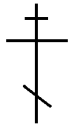


Saint Vladimir Orthodox Church
Свято-Владимирская Православная Церковь
Pentecost 2009



Schedule of Services

Blindman

Sat. May 23 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. May 24 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Leave-Taking (Apodosis) of Pascha, the Resurrection of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ

Tues. May 26 - Matins Pascha 5:30 p.m. (note this is not a complete vigil, but Matins alone)

This is the completion of the feast of the Resurrection. The service will be served just as it was at Pascha, all are strongly encouraged to attend. This is your last chance to sing "Christ is risen!"

Ascension of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ

Wednesday, May 27 – Vespers and Liturgy 5:30 p.m.

Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council

Sat. May 30 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. May 31 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Pentecost

Sat. June 6 – Baptism of D'Arcy Starratt 3:00 p.m. Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. June 7 - Hours and Divine Liturgy followed by Kneeling Vespers 9:45 a.m.

Wed. June 10 - Readers Vespers 5:30

(note - fast-free week)

All Saints

Sat. June 13 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. June 14 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

(Apostles' Fast begins June 15)

Wed. June 17 - Readers Vespers 5:30

All Saints of North America

Sat. June 20 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. June 21 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 9:45 a.m.

Wed. June 24 - Readers Vespers 5:30

Prophet Amos, Tsar-Martyr Lazar of Serbia, Blessed Augustine of Hippo

Sat. June 27 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. June 28 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wed. July 1 - Readers Vespers 5:30 **(to be confirmed)**

St. Alban, Protomartyr of Britain

Sat. July 4 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. July 5 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Monday July 6 - **Birth of St. John the Baptist, the Forerunner** - Readers Vespers 5:30

Feast of the Holy Apostles SS Peter and Paul

Sat. July 11 - Vespers 5:30 p.m.

Sun. July 12 - Hours and Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.

Wed. July 15 - Readers Vespers 5:30

Please pray for:

- ▶ Our parish, that we would grow in holiness and charity, in maturity and in numbers, and that the way would be opened to find a larger, more permanent home
- ▶ Our catechumens who are preparing for baptism and holy illumination
- ▶ Those who are travelling, that they would return to us safely
- ▶ Those who are grieving
- ▶ Those who are suffering due to war, famine, poverty and injustice
- ▶ Christians facing persecution for the sake of the Faith

Please Make Special Note of the Following Announcements

People frequently make special requests for Panikhidas (prayers for the departed) and for other prayers of blessings to be served after the Sunday Liturgy. This practice can no longer be carried on, *except in very exceptional circumstances*, as it extends the time of the Liturgy and places an extra burden on the priest and choir. All such rituals will be performed on Saturdays – before or after Vespers – or at other prearranged times. Requests for such services must also be made at least twenty-four hours in advance.

A Panikhida is a special ritual which is performed at a specific time, i.e., at the time of death, forty days after, and/or on the anniversary of a death. The general rule is that the Panikhida is reserved only for departed Orthodox Christians, although in the case of family members or very close friends, this rule is often overlooked. Also, there is no such practice as a “general Panikhida” except for Soul Saturdays. Normally a Panikhida is served for one or two very specific departed persons, and it is not the practice for people to put in extra names at the last minute.

In most Orthodox churches there is the practice of making an offering to the church at the time of the Panikhida and of giving the priest something as a token of appreciation. These practices have never been stressed at St. Vladimir’s, and we have no desire to lay extra financial burdens on our people. Bear in mind that a Panikhida, as a service of the Church, is there for the people; it is not something to be bought and sold. Hence, there are no “prices”, and no one is required or expected to “pay”. If anyone wishes to make a special offering and/or to express appreciation to the priest, this is fine. If a person does not wish to do so, this is also equally acceptable. Everyone should act in accordance with his or her own inclination. (It has also been the custom at St. Vladimir’s – and will continue to be so - that, when a special thank-you offering is given to the priest, that offering goes into the Russia box for the relief of poverty in Russia.)

There is also the custom of submitting names to be remembered during the Prothesis at the beginning of the Divine Liturgy. (The Prothesis or Proskimidia) is that portion of the Liturgy, right before the opening blessing, when the priest prepares the bread and wine for the Liturgy.) The usual practice in this ritual is as follows: The priest reads the names submitted, and with each one places a particle of bread on the diskos. Again, as with a Panikhida, this practice is normally reserved for the commemoration of living or departed Orthodox believers, or family members or very close friends. It should not be lightly regarded as a time when one has commemorations made for whoever may come to mind. Before submitting such names, think carefully of who may need special prayer at that particular time, and submit only those names. Submitting long lists of names chosen at random makes the whole process virtually meaningless. In order for the names submitted to be commemorated, they must be submitted during the Prothesis while the priest is still in the process of preparing the diskos.

In order to maintain a quiet and peaceful atmosphere in our church, we would like to remind you of the following points:

- ❖ It is extremely important to be on time for the Liturgy. Strictly speaking, the official beginning of the Divine Liturgy is the opening Blessing. “Blessed is the Kingdom ...” Anyone wishing to receive Holy Communion must be present in the church by the time of the opening blessing. The Liturgy is essentially the act of sanctifying all of Creation, all of the Kingdom of God. If one is not present to take part when this act of sanctification is officially enunciated, the one cannot partake of the fullness of the Kingdom.
- ❖ Once the Liturgy has begun, there should be no moving in and out of the church. In the case of young children, there may well be times when they have to be permitted to go to the washroom. This cannot be avoided with children, but it should be done as quietly as possible.

❖ The proper posture during the Liturgy is standing, although one may sit during the reading from the Apostle and during the sermon or other times of instruction. However, during prayers, antiphons, and all other parts of the Liturgy one normally stands quietly and prayerfully. It does, of course, sometimes happen that due to illness, infirmity, weakness or some other reason, one may have to sit for a while. This is entirely acceptable, but please do so only if it is necessary. There should be no “relaxing” during divine services. We are in the church in order to find strength and peace through prayer, not through “taking it easy” for a while.

❖ If very young children have the tendency to wander around during the service, don't try to restrain them, but let them do as they wish. The Lord likes to see the tiny ones feeling at home and at ease in His Temple. (The priest also gets a charge out of it.)

❖ During all offices and services (including the hours), there should be no movement during the Lord's Prayer. ***This includes activities such as lighting candles and venerating icons.*** Apart from this being an ancient pious custom well worth preserving, the Lord's prayer is really the climax and precious pearl of all prayer. It is in the very words used by Christ himself, and in reciting it we are uniting our own prayer fully and completely with the prayer of the incarnate Christ. Surely there can be few greater joys or privileges for the Christian.

