



SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America
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BEFORE thy CROSS, WE BOW DOWN IN WORSHIP O MASTER!

This week's Bulletin is offered for the health of Aaron Buttino by Sonia Buttino.

September 15, 2013 13th Sunday after Pentecost

September 21 Saturday

September 22 14th Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Great Vespers 4:00 pm

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Greatmartyr Nicetas the Goth (372). New Hieromartyr Priest John and Virgin-martyr Eudocia (1918). New Hieromartyrs Priests Andrew, Gregory, Gregory, John (1921). Venerable Confessor Ignatius (1932). New Hieromartyr Priest Demetrius (1935). New Hieromartyrs Priests John, Jacob, Peter and Deacon Nicholas, Martyrs Mary and Ludmila (1937). Uncovering of the relics of Saint Acacius the Confessor, Bishop of Melitene (257). Martyrs Theodotus, Asclepiodotus, and Maximus of Adrianopolis (305-311). Martyr Porphyrius the Mime of Caesaria (361). Uncovering of the relics of the Holy Protomartyr and Archdeacon Stephen (415). Venerable Philotheus the Presbyter of Asia Minor (10th c.). Saint Joseph, Abbot, of Alaverdi in Georgia (570). Saints Bessarion I and Bessarion II (1540), Metropolitans of Larissa. New Martyr John of Crete (1811). Venerable Gerasimus, Abbot, of Sourvia (1740). Saint Symeon, Archbishop of Thessalonica (1430). Saint Joseph the New of Partos, Metropolitan of Timisoara (1656). Saint Mirin, Abbot of Paisley.

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria and the Middle East, Bishop JOHN, Bishop PAUL. Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Sergius, Jacobus, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Dimitri, Michael Andrew, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Geoff, 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 Barbara Daley were offered at Liturgy and Moleben September 8 at her request.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Archpriest Vincent and Matushka Patricia Saverino, Andrew Fash, Paul Kappanadze and Emily Williams were offered at Liturgy and Moleben today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Archbishop DMITRI (Royster) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today requested by Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Michael and Elizabeth Spytko, Walter Jovorosky, Kathryn Chlus and Steve Bius were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

The Hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America ask us to add the following prayer at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy today:

“O Lord of Heaven and Earth and of all who dwell therein, we beseech you on behalf of all the Hierarchs of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of North and Central America who are gathering this week in solemn convocation. Make their travel to and from their meeting safe and sound; direct their deliberations to the glory of Your Holy Name and the benefit of Your Holy Church; grant them a fraternal spirit founded in Your love and Your grace, that in all they do and say, they may bring all honor, praise and glory to Your Name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.”

THE ELEVATION OF THE VENERABLE AND LIFE-CREATING CROSS OF THE LORD: The pagan Roman emperors tried to completely eradicate from human memory the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was resurrected for mankind. The Emperor Hadrian (117-138) gave orders to cover over the ground of Golgotha and the Sepulchre of the Lord, and to build a temple of the pagan goddess Venus and a statue of Jupiter.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols there. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the great Christian sacred remains, the Sepulchre of the Lord and the Life-Creating Cross were again discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory in the year 312 over Maxentius, ruler of the Western part of the Roman Empire, and over Licinius, ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 he had issued the Edict of Milan, by which the Christian religion was legalized and the persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the empire were stopped. The ruler Licinius, although he had signed the Edict of Milan to oblige Constantine, still fanatically continued the persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the 313 Edict of toleration extend also to the Eastern part of the empire. The Holy

Equal of the Apostles Emperor Constantine, having gained victory over his enemies in three wars with God's assistance, had seen in the heavens the Sign of the Cross, and written beneath: "By this you shall conquer."

Ardently desiring to find the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, Saint Constantine sent his mother, the pious Empress Helen (May 21), to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to Saint Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Although the holy empress Helen was already in her declining years, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. The empress gave orders to destroy the pagan temple and the statues in Jerusalem. Searching for the Life-Creating Cross, she made inquiry of Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful.

Finally, they directed her to a certain elderly Hebrew by the name of Jude who stated that the Cross was buried where the temple of Venus stood. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Tomb of the Lord was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body (March 6).

