

# ICHC NTKRA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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## Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to God for all things!

December 16, 2012	Sunday of the Holy Forefathers of the Lord	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
December 22	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
December 23	Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the Lord	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

**Saints of the Day:** Prophet Haggai (500 BC). New Hieromartyr Priest Vladimir (1918). New Hieromartyrs Arcadius, Bishop of Bezhetsk, and Priests Elias, Paul, Theodosius, Vladimir, and Alexander, Martyr Makarius (1937). New Hieromartyr Priest Peter (1937). Venerable Nun Sophia (in the world Solomonia), wife of Grand Duke Basil III (1542). Martyr Marinus of Rome (283). Blessed Empress Theophania of Byzantium (893). Saint Memnon, Archbishop of Ephesus (5 c). Saint Nicholas Chrysoberges, Patriarch of Constantinople (995). Saint Modestus II, Archbishop of Jerusalem (634). Martyrs Promus and Hilarion. Saint Bean Bishop of Leinster. Saint Bean, Bishop of Banff.

**Please remember in your prayers:** Priest Sergius, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, Michael, Mother Raphaela, John, Hilda, James, Nancy, Archpriest Jason, Archpriest John, Archpriest Vincent, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren, Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasys, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy.

**God Grant Many Years!** Prayers for the health of Daniel Riley and his mother Helen and brother Timothy were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

**God Grant Many Years!** Prayers for the health of Graham Shin were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of newly-departed mother Ada Richards were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of John and Jean Rinko.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Rose Sokol were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of John and Rose Gala.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of Maria Ivanovna Krakow were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

**The Sunday of the Holy Forefathers** occurs between the 11th and the 17th of December. This Sunday commemorates all the ancestors of the people of God, the holy patriarchs living up to the law, given on Sinai, and under the law, - from Adam to Joseph the Betrothed; together with them are commemorated «those who preached Christ» the holy prophets - from Samuel to Zechariah and to John the Baptist, and all the Old Testament righteous men, who were righteous in the faith in the coming of the Messiah. Especially in the service for this day are praised «the pious youths» Ananias, Azarias, and Misael, who «in faith were thrown into the fiery furnace» and «who in the middle of the flames were cooled by the dew of the Spirit and who walked about rejoicing, are mystically a prototype of the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ» from the Virgin, who after giving birth remained a virgin. With these holy youths are commemorated also "the righteous Daniel and the wonderful prophets", who, clearly revealing the divine second coming, saw Christ, "coming to all nations as Judge", and who, "your mind illumined by divine radiance", "that clearly the Virgin would give birth represented in mystical images".

"Today as we celebrate the Forefathers' memory", the holy Church exclaims: "let us offer praise to the fathers, who shone forth before and during the law, with righteous minds they served the Lord and Master who shone forth from the Virgin, now they delight in the unending light." "Let us offer songs of praise to the prophets of God". "Let us honor the holy youths, for they quenched the flaming furnace, together with the prophet Daniel, and all the righteous ones who shone forth before the law, together with those who served the Master under the law." 1). By accomplishing "now the honor of the memory of the forefathers", the holy Church edifies us, that we, in the expectation of the great and light-bearing day of the Nativity of Christ, is reflected by the faith and life of the holy Forefathers and, through them, has prepared ourselves, by their example, to the worthy meeting of the Lord Who came from Heaven, who has adorned their soul with virtues beforehand to be ready for the great and light-bearing day of the Nativity of our Savior worthily to meet Him with the lamp of faith and with the oil of charitable deeds, with the firm hope of life everlasting, with the light of both the joyful face of cleanliness and purity 2).

Together with them the holy Church on the present day, that its appeal be not in vain, places in the Gospel reading by the clergy about those called in Vespers, inspiring us, that we can be distracted from worthily meeting the Lord by the predominance of flesh over spirit, the attachment to the terrestrial, the blinding by gleam of worldly goods, the predilection for vanity, the unwillingness to deny one's self-love and pride

everyday, the enslavement to passions and covetousness, and in the Epistle reading directly commands us to destroy our earthly members: fornication, impurity, passion, evil lust and cupidity, to lay aside anger, evil, blaspheming, slander, lies, and in general to take off the old man and put on the new in the image of the Creator (Col. 3:4-11).