After the Liturgy, the service is not over until the prayers of Thanksgiving are recited. Please keep all movement/conversation to a minimum. Ideally, any preparation for coffee hour would wait until the conclusion of these prayers, but if you must work in the kitchen, please maintain silence. Remember that conversations in the kitchen (and opening/closing of cupboard doors) can be heard in the sanctuary. If you must speak to someone, please go into the synaxis (meeting) room and talk quietly. ***Quiet should be maintained until people have finished venerating the icons and the clergy have left the altar as prayer is still taking place.*** Thank you for your cooperation.

The Apostles' Fast

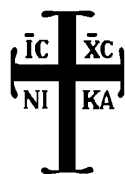
The general rules are as follows (from Chapter 33 of the Typikon):

"It should be noted that in the Fast of the Holy Apostles and of the Nativity of Christ, on Tuesday and Thursday we do not eat fish, but only oil or wine. On Monday, Wednesday and Friday, we eat neither oil nor wine.... On Saturday and Sunday we eat fish. If there occur on Tuesday or Thursday a Saint who has a [Great] Doxology, we eat fish; if on Monday, the same; but if on Wednesday or Friday, we allow only oil and wine.... If it be a Saint who has a Vigil on Wednesday or Friday, or the Saint whose temple it is, we allow oil and wine and fish...."

Please consult with Father Vladimir if you have any questions about establishing a discipline for this or any fasting period.

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit, that my thoughts may all be holy;
Act in me, O Holy Spirit, that my work, too, may be holy;
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit, that I love but what is holy;
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit, to defend all that is holy;
Guard me then, O Holy Spirit, that I may always may be holy.

St. Augustine of Hippo (June 15/28)



The Ascension of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ

from OCA.org

"I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and to My God, and Your God" (John 20:17).

In these words the Risen Christ described to Mary Magdalene the mystery of His Resurrection. She had to carry this mysterious message to His disciples, "as they mourned and wept" (Mark 16:10). The disciples listened to these glad tidings with fear and amazement, with doubt and mistrust. It was not Thomas alone who doubted among the Eleven. On the contrary, it appears that only one of the Eleven did not doubt - St John, the disciple "whom Jesus loved." He alone grasped the mystery of the empty tomb at once: "and he saw, and believed" (John 20:8). Even Peter left the sepulcher in amazement, "wondering at that which was come to pass" (Luke 24:12).

The disciples did not expect the Resurrection. The women did not, either. They were quite certain that Jesus was dead and rested in the grave, and they went to the place "where He was laid," with the spices they had prepared, "that they might come and anoint Him." They had but one thought: "Who shall roll away the stone from the door of the sepulcher for us?" (Mark 16:1-3; Luke 24:1). And therefore, on not finding the body, Mary Magdalene was sorrowful and complained: "They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him" (John 20:13). On hearing the good news from the angel, the women fled from the sepulchre in fear and trembling: "Neither said they anything to any man, for they were afraid" (Mark 16:8). And when they spoke no one believed them, in the same way as no one 'had believed Mary, who saw the Lord, or the disciples as they walked on their way into the country, (Mark 16:13), and who recognized Him in the breaking of bread. "And afterward He appeared unto the Eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen Him after He was risen" (Mark 16:10-14).

From whence comes this "hardness of heart" and hesitation? Why were their eyes so "holden," why were the disciples so much afraid of the news, and why did the Easter joy so slowly, and with such difficulty, enter the Apostles' hearts? Did not they, who were with Him from the beginning, "from the baptism of John," see all the signs of power which He performed before the face of the whole people? The lame walked, the blind saw, the dead were raised, and all infirmities were healed. Did they not behold, only a week earlier, how He raised by His word Lazarus from the dead, who had already been in the grave for four days? Why then was it so strange to them that the Master had arisen Himself? How was it that they came to forget that which the Lord used to tell them on many occasions, that after suffering and death He would arise on the third day?

The mystery of the Apostles' "unbelief" is partly disclosed in the narrative of the Gospel: "But we trusted that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel," with disillusionment and complaint said the two disciples to their mysterious Companion on the way to Emmaus (Luke 24:21). They meant: He was betrayed, condemned to death and crucified. The news of the Resurrection brought by the women only "astonished" them. They still wait for an earthly triumph, for an external victory. The same temptation possesses their hearts, which first prevented them from accepting "the preaching of the Cross" and made them argue every time the Saviour tried to reveal His mystery to them. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26). It was still difficult to understand this.

He had the power to arise, why did He allow what that had happened to take place at all? Why did He take upon Himself disgrace, blasphemy and wounds? In the eyes of all Jerusalem, amidst the vast crowds assembled for the Great Feast, He was condemned and suffered a shameful death. And now He enters not into the Holy City, neither to the people which beheld His shame and death, nor to the High Priests and elders, nor to Pilate - so that He might make their crime obvious and smite their pride. Instead, He sends His disciples away to remote Galilee and appears to them there. Even much earlier the disciples wondered, "How is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" (John 14:22). Their wonder continues, and even on the day of His glorious Ascension the Apostles question the Lord, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). They still did not comprehend the meaning of His Resurrection, they did not understand what it meant that He was "ascending" to the Father. Their eyes were opened but later, when "the promise of the Father" had been fulfilled.

In the Ascension resides the meaning and the fullness of Christ's Resurrection.

The Lord did not rise in order to return again to the fleshly order of life, so as to live again and commune with the disciples and the multitudes by means of preaching and miracles. Now he does not even stay with them, but only "appears" to them during the forty days, from time to time, and always in a miraculous and mysterious manner. "He was not always with them now, as He was before the Resurrection," comments St John Chrysostom. "He came and again disappeared, thus leading them on to higher conceptions. He no longer permitted them to continue in their former relationship toward Him, but took effectual measures to secure these two objects: That the fact of His Resurrection should be believed, and that He Himself should be ever after apprehended to be greater than man." There was something new and unusual in His person (cf. John 21:1-14). As St John Chrysostom says, "It was not an open presence, but a certain testimony of the fact that He was present." That is why the disciples were confused and frightened. Christ arose not in the same way as those who were restored to life before Him. Theirs was a resurrection for a time, and they returned to life in the same body, which was subject to death and corruption - returned to the previous mode of life. But Christ arose for ever, unto eternity. He arose in a body of glory, immortal and incorruptible. He arose, never to die, for "He clothed the mortal in the splendor of incorruption." His glorified Body was already exempt from the fleshly order of existence. "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (I Cor. 15:42-44).

