

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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*Who is so great a God as our God?!
You are the God Who does wonders!*

June 12, 2011	HOLY PENTECOST	Divine Liturgy and Vespers	9:30 am
June 13-17		Fast-Free Week	
June 18	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
June 19	Sunday of All Saints	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of newly-wed son Aaron and daughter-in-law Ashley were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Sonia Buttino.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Mother Raphaela were offered June 5 and today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Esther Hladysz, Father John Southern, Fred Wilkinson, and Albert Kaba were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. The interment with military honors of Michael Sterzin will be in Saints Peter and Paul Cemetery on Saturday, June 18, at 12:00 noon.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of aunt Ethel Udics, aunt Anna Mayhrich, aunt Rose Medvick and mother Mary Konet Udics were offered today at Liturgy and Parastas at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Albert Frantzman, Amelia Deop, Mary Opacki, George Kravec, Justina Staley and Norman Patnaude were offered today at Liturgy and Parastas.

+ **Please remember in your prayers** Michael Sterzin, John Ille, Michael Rosics, Oleh Tarnawsky, Robert Roback, Zoran Milkovich, Edward Higgins.

Archpastoral Letter of His Grace, Bishop Michael, For the Feast of Holy Pentecost

June 12, 2011

Beloved Concelebrants at the Holy Altar and Dear Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

Christ is in our midst! – He is and ever shall be!

On this great feast of Pentecost, we Orthodox Christians celebrate both the coming down of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles and the Birth of our Holy Church. Today we are challenged to be as faithful to the Holy Spirit and to Christ's Holy Church as the apostles and disciples were nearly 2,000 years ago.

What does this mean? It means being faithful to our Church's Holy Tradition. For many, Tradition means customs or practices of years ago – things that are almost relics of ages past. But on the contrary, Tradition is a *living on* of the Truth that is Jesus Christ, believed and lived by His first followers and generations after them. In the words of the eminent theologian Vladimir Lossky, Tradition is "the life of the Holy Spirit in the Church." This means our faith is unchanging in dogma, yet dynamic in its application; the same in essence, but growing in its expression.

Why should we be faithful to Tradition? Because, we know from Saint Paul that the "pillar and ground of truth" is not solely the Scripture itself, but the Church (1 Timothy 3:15). Upon the rock of the apostles' faith, Jesus built His Church ... and we believe that the Holy Orthodox Church is that one Church to this very day. How can we say that? Because the Orthodox Church alone has kept the deposit of faith given by Our Lord, "delivered once for all to the Saints" (Jude 3), passed on from one generation to the next without addition, alteration, or subtraction. Ours remains the faith of the early Church unchanged; ours remains the Tradition of undivided Christianity unaltered. In an era of religious indifferentism, such bold statements stand apart from what is viewed as politically correct; but like the first Christians, "we must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The Scripture clearly tells us that the faithful followers of Our Lord in the early Church, guided by the Holy Spirit from the day of Pentecost, "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine ..." (Acts 2:42). That remains our challenge in the 21st century – to be faithful to the True Church that Jesus Christ established, to be true to the Tradition handed down to us by the holy apostles.

As we celebrate the Birthday of the Holy Orthodox Church, let us recommit ourselves to the One True God in Three Persons – the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit – and the one true Church, born on Pentecost Sunday so long ago. In the year ahead, let us pledge to learn our faith ever more seriously, love our faith ever more deeply, live our faith ever more openly, and share our faith ever more boldly. As we do this, we will indeed be true to the great gift God has given us.

On this feast, let us proclaim with all our minds, all our hearts, all our souls, and all our voices: "We have seen the true light, we have received the heavenly Spirit, we have found the true faith, worshipping the undivided Trinity, Who has saved us." To God be all glory, honor, and worship unto the ages of ages! Amen.

With love in Christ, + Michael, Bishop of New York and the Diocese of New York and New Jersey

REMINDER: July 4, Monday, 11 am. Parish Picnic with Bishop MICHAEL and NY Deanery clergy families

Saints of the Day: Venerable Onuphrius the Great (400). Venerable Peter of Mount Athos (734). Opening of the relics (1650) of Saint Anna of Kashin (1338). Venerable Arsenius, Abbot of Konevits (1447). Venerable Onuphrius, Abbot of Malsk (Pskov) (1492). Venerable Monks Bassian and Jonah, of Petroma (Solovki) (1561). Venerable Monks Onuphrius and Auxentius, of Vologda (1521). Saint Ternan, Bishop of Culross, Scotland.

HOMILY About the palace and the hut by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha

"The house of the wicked shall be overthrown but the hut of the righteous shall flourish" (Proverbs 14:11).