In order to discern on which of the three crosses the Savior was crucified, Patriarch Macarius alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead one, he came to life. Having beheld the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross was found.

Christians came in a huge throng to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching Saint Macarius to elevate the Cross, so that even those far off might reverently contemplate it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders raised up the Holy Cross, and the people, saying "Lord have mercy," reverently prostrated before the Venerable Wood. This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-Creating Cross another miracle took place: a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. The elder Jude and other Jews there believed in Christ and accepted Holy Baptism. Jude received the name Cyriacus and afterwards was consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem.

During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363) he accepted a martyr's death for Christ (see October 28). The holy empress Helen journeyed to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than 80 churches, at Bethlehem the birthplace of Christ, and on the Mount of Olives where the Lord ascended to Heaven, and at Gethsemane where the Savior prayed before His sufferings and where the Mother of God was buried after her death.

Saint Helen took part of the Life-Creating Wood and nails with her to Constantinople. The holy emperor Constantine gave orders to build at Jerusalem a majestic and spacious church in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, also including under its roof the Life-Giving Tomb of the Lord and Golgotha. The temple was constructed in about ten years. Saint Helen did not survive until the dedication of the temple, she died in the year 327. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335. On the following day, September 14, the festal celebration of the Exaltation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross was established.

Another event connected to the Cross of the Lord is remembered also on this day: its return to Jerusalem from Persia after a fourteen year captivity. During the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Phocas (602-610) the Persian Emperor Khosroes II in a war against the Greeks defeated the Greek army, plundered Jerusalem and captured both the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord and the Holy Patriarch Zachariah (609-633).

The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years and only under the Emperor Heraclius (610-641), who with the help of God defeated Khosroes and concluded peace with his successor and son Syroes, was the Cross of the Lord returned to the Christians.

With great solemnity the Life-creating Cross was transferred to Jerusalem. Emperor Heraclius in imperial crown and royal purple carried the Cross of Christ into the temple of the Resurrection. With the Emperor went Patriarch Zacharios. At the gates by which they ascended Golgotha, the Emperor suddenly stopped and was not able to proceed farther. The holy Patriarch explained to the Emperor that an angel of the Lord was blocking his way. The Emperor was told to remove his royal trappings and to walk barefoot, since He Who bore the Cross for the salvation of the world from sin had made His way to Golgotha in all humility. Then Heraclius donned plain garb, and without further hindrance, carried the Cross of Christ into the church.

In a sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross, Saint Andrew of Crete says: "The Cross is exalted, and everything true gathers together, the Cross is exalted, and the city makes solemn, and the people celebrate the feast".

GREATMARTYR NICETAS THE GOTH (a Germanic tribe). He was born and lived on the banks of the Danube River, and suffered for Christ in the year 372. The Christian Faith was then already widely spread throughout the territory of the Goths. Saint Nicetas believed in Christ and accepted Baptism from the Gothic bishop Theophilus, a participant in the First Ecumenical Council. Pagan Goths began to oppose the spread of Christianity, which resulted in internecine strife.

After the victory of Fritigern, heading a Christian army and inflicting defeat on the pagan Athanaric, the Christian Faith began to spread increasingly among the Goths. The Arian bishop Ulfilas, the successor to Bishop Theophilus, created a Gothic alphabet and translated into the Gothic language many priestly books. Saint Nicetas worked intensely among his fellow Goths at spreading Christianity. By his personal example and inspired words he brought many pagans to the Christian Faith.

However, after his defeat Athanaric again contrived to gather his own forces, return to his own country and regain his former power. Since he remained a pagan, he continued to hate Christians and persecute them.

Saint Nicetas endured many tortures, and died after being thrown into a fire. His body remained unharmed by the fire and was illumined by a miraculous light. By night, a friend of the martyr, a Christian named Marianus, retrieved the body of Saint Nicetas, and buried it in Cilicia. Afterwards, it was transferred to Constantinople. Part of the relics of the Great Martyr Nicetas were later transferred to the monastery of Vysokie Dechani in Serbia. Saint Nicetas received an unfading crown of glory from Christ in the year 372.

We pray to Saint Nicetas for the preservation of children from birth defects.