This mysterious transformation of human bodies, of which St Paul was speaking in the case of our Lord, had been accomplished in three days. Christ's work on earth was accomplished. He had suffered, was dead and buried, and now rose to a higher mode of existence. By His Resurrection He abolished and destroyed death, abolished the law of corruption, "and raised with Himself the whole race of Adam." Christ has risen, and now "no dead are left in the grave" (cf. The Easter Sermon of St John Chrysostom). And now He ascends to the Father, yet He does not "go away," but abides with the faithful for ever (cf. The Kontakion of Ascension). For He raises the very earth with Him to heaven, and even higher than any heaven. God's power, in the phrase of St John Chrysostom, "manifests itself not only in the Resurrection, but in something much stronger." For "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God" (Mark 16:19).

And with Christ, man's nature ascends also.

"We who seemed unworthy of the earth, are now raised to heaven," says St John Chrysostom. "We who were unworthy of earthly dominion have been raised to the Kingdom on high, have ascended higher than heaven, have come to occupy the King's throne, and the same nature from which the angels guarded Paradise, stopped not until it ascended to the throne of the Lord." By His Ascension the Lord not only opened to man the entrance to heaven, not only appeared before the face of God on our behalf and for our sake, but likewise "transferred man" to the high places. "He honored them He loved by putting them close to the Father." God quickened and raised us together with Christ, as St Paul says, "and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephes. 2:6). Heaven received the inhabitants of the earth. "The First fruits of them that slept" sits now on high, and in Him all creation is summed up and bound together. "The earth rejoices in mystery, and the heavens are filled with joy."

"The terrible ascent...." Terror-stricken and trembling stand the angelic hosts, contemplating the Ascension of Christ. And trembling they ask each other, "What is this vision? One who is man in appearance ascends in His body higher than the heavens, as God."

Thus the Office for the Feast of the Ascension depicts the mystery in a poetical language. As on the day of Christ's Nativity the earth was astonished on beholding God in the flesh, so now the Heavens do tremble and cry out. "The Lord of Hosts, Who reigns over all, Who is Himself the head 'Of all, Who is preeminent in all things, Who has reinstated creation in its former order - He is the King of Glory." And the heavenly doors are opened: "Open, Oh heavenly gates, and receive God in the flesh." It is an open allusion to Psalms 24:7-10, now prophetically interpreted. "Lift up your heads, Oh ye gates, and be lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty...." St Chrysostom says, "Now the angels have received that for which they have long waited, the archangels see that for which they have long thirsted. They have seen our nature shining on the King's throne, glistening with glory and eternal beauty.... Therefore they descend in order to see the unusual and marvelous vision: Man appearing in heaven."

The Ascension is the token of Pentecost, the sign of its coming, "The Lord has ascended to heaven and will send the Comforter to the world"

For the Holy Spirit was not yet in the world, until Jesus was glorified. And the Lord Himself told the disciples, "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). The gifts of the Spirit are "gifts of reconciliation," a seal of an accomplished salvation and of the ultimate reunion of the world with God. And this was accomplished only in the Ascension. "And one saw miracles follow miracles," says St John Chrysostom, "ten days prior to this our nature ascended to the King's throne, while today the Holy Ghost has descended on to our nature." The joy of the Ascension lies in the promise of the Spirit. "Thou didst give joy to Thy disciples by a promise of the Holy Spirit." The victory of Christ is wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

"On high is His body, here below with us is His Spirit. And so we have His token on high, that is His body, which He received from us, and here below we have His Spirit with us. Heaven received the Holy Body, and the earth accepted the Holy Spirit. Christ came and sent the Spirit. He ascended, and with Him our body ascended also" (St John Chrysostom). The revelation of the Holy Trinity was completed. Now the Spirit Comforter is poured forth on all flesh. "Hence comes foreknowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of what is hidden, distribution of good gifts, the heavenly citizenship, a place in the chorus of angels, joy without end, abiding in God, the being made like to God, and, highest of all, the being made God!" (St Basil, On the Holy Spirit, IX). Beginning with the Apostles, and through communion with them - by an unbroken succession - Grace is spread to all believers. Through renewal and glorification in the Ascended Christ, man's nature became receptive of the spirit. "And unto the world He gives quickening forces through His human body," says Bishop Theophanes. "He holds it completely in Himself and penetrates it with His strength, out of Himself; and He likewise draws the angels to Himself through the spirit of man, giving them space for action and thus making them blessed." All this is done through the Church, which is "the Body of Christ;" that is, His "fullness" (Ephesians 1:23). "The Church is the fulfillment of Christ," continues Bishop Theophanes, "perhaps in the same way as the tree is the fulfillment of the seed. That which is contained in the seed in a contracted form receives its development in the tree."

The very existence of the Church is the fruit of the Ascension. It is in the Church that man's nature is truly ascended to the Divine heights. "And gave Him to be Head over all things" (Ephesians 1:22). St John Chrysostom comments: "Amazing! Look again, whither He has raised the Church. As though He were lifting it up by some engine, He has raised it up to a vast height, and set it on yonder throne; for where the Head is, there is the body also. There is no interval of separation between the Head and the body; for were there a separation, then would the one no longer be a body, nor would the other any longer be a Head." The whole race of men is to follow Christ, even in His ultimate exaltation, "to follow in His train." Within the Church, through an acquisition of the Spirit in the fellowship of Sacraments, the Ascension continues still, and will continue until the

measure is full. "Only then shall the Head be filled up, when the body is rendered perfect, when we are knit together and united," concludes St John Chrysostom.

The Ascension is a sign and token of the Second Coming. "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11).

The mystery of God's Providence will be accomplished in the Return of the Risen Lord. In the fulfillment of time, Christ's kingly power will be revealed and spread over the whole of faithful mankind. Christ bequeathes the Kingdom to the whole of the faithful. "And I appoint unto you a Kingdom as My Father has appointed unto me. That ye may eat and drink at My table in My Kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Luke 22:29-30). Those who followed Him faithfully will sit with Him on their thrones on the day of His coming. "To him that overcomes will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne" (Rev. 3:21). Salvation will be consummated in the Glory. "Conceive to yourself the throne, the royal throne, conceive the immensity of the privilege. This, at least if we chose, might more avail to startle us, yea, even than hell itself" (St John Chrysostom).

We should tremble more at the thought of that abundant Glory which is appointed unto the redeemed, than at the thought of the eternal darkness. "Think near Whom Thy Head is seated...." Or rather, Who is the Head. In very truth, "wondrous and terrible is Thy divine ascension from the mountain, O Giver of Life." A terrible and wondrous height is the King's throne. In face of this height all flesh stands silent, in awe and trembling. "He has Himself descended to the lowest depths of humiliation, and raised up man to the height of exaltation."