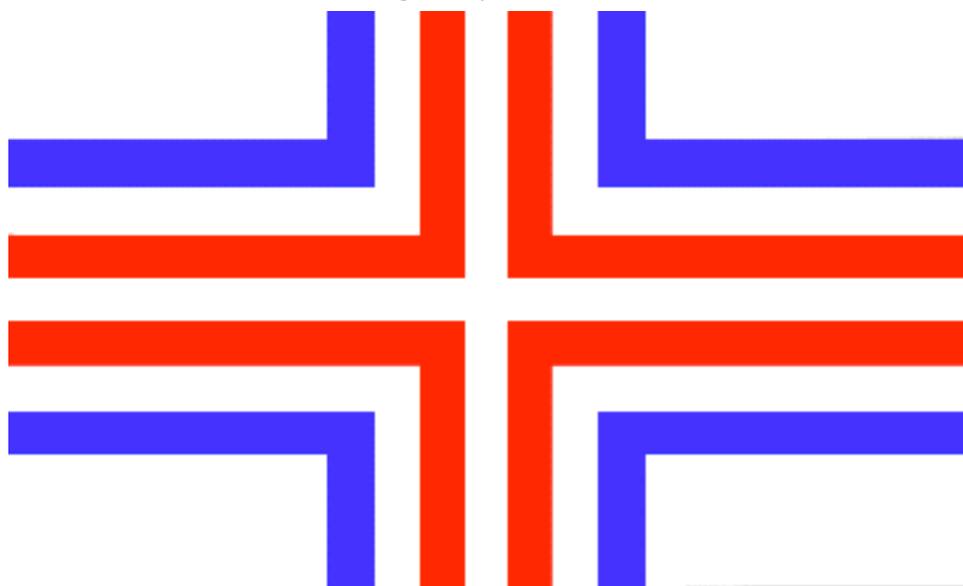
The palace of Herod lay in ruins and the cave of the Child of Bethlehem remains. The crowns of the Caesars have been lost but the bones of the martyrs have been preserved. The palaces of the pagan kings have been transformed into piles of stone and dust but the caves of the ascetics have grown into most beautiful churches. The golden idols have been scattered into nothing and the chains of the Apostle Peter are preserved as a holy relic. The powerful Roman Empire is now only a tale of the dead, while the hut of Christianity, the Holy Church is today the most powerful empire in the world. Where are the Jews, the murders of God? They are dispersed throughout the world. Where are the powerful Romans? In the grave. Where is the power of bloody Nero? Where is the power of the evil Diocletian and the depraved Maximian? Where is the success of Julian the Apostate? Where are those high towers? They are where the tower of Babel is - beneath the dust and ashes, beneath shame and damnation.

Go about your own city and inquire how many homes of the godless are excavated? How many huts of the righteous grew into beautiful houses? Brethren, heaven and earth are founded on justice, on God's steadfast justice. That is why every pagan creation is as arrogant air bubbles, which burst and are trampled on by passers-by. The palaces of the pharaohs and Babylonians are as trampled bubbles and the tent of the righteous Abraham flourishes and blossoms in eternity. O my brethren, how all-powerful and long lasting is justice and how rumbling and transient is injustice like a storm on a summer's day!

O Righteous Lord, how magnificent and consistent are You in the exercising of Your justice.
To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.



June 14th is Flag Day. God Bless America!



Flag Day! As you know, June 14 is Flag Day, which commemorates the adoption of the flag of the United States, which happened that day by resolution of the Second Continental Congress in 1777. Flag Day was established in 1916, when President Woodrow Wilson issued a proclamation that officially established June 14 as Flag Day; in August 1949, National Flag Day was established by an Act of Congress.

Obviously, this is not a Church Holiday. But there's no reason not to have a Church Flag, thought Father John. So, thinking of the Stars and Stripes and the Fort Mifflin flag* (http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/us-pa_fm.html), the idea of 13 stripes was predominant. Also, an incorporation of the national history of the Orthodox Church in the United States would be necessary – at least a nod to Russia and Greece, the first two founders of Orthodox Christianity here. Unfortunately, one can't accommodate all of our ethnic ancestors.

The hymn *Vexilla Regis* or the *Flag of the King*, says that the flag of our King, Jesus Christ, is the Holy Cross. So our flag would also have to be based on the Cross. Russia has used the Cross of Saint George as a white cross on a red flag. Greece's flag of Saint George is a white cross on a blue flag. One rule of heraldry is that colors should not touch colors, only metals – silver (= white) or gold (= yellow). So the only thing was to superimpose all of this on one flag – a white cross in the center, a red cross outlining that, and another white cross with blue outlining for the Russian and Greek roots. But the stripes on the flag would be 1/13th of the total height, reminiscent of our Stars and Stripes.

The flag for the Orthodox Christian Church in America was accepted as the flag for the Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley, and recommended to Metropolitan Herman as a flag for the Orthodox Church in America and to the Standing Council of Orthodox Bishops in America. Next step: to present it to the newly-formed Episcopal Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Hierarchs of North America.

See *Flags of the World*: <http://www.crwflags.com/fotw/flags/rel-orth.html>

* This flag also flew over Fort Stanwix (Schuyler) during the Burgoyne Campaign in New York State as well as at Fort Griswold in Connecticut.