, or perhaps to

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occupy our minds and hearts with matters “above/beyond what needs to be minded,” – and that is our here and now; our immediate responsibilities, according to our vocation.

If I find myself overburdened today, with overthinking things, let me simplify matters and hand all that “stinking thinking” over to God. Let me re-connect with Him, in heartfelt prayer, and let myself “be transformed by the renewal of my mind,” in the simplicity of God’s grace. God, help me do the next right thing today, and move forward in Your loving presence. “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done” with all of us on this sunny Friday, Lord, and thank You for the small measure of faith You give me today.



Remove your self, your egoism, from your actions and then you will be motivated by pure reasons. Indiscreet behaviour will often do more harm than the irresponsible behaviour of the insane, because the indiscreet wound sensitive hearts with their sharp words and will often mortally traumatize them by leading them to desperation.

Elder Paisios of Mount Athos
Spiritual Counsels Vol. II
Spiritual Awakening p.86

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PARISH NEWS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Sunday, July 15th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Saturday, July 21st

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, July 22nd

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Saturday, July 28th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, July 29th

9:40 am: Hours

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Saturday, August 4th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 5th

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General Confession

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Saturday, August 11th

6:30 pm: Vespers

Sunday, August 12th

9:40 am: Hours

9:45 am: General Confession

10:00 am: Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Request & Bulletin Sponsor: Use the sign-up sheet at the candle stand for the health of, eternal memory of or a Pannikhida for a loved one or friend will be remembered during Divine Liturgy for the day/week that you signed up for.

Memorial Candles: Candles can be purchased at the candle stand, suggested donation of \$10 for a large one.

Private Confessions: **Can be heard a half hour before any service.** See Father Matthew for other times.

General Confession: Will be at 9:45 am on the first Sunday of the month.

Receiving Holy Communion: Holy Communion is offered to those baptized Orthodox Christians who have prepared themselves for the reception of the Sacrament by prayer and fasting. Blessed Bread is available for all our visitors at the very end of the Divine Liturgy.

Pannikhida Service: The third Sunday of each month there will be a Pannikhida after Divine Liturgy. If you would like your loved ones to be remembered please give a list of names to Father Matthew before that Sunday for those to be remembered in the month.

Special Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail: OrthodoxChurchMotherOfGod@outlook.com

The Living Clean Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Friday from 8-9:15 pm downstairs in the community room.

The Grey Book Step Meeting Group of Narcotics Anonymous meets every Tuesday from 7-8:00 pm downstairs in the community room.