What then should we do? "If thou art the body of Christ, bear the Cross, for He bore it" (St John Chrysostom).

"With the power of Thy Cross, Oh Christ, establish my thoughts, so that I may sing and glorify Thy saving Ascension."

Pentecost –The Descent of the Holy Spirit

From OCA.org

In the Church's annual liturgical cycle, Pentecost is "the last and great day." It is the celebration by the Church of the coming of the Holy Spirit as the end - the achievement and fulfillment - of the entire history of salvation. For the same reason, however, it is also the celebration of the beginning: it is the "birthday" of the Church as the presence among us of the Holy Spirit, of the new life in Christ, of grace, knowledge, adoption to God and holiness.

This double meaning and double joy is revealed to us, first of all, in the very name of the feast. Pentecost in Greek means fifty, and in the sacred biblical symbolism of numbers, the number fifty symbolizes both the fulness of time and that which is beyond time: the Kingdom of God itself. It symbolizes the fulness of time by its first component: 49, which is the fulness of seven (7 x 7): the number of time. And, it symbolizes that which is beyond time by its second component: 49 + 1, this one being the new day, the "day without evening" of God's eternal Kingdom. With the descent of the Holy Spirit upon Christ's disciples, the time of salvation, the Divine work of redemption has been completed, the fulness revealed, all gifts bestowed: it belongs to us now to "appropriate" these gifts, to be that which we have become in Christ: participants and citizens of His Kingdom.

THE VIGIL OF PENTECOST

The all-night Vigil service begins with a solemn invitation:

"Let us celebrate Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, The appointed day of promise, and the fulfillment of hope, The mystery which is as great as it is precious."

In the coming of the Spirit, the very essence of the Church is revealed:

"The Holy Spirit provides all, Overflows with prophecy, fulfills the priesthood, Has taught wisdom to illiterates, has revealed fishermen as theologians, He brings together the whole council of the Church."

In the three readings of the Old Testament (Numbers 11:16-17, 24-29; Joel 2:23-32; Ezekiel 36:24-28) we hear the prophecies concerning the Holy Spirit. We are taught that the entire history of mankind was directed towards the day on which God "would pour out His Spirit upon all flesh." This day has come! All hope, all promises, all expectations have been fulfilled. At the end of the Aposticha hymns, for the first time since Easter, we sing the hymn: "O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth....," the one with which we inaugurate all our services, all prayers, which is, as it were, the life-breath of the Church, and whose coming to us, whose "descent" upon us in this festal Vigil, is indeed the very experience of the Holy Spirit "coming and abiding in us."

Having reached its climax, the Vigil continues as an explosion of joy and light for "verily the light of the Comforter has come and illumined the world." In the Gospel reading (John 20:19-23) the feast is interpreted to us as the feast of the Church, of her

divine nature, power and authority. The Lord sends His disciples into the world, as He Himself was sent by His Father. Later, in the antiphons of the Liturgy, we proclaim the universality of the apostles' preaching, the cosmical significance of the feast, the sanctification of the whole world, the true manifestation of God's Kingdom.

THE VESPER OF PENTECOST

The liturgical peculiarity of Pentecost is a very special Vespers of the day itself. Usually this service follows immediately the Divine Liturgy, is "added" to it as its own fulfillment. The service begins as a solemn "summing up" of the entire celebration, as its liturgical synthesis. We hold flowers in our hands symbolizing the joy of the eternal spring, inaugurated by the coming of the Holy Spirit. After the festal Entrance, this joy reaches its climax in the singing of the Great Prokeimenon:

"Who is so great a God as our God?"

Then, having reached this climax, we are invited to kneel. This is our first kneeling since Easter. It signifies that after these fifty days of Paschal joy and fullness, of experiencing the Kingdom of God, the Church now is about to begin her pilgrimage through time and history. It is evening again, and the night approaches, during which temptations and failures await us, when, more than anything else, we need Divine help, that presence and power of the Holy Spirit, who has already revealed to us the joyful End, who now will help us in our effort towards fulfillment and salvation.

All this is revealed in the three prayers which the celebrant reads now as we all kneel and listen to him. In the first prayer, we bring to God our repentance, our increased appeal for forgiveness of sins, the first condition for entering into the Kingdom of God.

In the second prayer, we ask the Holy Spirit to help us, to teach us to pray and to follow the true path in the dark and difficult night of our earthly existence. Finally, in the third prayer, we remember all those who have achieved their earthly journey, but who are united with us in the eternal God of Love.

The joy of Easter has been completed and we again have to wait for the dawn of the Eternal Day. Yet, knowing our weakness, humbling ourselves by kneeling, we also know the joy and the power of the Holy Spirit who has come. We know that God is with us, that in Him is our victory.

Thus is completed the feast of Pentecost and we enter "the ordinary time" of the year. Yet, every Sunday now will be called "after Pentecost" - and this means that it is from the power and light of these fifty days that we shall receive our own power, the Divine help in our daily struggle. At Pentecost we decorate our churches with flowers and green branches - for the Church "never grows old, but is always young." It is an evergreen, ever-living Tree of grace and life, of joy and comfort. For the Holy Spirit - "the Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life - comes and abides in us, and cleanses us from all impurity," and fills our life with meaning, love, faith and hope.

Father Alexander Schmemmann (1974)

Justin Martyr – June 1/14

From OCA.org

The Holy Martyr Justin the Philosopher was born around 114 at Sychem, an ancient city of Samaria. Justin's parents were pagan Greeks. From his childhood the saint displayed intelligence, love for knowledge and a fervent devotion to the knowledge of Truth. When he came of age he studied the various schools of Greek philosophy: the Stoics, the Peripatetics, the Pythagoreans, the Platonists, and he concluded that none of these pagan teachings revealed the way to knowledge of the true God.

Once, when he was strolling in a solitary place beyond the city and pondering about where to seek the way to the knowledge of Truth, he met an old man. In the ensuing conversation he revealed to Justin the essential nature of the Christian teaching and advised him to seek the answers to all the questions of life in the books of Holy Scripture. "But before anything else," said the holy Elder, "pray diligently to God, so that He might open to you the doors of Light. No one is able to comprehend Truth, unless he is granted understanding from God Himself, Who reveals it to each one who seeks Him in prayer and in love."

In his thirtieth year, Justin accepted holy Baptism (between the years 133 and 137). From this time St Justin devoted his talents and vast philosophical knowledge to preaching the Gospel among the pagans. He began to journey throughout the Roman Empire, sowing the seeds of faith. "Whosoever is able to proclaim Truth and does not proclaim it will be condemned by God," he wrote.