1) In the sacred chants for this day among the Old Testament righteous men the following are referred to by name: Aaron (the first priest, brother of Moses), Avakum [LXX for Habakkuk] (see December 2), Obadiah (see November 19), Abel (son of Adam), Abraham (see October 9), Haggai (see December 16), Adam (Forefather of the human race), Azariah (see December 17), Anna (see December 9), Barak (see Judges 4-5), Gideon (see September 26), David (see December 26), Daniel (see December 17), Deborah (see Judges 4-5), Eleazar (see September 2), Elisha (see June 14), Enos (son of Seth, - see Genesis 5:6-11), Enoch (see Gen 5: 18-24), Esther (see Esther 1-10), Zechariah (see February 8), Elijah (see July 20), Isaac (son of Abraham), Isaiah (see May 9), Jael (see Judges 4-5), Jacob (son of Isaac), Ezekiel (see July 21), Jeremiah (see May 1), Jesse (father of David), Jephthah (see Judges 11, 12:1-7), Joshua (see September 1), Job (see May 6), Jonah (see September 22), Joseph (see March 31), Josiah, Judah (see Gen 49:8-17), Judith (see book of Judith 1-16), Levi (son of Jacob), Malachi (see January 3), Melchizedek (see Gen 14:18-20), Misael (see December 17), Micaiah (see August 14), Moses (see September 4), Nahum (see December 1), Nathan (see 2 Kings 5:14), Noah (see Gen 5:28-32, 6-9), Huldah (see April 10, 4 Kings 22:14), Hur (see Exodus 24:14), Rachel (wife of Jacob), Rebecca (wife of Isaac), Ruth (see Ruth 1-4), Samson (see Judges 13-16), Samuel (see August 20), Sarah (wife of Abraham), Seth (son of Adam, see Gen 5:3-5), Solomon (son of David), Zephaniah (see December 3).

2) Singing in the service for this day "the god-pleasing life" of the Old Testament righteous men, the Holy Church thus represents our intellectual look at the whole universe of great virtues, such as: the God-loving gentleness and meekness of the first martyr in the world Abel, the holy zeal for the glorification of the name of God Enos, the high divine thinking and the fear of God of Enoch, the firmness in faith and piety of Noah among the general depravity of his contemporary world, the wonderful faith and obedience to the word of God of Abraham, filial obedience of Isaac up to the preparation to be offered as a burnt offering according to the command of God, the kind domestic bravery of Sarah, the penetrating maternal love of Rebecca, the mild humility of Jacob who earned the rage of Laban and Esau, the holy chastity of Joseph who was more than ready to suffer and die, rather than to sin before God, the unhampered invincible patience in the sufferings and misfortunes of Job, the meek, wise leadership of Moses and Samuel, the inspiring courage through faith of Joshua son of Nun, Barak, and Gideon, the high self-sacrificing love for their country and people of Judith and Esther, the plaintive and contrite repentance of David and Manasseh, the ascetic and divinely intellectual life of Elijah and Elisha, the zeal for the glory of God of the holy prophets, the unhampered invincible dedication to the law of God and usual patriotism of the three youths in Babylon and the rest of the good deeds of all the other Old Testament men we celebrate, "of whom the world was not worthy" (Hebrews 11:38). According to the teaching of Saint Gregory the Theologian, each of these virtues stand by themselves «as a special way to salvation, and undoubtedly results in any one of the everlasting and blessed abodes; for as the generations of life are various, so are the abodes of God are many (John 14:2), and in them are divided and are assigned to everyone according to his worthiness. Therefore let one fulfill his virtue, one to another, the other of the many, and whoever, if it is possible, and in everything; only let everyone go without stopping, let everyone strive forward and follow steadily in the steps of the good leaders, who directly leads a path for him, and makes his way through the narrow gate (Matthew 7:14) to lead to the heights of the blessed heaven».

**The Holy Prophet Haggai** was born in Babylon during the time of the captivity of Israel. He was of the tribe of Levi and prophesied about 470 years before Christ. As a youth, he visited Jerusalem. He urged Zerubbabel and Joshua the priest to restore the Temple of the Lord in Jerusalem, prophesying for this Temple greater glory than the former Temple of Solomon, The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts (Haggai 2:9), for the Lord and Savior was to appear in this new temple. He lived long enough to see one part of the temple built by Zerubbabel. He died in old age and joined his ancestors.

**Saint Theophania the Empress** was born of eminent parents, Constantine and Anna, who were kin to several emperors. Her parents were childless for a long time and prayed to the Most-holy Mother of God to give them an offspring. And God gave them this daughter, Theophania. Imbued with the Christian spirit from her childhood, Theophania surpassed all her companions in all the Christian virtues. When she grew up, she entered into marriage with Leo, the son of Emperor Basil the Macedonian. She endured great hardships alongside her husband. Responding to slander-that Leo carried a knife in his boot and planned to kill his father at an opportune time-the gullible father, Basil, locked his son and daughter-in-law in prison. Thus, two innocent souls languished in prison for three years. Once, during the Feast of the Prophet Elias, the emperor summoned all his noblemen to his court for a banquet. Suddenly the emperor's parrot unexpectedly spoke these words, "Alas, alas, my Lord Leo!" and repeated these words a number of times. This brought great anxiety to all of the imperial noblemen, and they all begged the emperor to release his son and daughter-in-law. The grieved emperor did so. After his father's death, Leo became emperor and was called "the Wise." Theophania did not consider her imperial dignity as anything, but, completely devoted to God, she cared only about the salvation of her soul, fasting and praying, distributing many alms, and restoring many monasteries and churches. Neither an untrue word nor an excessive word nor, least of all, slander proceeded from her lips. Before her death she called all her closest friends, took leave of them and gave up her soul to her God in the year 892. The Emperor Leo wanted to build a church over her grave in her name, but since the patriarch objected to this, he built a church to All Saints, saying that if Theophania became a saint, she would be glorified together with the other saints. The Feast of All Saints was then instituted to be celebrated on the Sunday after the Feast of the Holy Trinity.