

ICHC NTKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
305 Main Road, Herkimer, New York, 13350 • 315-866-3272
Archpriest John Udics, Rector • e-mail: john.udics@gmail.com
Deacon Mark Bohush • e-mail: markabohush@aol.com
Parish Web Page: www.cnyorthodoxchurch.org

WHO IS SO GREAT A GOD AS OUR GOD?! THOU ART THE GOD WHO DOES WONDERS!

| | | | |
|---------------|---|----------------|---------|
| June 23, 2013 | Pentecost: The Feast of the Holy Trinity | Divine Liturgy | 9:30 am |
| June 24 | Monday: Nativity of Saint John the Baptist | Divine Liturgy | 9:30 am |
| June 29 | Saturday: The Holy Apostles Peter and Paul | Divine Liturgy | 9:30 am |
| June 29 | Saturday | Great Vespers | 4:00 pm |
| June 30 | All Saints. The Synaxis of the Twelve Apostles | Divine Liturgy | 9:30 am |

Saints of the Day: Martyr Agrippina of Rome (253-260). New Hieromartyrs Priests Alexander, Alexis, Peter (1918). New Hieromartyr Mitrophan Archbishop of Astrakhan (1919), Bishop Leonty of Enotaeva, and those with him. New Hieromartyr Maxim, Bishop of Serpukhov (1930). Saint Artemius of Verkola (1545). Translation of the relics (1714) of Saint Herman, Archbishop of Kazan (1567). Martyrs Eustochius, Gaius, Probus, Lollius, and Urban, of Ancyra (4th c.). Venerable Joseph (1612), Anthony, and Ioannicius, Abbots of Vologda. Translation of the relics of Venerable Michael, fool-for-Christ of Klops Monastery (1482). Virgin Etheldreda Abbess of Ely, Queen of Northumbria, (England) (679). Saint Dionysius of Polotsk (1182). Saint Nicetas of Thebes in Boetia (1079) and his disciples Theodore, Gregory and Daniel. Saint Mochaoi, Abbot of Nendruim (493),

Please remember in your prayers: Bishop JOHN, Bishop PAUL. Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Bohdan, Sergius, Jacobus, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Sister Deborah. Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Mykola, Helen, Isaiah, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Shelby Sobolowski were offered at Liturgy and Moleben June 16th at the request of Barbara Daley.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Ed Anderson were offered at Liturgy and Moleben June 16th at the request of Anita Anderson.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Tom Smith, Archimandrite Athanasy (Mastalsky), Jim and Rose Gomes, Father Thaddaeus Werner and Deacon Mark Bohush were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of the newly-departed Michelle Sokerka Long (56) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Maryanne Mamrosch.

Memory Eternal. Flowers on the church steps are in memory of Helen, Michael, and Steven Sobolowski from Barbara Daley.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Matushka Mary Ann Bohush, uncle John Kurap, Metropolitan THEOPHILUS and cousin Joe Kushner were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

A conversation with Syrian refugees in Amman By Martin Janssen

Conclusion of the article “The Dhimma Returns to Syria” in last week’s bulletin.

Last Tuesday, May 21 a prayer walk was held in the Jordanian capital Amman around nightfall. Its purpose was to inquire after the unknown fate of the two Syrian bishops who were kidnapped over a month ago. I had agreed with some members of the congregation where I always worship to take part and traveled there with them. During the journey I was brought into contact with a Syrian priest from Aleppo who after the journey was concluded introduced me to a group of Syrian Christian refugees. The priest suggested that we all spend the rest of the evening together so that as a correspondent from Europe I could listen to the stories and testimonies of these Syrians.

Syrian refugees of all religious backgrounds – not just Christians – do not feel at ease in neighboring countries such as Lebanon and Jordan. They get the very strong impression that they are not welcome and that the open hostility of the local population towards them is growing. In Jordan, for example, some parliamentarians have been calling on the government for months to expell all Syrian refugees from the country because they pose a security risk. The problem is that this accusation contains an kernel of truth. Our evening discussion group of 12 people included some Jordanian Christians. They reported that a few weeks early the Jordanian security services had managed to thwart an assassination attempt on Abdullah, the Jordanian monarch. This

attack was planned and orchestrated by a sleeper cell of the Syrian, al-Qaida affiliated, Jabhat al-Nusra movement. It was precisely to escape such radical Islamic movements that Syrian Christians have fled to Jordan.

My interlocutors this evening were almost all from northern Syria. They came from Idlib, Aleppo and villages in the countryside between the two cities. Their testimony was unanimous. Many of these villages had a large Christian presence until a few years ago, but now Christians no longer lived there. Jamil, an elderly man, told the following story during which other attendees began to nod violently in agreement. They appeared to have experienced exactly the same things.