Justin opened a school of Christian philosophy. St Justin subsequently defended the truth of Christian teaching, persuasively confuting pagan sophistry (in a debate with the Cynic philosopher Crescentius) and heretical distortions of Christianity. He also spoke out against the teachings of the Gnostic Marcian.

In the year 155, when the emperor Antoninus Pius (138-161) started a persecution against Christians, St Justin personally gave him an Apology in defense of two Christians innocently condemned to execution, Ptolemy and Lucias. The name of the third remains unknown.

In the Apology he demonstrated the falseness of the slander against Christians accused unjustly for merely having the name of Christians. The Apology had such a favorable effect upon the emperor that he ceased the persecution. St Justin journeyed, by decision of the emperor, to Asia Minor where they were persecuting Christians with particular severity. He proclaimed the joyous message of the imperial edict throughout the surrounding cities and countryside.

The debate of St Justin with the Rabbi Trypho took place at Ephesus. The Orthodox philosopher demonstrated the truth of the Christian teaching of faith on the basis of the Old Testament prophetic writings. St Justin gave an account of this debate in his work Dialogue with Trypho the Jew.

A second Apology of Saint Justin was addressed to the Roman Senate. It was written in the year 161, soon after Marcus Aurelius (161-180) ascended the throne.

When he returned to Italy, St Justin, like the Apostles, preached the Gospel everywhere, converting many to the Christian Faith. When the saint arrived at Rome, the envious Crescentius, whom Justin always defeated in debate, brought many false accusations against him before the Roman court. St Justin was put under guard, subjected to torture and suffered martyrdom in 165. The relics of St Justin the Philosopher rest in Rome.

In addition to the above-mentioned works, the following are also attributed to the holy martyr Justin the Philosopher: *An Address to the Greeks; A Hortatory Address to the Greeks; On the Sole Government of God*

St John of Damascus preserved a significant part of St Justin's *On the Resurrection*, which has not survived. The church historian Eusebius asserts that St Justin wrote books entitled *The Singer; Denunciation of all Existing Heresies and Against Marcian*

In the Russian Church the memory of the martyr is particularly glorified in temples of his name. He is invoked by those who seek help in their studies.

The holy martyrs Justin, Chariton, Euelpistus, Hierax, Peonus, Valerian, Justus and the martyr Charito suffered with St Justin the Philosopher in the year 166. They were brought to Rome and thrown into prison. The saints bravely confessed their faith in Christ before the court of the prefect Rusticus. Rusticus asked St Justin, whether he really thought that after undergoing tortures he would go to heaven and receive a reward from God. Saint Justin answered, "Not only do I think this, but I know and am fully assured of it."

The prefect proposed to all the Christian prisoners that they offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. When they refused he issued a sentence of death, and the saints were beheaded.

Feast of Ss Peter and Paul

Sermon of Saint Augustine, Bishop of Hippo

Today the Holy Church piously remembers the sufferings of the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Apostles Peter and Paul.

St. Peter, the fervent follower of Jesus Christ, for the profound confession of His Divinity: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God," was deemed worthy by the Savior to hear in answer, "Blessed art thou, Simon ... I tell thee, that thou art Peter [Petrus], and on this stone [petra] I build My Church" (Mt.16:16-18). On "this stone" [petra], is on that which thou sayest: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" it is on this thy confession I build My Church. Wherefore the "thou art Peter": it is from the "stone" [petra] that Peter [Petrus] is, and not from Peter [Petrus] that the "stone" [petra] is, just as the Christian is from Christ, and not Christ from the Christian. Do you want to know, from what sort of "rock" [petra] the Apostle Peter [Petrus] was named? Hear the Apostle Paul: "Brethren, I do not want ye to be ignorant," says the Apostle of Christ, "how all our fathers were all under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and all were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (1 Cor.10: 1-4). Here is the from whence the "Rock" is Peter.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, in the final days of His earthly life, in the days of His mission to the race of man, chose from among the disciples His twelve Apostles to preach the Word of God. Among them, the Apostle Peter for his fiery ardor was vouchsafed to occupy the first place (Mt.10:2) and to be as it were the representative person for all the Church. Therefore it is said to him,



preferentially, after the confession: "I will give unto thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in the heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth: shall be loosed in heaven" (Mt.16: 19). Therefore it was not one man, but rather the One Universal Church, that received these "keys" and the right "to bind and loosen." And that it was actually the Church that received this right, and not exclusively a single person, turn your attention to another place of the Scriptures, where the same Lord says to all His Apostles, "Receive ye the Holy Spirit" and further after this, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them: and whose soever sins ye retain, are retained" (John 20: 22-23); or: "whatsoever ye bind upon the earth, shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosened in heaven" (Mt.18:18). Thus, it is the Church that binds, the Church that loosens; the Church, built upon the foundational cornerstone, Jesus Christ Himself (Eph 2:20), doth bind and loosen. Let both the binding and the loosening be feared: the loosening, in order not to fall under this again; the binding, in order not to remain forever in this condition. Therefore "Iniquities ensnare a man, and everyone is bound in the chains of his own sins," says Wisdom (Prov 5:22); and except for Holy Church nowhere is it possible to receive the loosening.

After His Resurrection the Lord entrusted the Apostle Peter to shepherd His spiritual flock not because, that among the disciples only Peter alone was pre-deserved to shepherd the flock of Christ, but Christ addresses Himself chiefly to Peter because, that Peter was first among the Apostles and as such the representative of the Church; besides which, having turned in this instance to Peter alone, as to the top Apostle, Christ by this confirms the unity of the Church. "Simon of John" -- says the Lord to Peter -- "lovest thou Me?" -- and the Apostle answered: "Yea, Lord, Thou knowest that I love Thee"; and a second time it was thus asked, and a second time he thus answered; being asked a third time, seeing that as it were not believed, he was saddened. But how is it possible for him not to believe That One, Who knew his heart? And wherefore then Peter answered: "Lord, Thou knowest all; Thou knowest that I love Thee." "And sayeth Jesus to him" all three times "Feed My sheep" (John 20:15-17).

Besides this, the triple appealing of the Savior to Peter and the triple confession of Peter before the Lord had a particular beneficial purpose for the Apostle. That one, to whom was given "the keys of the kingdom" and the right "to bind and to loose," bound himself thrice by fear and cowardice (Mt.26:69-75), and the Lord thrice loosens him by His appeal and in turn by his confession of strong love. And to shepherd literally the flock of Christ was acquired by all the Apostles and their successors. "Take heed, therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock," the Apostle Paul urges church presbyters, "over which the Holy Spirit hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of the God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts 20:28); and the Apostle Peter to the elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof not by constraint, but willingly: not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind: neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being examples to the flock. And when is appeared the Prince of pastors, ye will receive unfading crowns of glory" (1 Pet. 5:2-4).

It is remarkable that Christ, having said to Peter: "Feed My sheep," did not say: "Feed thy sheep," but rather to feed, good servant, the sheep of the Lord. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor.1:13). "Feed My sheep". Wherefore "wolfish robbers, wolfish oppressors, deceitful teachers and mercenaries, not being concerned about the flock" (Mt.7:15; Acts 20:29; 2 Pet 2:1; John 10:12), having plundered a strange flock and making of the spoils as though it be of their own particular gain, they think that they feed their flock. Such are not good pastors, as pastors of the Lord. "The good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep" (John 10:11), entrusted to Him by the chief Shepherd Himself (1 Pet 5:4). And the Apostle Peter, true to his calling, gave his soul for the very flock of Christ, having sealed his apostleship by a martyr's death, is now glorified throughout all the world.

The Apostle Paul, formerly Saul, was changed from a robbing wolf into a meek lamb. Formerly he was an enemy of the Church, then is manifest as an Apostle. Formerly he stalked it, then preached it. Having received from the high priests the authority at large to throw all Christians in chains for execution, he was already on the way, he breathed out "threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord" (Acts 9:1), he thirsted for blood, but "He that dwells in the Heavens shall laugh him to scorn" (Ps 2:4). When he, "having persecuted and vexed" in such manner "the Church of God" (1Cor.15:9; Acts 8:5), he came near Damascus, and the Lord from Heaven called to him: "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" and I am here, and I am there, I am everywhere: here is My head; there is My body. There becomes nothing of a surprise in this; we ourselves are members of the Body of Christ. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me; it is hard for thee to kick against the goad" (Acts 9:4-5). Saul, however, "trembling and frightened", cried out: "Who art Thou, Lord?" The Lord answered him, "I am Jesus Whom thou persecutest."

And Saul suddenly undergoes a change: "What wantest Thou me to do?" -- he cries out. And suddenly for him there is the Voice: "Arise, and go to the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:6). Here the Lord sends Ananias: "Arise and go into the street" to a man, "by the name of Saul," and baptize him, "for this one is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel" (Acts 9: 11, 15, 18). This vessel must be filled with My Grace. "Ananias, however, answered: Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he hath done to Thy saints in Jerusalem: and here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Thy Name" (Acts 9:13-14). But the Lord urgently commands Ananias: "Search for and fetch him, for this vessel is chosen by Me: for I shall show him what great things he must suffer for My name's sake" (Acts 9:11, 15-16).

And actually the Lord did show the Apostle Paul what things he had to suffer for His Name. He instructed him the deeds; He did not stop at the chains, the fetters, the prisons and shipwrecks; He Himself felt for him in his sufferings, He Himself guided him towards this day. On a single day the memory of the sufferings of both these Apostles is celebrated, though they suffered on separate days, but by the spirit and the closeness of their suffering they constitute one. Peter went first, and Paul followed soon after him. Formerly called Saul, and then Paul, having transformed his pride into humility. His very name (Paulus),

meaning "small, little, less," demonstrates this. What is the Apostle Paul after this? Ask him, and he himself gives answer to this: "I am," says he, "the least of the Apostles... but I have labored more abundantly than all of them: yet not I, but the grace of God, which was with me" (1 Cor.15:9-10).

And so, brethren, celebrating now the memory of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, remembering their venerable sufferings, we esteem their true faith and holy life, we esteem the innocence of their sufferings and pure confession. Loving in them the sublime quality and imitating them by great exploits, "in which to be likened to them" (2 Thess 3: 5-9), and we shall attain to that eternal bliss which is prepared for all the saints. The path of our life before was more grievous, thornier, harder, but "we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses" (Heb 12: 1), having passed by along it, made now for us easier, and lighter, and more readily passable. First there passed along it "the author and finisher of our faith," our Lord Jesus Christ Himself (Heb 12: 2); His daring Apostles followed after Him; then the martyrs, children, women, virgins and a great multitude of witnesses. Who acted in them and helped them on this path? He Who said, "Without Me ye can do nothing" (John 15: 5).

All Saints

We ought to have the most lively spiritual union with the heavenly inhabitant, with all the saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs, prelates, venerable and righteous men, as they are all members of one single body, the Church of Christ, to which we sinners also belong, and the living Head of which is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. This is why we call upon them in prayer, converse with them, thank and praise them. It is urgently necessary for all Christians to be in union with them, if they desire to make Christian progress, for the saints are our friends, our guides to salvation, who pray and intercede for us.

St. John of Kronstadt, *My Life in Christ*

In the Lives of the Saints are shown numerous but always certain ways of salvation, enlightenment, sanctification, transfiguration, "christification", deification; all the ways are shown by which man conquers sin, every sin; conquers passion, every passion; conquers the devil, every devil. There is a remedy there for every sin: from every passion – healing, from every death – resurrection, from every devil – deliverance; for all evils – salvation. There is no passion, no sin for which the Lives of the Saints do not show how the passion or sin in question is conquered, mortified, and uprooted.

St. Justin (Popovich), *Orthodox Faith and Life in Christ*

All Saints of North America

St. Innocent, St. Tikhon, St. Raphael (Hawaweeny), St. John (Maximovitch), St. Nikolai (Velimirovich), St. Herman, St. Alexis (Toth), St. Juvenaly, St. Peter the Aleut, St. Alexander (Hotovitsky), St. John (Kochurov), St. Yakov (Netsvetov), St. Basil (Martysz)

Come, let us praise the Saints of North America,
Holy hierarchs, venerable monastics and glorious martyrs,
pious men, women and children, both known and unknown.
Through their words and deeds in various walks of life,
by the grace of the Spirit they achieved true holiness.
As they now stand in the presence of Christ who glorified them,
they pray for us who celebrate their memory in love.

Come, let us assemble today,
and glorify the luminaries of the North American lands,
the glorious martyrs and holy bishops who confirmed our Faith,
the righteous dwellers in the wilderness,
and guides of the spiritual life.
Let us cry out to them in joy:
O All Saints of North America, known and unknown, pray to God for us.

As the brightest sun, as the brilliance of the morning star,
the precious feast of the Saints of North America has dawned for us,
to illumine us and to set our hearts on fire,
to imitate their godly lives,
and to follow their example of zeal for God.

Come let us assemble today,
and let us praise the elect of North America.
Having fought the good fight you have persevered in the Faith,
receiving your crowns of victory from God.
Beseech Him to deliver from every calamity and sorrow,
all who keep your holy memory in faith and love.