Jamil lived in a village near Idlib where 30 Christian families had always lived peacefully alongside some 200 Sunni families. That changed dramatically in the summer of 2012. One Friday trucks appeared in the village with heavily armed and bearded strangers who did not know anyone in the village. They began to drive through the village with a loud speaker broadcasting the message that their village was now part of an Islamic emirate and Muslim women were henceforth to dress in accordance with the provisions of the Islamic Sharia. Christians were given four choices. They could convert to Islam and renounce their “idolatry”. If they refused they were allowed to remain on condition that they pay the jizya. This is a special tax that non-Muslims under Islamic law must pay for “protection”. For Christians who refused there remained two choices: they could leave behind all their property or they would be slain. The word that was used for the latter in Arabic (dhabaha) refers to the ritual slaughter of sacrificial animals.

After Jamil had finished his story a gloomy silence descended. I asked him how the 30 Christian families in his village had perished since then. He replied that a number of families – including his own family – had initially opted to pay jizya. When the leader of the armed militia in their village, however, noticed that they were able to do this, the amount kept increasing in the following months. Like almost all other Christian families he eventually fled the village. His land and farm were lost. Some Christian families in his village who were unable to escape or pay the jizya converted to Islam. To his knowledge, there were no Christians killed in his village, but he had heard other stories from a neighboring village where only three Christian families survived. They were all murdered in the middle of the night.

Miryam, an Armenian middle-aged woman from Aleppo, made the biggest impression on me. A common thread running through all the stories from different places in northern Syria during this evening was the constant complaint that armed militias looted and plundered. From wheat, bread and diesel in the villages to the complete inventory of schools, businesses and factories in Aleppo. Factory owners who protested were executed without mercy. Miryam said acquaintances who fled to Turkey learned that members of these armed militias were selling this “war booty” at bargain basement prices in Turkey. Miryam looked at me thoughtfully and said something which remained constantly with me over the following days. She told me that she had learned last year that a human being has a tremendous ability to adapt to the most difficult conditions. They had to learn to live in Aleppo without water or food, and sometimes no electricity for days on end. They even had to learn to live with the sounds of explosives and gunfire that tore them from sleep at night.

However, what a man cannot live with is the constant terror that paralyzes him completely: the daily fear that the bus transporting children to their school would be targeted by a suicide attack; the psychological fear that comes over you on Sunday when you go to church knowing there are groups active in your neighborhood who consider it a religious duty to kill as many Christians as possible; and finally the situation that at night you do not dare to go to bed because you have received reports about acquaintances and relatives who were surprised by a rocket that crashed out of nowhere onto their property while they slept; or what can happen when you spend hours in a long line at one of the few bakeries that still make bread. Indeed Miryam told me that she never could have imagined that even the simplest of life’s activities had suddenly become dangerous.

At the end of the night I struggled inwardly with a question that I did not dare to express but which I finally found the courage to utter. What next? What did these Syrian refugees have to say about their own future and that of Christianity in Syria? Later I realized that in fact no one answered this question. The Armenian Miryam said she was thinking of emigrating with her family to Armenia, while Jamil talked about relatives who lived in Sweden. Perhaps their answer to my question lay hidden in these comments.

Just after midnight I drove home with the members of my church from Amman. Everyone was silent and seemed lost in thought. I was to be dropped off at the church. This church sits on a hill which was once almost always enchantingly lit, but I had noticed recently that this was no longer the case. While getting out of the car I asked about the reason and was told that “there were people who had taken offense”. I also saw three young men quasi-nonchalantly keeping watch at the church. When I asked if this was necessary, the short reply I got was “Yes.”

www.religiousfreedomcoalition.org

http://atlashrugs2000.typepad.com/atlas_shrugs/2013/06/the-dhimma-returns-to-syria-.html

THE HOLY MARTYR AGRIPPINA was born and educated in Rome. From her childhood she trained herself to live an evangelical life, driving away the stench of passions from her heart and filling her heart with the sweet-smelling fragrance of purity, of virginity and chastity. She was betrothed to Christ the Lord and, as the Bride of Christ, suffered during the reign of Emperor Valerian. She endured flogging with rods until her bones were crushed. An angel of God appeared to her and strengthened her. While being tortured, Saint Agrippina gave up her soul to God. Her companions, Bassa, Paula and Agathonice, translated her relics to the island of Sicily and honorably buried them there. A church was later built there in Saint Agrippina's honor. Countless miracles were wrought from her relics. By the power of her relics, even the Hagarenes were turned away from the town where her relics reposed. Saint Agrippina rested in the year 275 A.D., crowned with glory.