AKATHIST TO ST. JOHN (MAXIMOVITCH) OF SAN FRANCISCO (June 20/July2)

***Since many in the parish have a great love for St. John, we include his akathist here below as an aid to prayer.
O holy Father John, pray to God for us!***

Kontakion 1

Chosen wonderworker and superb servant of Christ, who pourest out in the latter times inexhaustible streams of inspiration and multitude of miracles. We praise Thee which love, and call out to Thee:
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Ikos 1

An angel in the flesh wast Thou manifested in the latter times by the grace of God Who ever careth for men. Seeing the beauty of Thy virtues, we Thy children now cry out to Thee:
Rejoice, Thou who didst live in virtue from earliest childhood.
Rejoice, Thou who didst ever live in fear of God and do His holy will.
Rejoice, Thou who didst manifest the grate of God in numberless virtues.
Rejoice, Thou who didst mystically hear the distant prayers of those in distress.
Rejoice, Thou who wast filled with love for Thy fellow men and didst do all possible for their salvation.
Rejoice, Thou who dost bring joy to all who pray to Thee in faith and love.
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 2

Seeing the abundance and variety of Thy virtues. O holy Hierarch, we see in Thee a living source of God's wonders in our time. Thou dost refresh with Thy love and miracles all who cry in faith to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 2

Being filled with love. Thou wast also filled with theology. O holy Father. And in Thee the knowledge of God flowed forth again in love for suffering men. Do Thou teach us also know the true God in love as we call out to Thee in admiration.
Rejoice. firm stronghold of Orthodox truth
Rejoice. precious vessel of the gifts of the Holy Spirit
Rejoice. righteous accuser of impiety and false doctrine
Rejoice ardent doer of the commandments of God
Rejoice. severe ascetic who gavest thyself no repose
Rejoice, loving shepherd of the flock of Christ
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 3

By God's mercy Thou wast manifest as a father to orphans and instructor of the young, raising them in the fear of God and preparing them for the service of God. Therefore all Thy children look to Thee with love and cry out with gratitude to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 3

Dwellers in heaven should be praising Thee and not we on earth, for our words are feeble beside Thy deeds. Yet offering to God what we have we cry out to Thee thus:
Rejoice Thou who didst protect Thy children by Thy constant prayer.
Rejoice Thou who didst ever guard Thy flock by the sign of the Cross.
Rejoice, Thou whose love knew no bounds of country or race
Rejoice, bright luminary beloved by all.
Rejoice, model of spiritual meekness.
Rejoice, giver of spiritual consolation to those in need.
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 4

Bewildered by Thy deeds of piety and love, we know not how to praise Thee worthily, O Hierarch John. Thou didst travel to the ends of the earth to save Thy people and preach the gospel to those in darkness. Thanking God for Thine apostolic labors, we cry out to Him: Alleluia.

Ikos 4

The people of many lands beheld Thy life and marveled at God's mercies even in these latter times. And so we also, marveling, cry out in awe:
Rejoice, enlightener of those in the darkness of unbelief.
Rejoice, Thou who didst follow Thy people to the farthest East and West.
Rejoice, fountain of miracles poured out by God.
Rejoice, loving chastiser of those who have gone astray.
Rejoice, speedy comfort to those who repent of their sins.
Rejoice, support of those who go on the right path.
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 5

Thou wast manifest as a vehicle of God's power to stop the destructive forces of fallen nature, O holy Hierarch, preserving Thy people on the island from the deadly wind and storm by Thy prayer and the sign of the Cross, So preserve us also who cry out in wonder unto God: Alleluia.

Ikos 5

All who have trusted in Thy help in desperate circumstances and adversities have found deliverance, O bold intercessor before the Throne of God. Therefore, we too do place our hope in Thee to protect us in dangers by Thy prayers before God as we call out to Thee:

Rejoice, Thou who didst stop the powers of nature from doing harm to Thy flock.

Rejoice, Thou who providest by Thy prayer for all in need.

Rejoice, inexhaustible bread for the hungry.

Rejoice, abundant wealth for those who live in poverty.

Rejoice, consolation for those in sorrow.

Rejoice, quick uplifting for those Who have fallen.

Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 6

Thou wast manifest as a new Moses, leading his flock out of slavery, O Hierarch John. Do deliver us also from slavery to sins and the enemies of God as we cry out to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 6

Thou didst do the impossible and persuade the authorities of this world to have pity on Thy flock, O good shepherd. Do pray for us now that we may live in peace and quiet, saving our souls as we gratefully cry to Thee:

Rejoice, helper of all who call upon Thee in faith.

Rejoice, Thou who deliverest from death and disaster.

Rejoice, Thou who preservest from lies and slander.

Rejoice, preserver of the innocent from bonds.

Rejoice, Thou who foilest the attacks of the unrighteous.

Rejoice, destroyer of lies and exalter of truth.

Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 7

O lover of the saints of East and West, Thou didst restore to the Orthodox Church the saints of the West, of lands which had fallen away from the truth. Now with these saints Thou dost pray for us to God as we on earth cry out to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 7

O fervent venerator of the holy Hierarchs of Gaul, Thou wast manifest in the latter times as one of them, exhorting Thy flock to preserve the same Orthodox faith that they confessed, and astonishing the peoples of the West by Thy holy life. Now preserve us in that same faith as we cry out to Thee:

Rejoice, new Martin by Thy miracles and ascetic feats.

Rejoice, new Germanus by Thy confession of the Orthodox faith.

Rejoice, new Hilary by Thy divine theology.

Rejoice, new Gregory by Thy love for God's saints.

Rejoice, new Faustus by Thy gentle love and monastic fervor.

Rejoice, new Caesarius by Thy firm yet loving rule of the Church of God.

Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter Times .

Kontakion 8

At the end of Thy life, O holy Hierarch, Thou wast called to the New World, to offer there Thy witness of ancient Christianity and to suffer persecution for Thy righteousness, thus perfecting Thy soul for heaven. Now marveling at Thy patience and long-suffering, we all cry out to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 8

O laborer of Christ's vineyard who knew no rest even at the end of Thy much-toiling life, help us now in our labors as we strive to be faithful to Christ, crying out in praise to Thee:

Rejoice, Thou who didst endure to the end and so attain salvation

Rejoice, Thou who wast deemed worthy to die before the icon the Mother of God.

Rejoice, Thou who didst keep Thy faith and courage in the midst of unjust persecution.

Rejoice, Thou who didst labor to the end for Thy flock and meet death sitting as a hierarch.

Rejoice Thou Who didst return through the air to be buried amidst the flock.

Rejoice Thou who workest Wonders for those who come to Thy Sepulchre with faith and love.

Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 9

All angel-kind rejoiced at Thy soul's ascent to their celestial home marveling at the wonders Thou didst perform on earth through the action of the Holy Spirit to whom we sing: Alleluia.

Ikos 9

Orators find it impossible to describe Thy life of sanctity with their many and eloquent words, O righteous John for Thou didst become a living house for the power of the ineffable God. Yet, unable to fall silent at the wonder shown to our age of feeble faith, we glorify Thee:
Rejoice, divine palace where from the counsel of the Good King is given.
Rejoice, small and humble abode containing the spacious beauty of angels mansions.
Rejoice Thou who didst gain a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.
Rejoice, infirmary wherein all manner of diseases are divinely healed.
Rejoice closet wherein Thy holy labor of prayer was hidden.
Rejoice, blessed temple of the Holy Spirit.
Rejoice O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 10

Wishing to save the world, the Saviour of all hath sent a new saint among us and through him hath called us out of the dark recesses of sin. Hearing this call to repentance, the unworthy ones in turn cry out to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 10

Thou art a wall sheltering us from adversity, O Hierarch John, for through Thy heavenly intercessions we are delivered from the attacks of demonic passions and from afflictions which beset us on earth. Before Thy firm support of prayer, we cry with faith:
Rejoice, sight to the blinded.
Rejoice, strength and life to those on the bed of death.
Rejoice, God-revealed advice to those in doubt and confusion.
Rejoice, refreshing water to those perishing in the heat of sorrow .
Rejoice, loving father to the lonely and abandoned.
Rejoice, holy teacher of those who seek the Truth.
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 11

Thy life was a hymn to the Most Holy Trinity, surpassing others in thought, word and deed, O most blessed John. For with much wisdom Thou didst explain the precepts of the true Faith, reaching us to sing with faith, hope and love to the one God in Trinity: Alleluia.

Ikos 11

We see Thee as a radiant lamp of Orthodoxy amidst the darkness of ignorance, O God-chosen pastor of Christ's flock, our Father John, For even after Thy repose Thou dost speak the truth to the ignorant and give instruction to those who seek guidance and to all who cry to Thee:
Rejoice, radiance of divine wisdom to those in ignorance. Rejoice, rainbow of quiet joys for the meek.
Rejoice, thunder to stubborn sinners.
Rejoice, lightning of the zeal of God.
Rejoice, rain of God's dogmas.
Rejoice, shower of theological thoughts.
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 12

Grace hath been poured out in the last days upon us all. Beholding this grace come forth from a holy hierarch who once did walk among us, let us receive it with reverence and thanksgiving, crying to God: Alleluia.

Ikos 12

Singing in praise to God, the heavenly choir of saints rejoiceth that He hath not forsaken the fallen and unbelieving world, but hath manifested His almighty power in Thee, his meek and humble servant. O blessed John, with all the saints we greet Thee and give honor to Thee:
Rejoice, new star of righteousness shining in heaven s firmament.
Rejoice, new prophet who wast sent before the final unleashing of evil.
Rejoice, new Jonah warning all of the wages of sin.
Rejoice, new Baptist drawing all to a life of prayer and repentance.
Rejoice, new Paul suffering to preach the gospel in the spirit of truth,
Rejoice, new apostle whose miracles instill in us faith and awe.
Rejoice, O holy Hierarch John, wonderworker of the latter times.

Kontakion 13

O holy and most wondrous Hierarch John, consolation for all the sorrowing, accept now our prayerful offering that through Thy prayers to our Lord we may be spared gehenna and by Thy God-pleasing intercession we may cry eternally: Alleluia (*Thrice*)

Ikos 1 and Kontakion 1 are read again.

St. Alban. Protomartyr of Britain, June 22/July 5

He was a soldier and a Roman citizen, but he did not let his privileged position get in the way of doing what is right. He sheltered a priest who was fleeing the persecutions of that time. As he spent time with this priest and grew in knowledge of the true Faith, he chose to be baptized.

When it became known to the authorities that a Christian was hiding in Alban's house, soldiers came to take the priest to his martyrdom, but Alban put on the priest's cloak and came out. He was brought before the judge, who was infuriated that someone in Alban's position would jeopardize his life for the sake of a Christian. He tried to persuade Alban through torture to deny his new-found faith, but to no avail. He was taken outside the town to be beheaded. Alban was eager to meet his Lord, so when he and his executioner came to a river, it dried up so they might cross. As he was lead up a hill, Alban desired to drink, and a stream of water sprang up. The executioner, seeing this, could not put Alban to death, but wished to become a Christian; seeking to die with Alban if he could not take his place.

Our father among the saints Alban was put to death by the sword in 305, in the city of Verulanium (now St. Alban's). The Venerable Bede tells us that "when the peace of Christian times was restored, a beautiful church worthy of his martyrdom was built, where sick folk are healed, and frequent miracles take place to this day."

"Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends." John 15:13

Holy martyr Alban, pray to God for us!

St. Elizabeth the Grand Duchess, New-Martyr of Russia, and those martyred with her (July 5/18)

She was a German princess who came to Orthodoxy when she married Grand Duke Sergei (uncle to Tsar Nicholas II, who later married Elizabeth's sister, Tsarina Alexandra). Sergei was brutally murdered before her eyes, yet she forgave the killers, praying for their repentance. Leaving behind her life of privilege, she founded the convent of SS Martha and Mary, a community devoted to serving God through service to the poor and needy. A shining beacon of sanctity, the Bolsheviks saw her as a threat, and she was martyred along with the nun Barbara (who refused to leave her Abbess, though soldiers had forcibly dispersed the other nuns) and the Princes Sergius, John, Igor, Constantine and Vladimir by being thrown down a mine shaft. Residents in the area reported hearing singing for an extended period of time afterwards.

Come, all ye who love Christ, and let us offer up a hymn of praise unto the martyred nun Elizabeth, who was chosen by the Lord of hosts to serve as an example of Christian piety and love for those who desire to follow in His steps. For, spurning the vanity of worldly possessions, rank and cares, she dedicated her whole life to the aid of those in need. Wherefore, it hath pleased Christ our God to crown her ascetic labours with the diadem of martyrdom; and, dwelling now in His heavenly kingdom, she maketh supplication into God, that He deliver from misfortunes and perils all who chant unto her with joy:

Rejoice, O venerable martyr Elizabeth, true model of Christian sacrifice!

SAINT VLADIMIR ORTHODOX CHURCH

Свято-Владимирская Православная Церковь

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