

# ICHC NTKRA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Orthodox Church in America  
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## *Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory to God for All Things!*

**January 26, 2014 30<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost**

February 1 Saturday

February 2 31<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

Great Vespers 4:00 pm

Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

**Saints of the Day:** Saint Xenophon and his wife, Saint Mary, and their two sons, Saints Arcadius and John, of Constantinople (6th c.). New Martyr Matushka Maria of Gatchina (1930). New Hieromartyr Cyril, Metropolitan of Kazan (1937). New Hieromartyr Arcadius (1938). Martyr John (1938). Venerable Xenophon, Abbot of Robeika (Novgorod) (1262). Martyrs Presbyter Ananias, Peter, and Seven Soldiers, in Phoenicia (295). Venerable Symeon "the Ancient" of Mount Sinai (ca. 390). Translation of the relics of Venerable Theodore, Abbot of the Studion (845). Saint Joseph, Bishop of Thessalonica, brother of Saint Theodore of the Studion (830). Saint Davit IV the Builder, King of Georgia and Abkhazeti (1125). Saint Ammon, of Egypt, Disciple of Saint Anthony the Great (350), and Saint Gabriel, Abbot at Jerusalem (490). Two Martyrs of Phrygia. Venerable Clement of Mount Sagmaton (12th c.). Saint Paula of Palestine (404). Saint Conan (Conon) of Iona, Bishop (c.648). Saint Tortgith, Novice-Mistress of of Barking (c. 700)

**Please remember in your prayers:** Abducted nuns and orphans of Saint Tekla Monastery in Syria, Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria and the Middle East. Bishop Boulos Yazigi, Bishop Yohanna Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Alexander, Athanasy, Isidore, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Bohdan, Sergius, Jacobus, Andrij, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mother Raphaela, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Connie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, 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, Vincent, Archpriest Leonid, Diane, Abigail.

**God Grant Many Years!** Prayers for the health of Richard Medvick, Robert Culp, Archpriest Andrew Nelko, Kevin Culp, Michael Baran, Metropolitan ANTONY and Metropolitan HERMAN were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of Noel Yurch, Archimandrite Josef (Strok) and Bishop JOSE (Cortes y Olmos) were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of Peter Mezick, Sarah Eskoff, Stella Eskoff, Chester Ptasznik and Tillie Leve were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

### **FOR YOUR INFORMATION**

The **Annual Parish Meeting** will be held February 9, 2014, after Divine Liturgy. All those submitting **reports** for inclusion in the printed report for 2013 are **REMINDED** to turn them in before the end of January.

**THE VENERABLE XENOPHONT AND MARIA AND THEIR SONS JOHN AND ARCADIUS** were prominent and wealthy citizens of Constantinople. Xenophont and his wife Maria lived a God-pleasing life and dedicated all their attention to the Christian upbringing of their sons. When their sons reached majority, they were sent to study in Beirut; but it so happened that a storm capsized their boat. By the Providence of God, John and Arcadius were somehow saved. They were tossed ashore by the waves but in two different places so that each thought the other was drowned. Out of grief for each other, they both became monks in two different monasteries. After two years, their grieving parents came to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage to pay homage before the holy shrines. There, with the help of the "discernment" of a spiritual father, first the brothers met and, after that, the parents with their children. Out of gratitude to God, Xenophont and Maria distributed their entire estate to the poor and both of them were tonsured. The history of these four souls is touching and it shows how the Lord wonderfully guides the fate of those who believe in Him; how He permits pain and sorrow upon them that they may, later on, be strengthened in faith, in order to lead them into still greater joy. They lived and died in the Lord in the fifth century.

**VENERABLE SIMEON THE OLD ONE [VETNI]** was a companion and friend of Saint Paladius. From his early youth until his death, Simeon lived a life of asceticism in a cave. He established two monasteries and died in the Lord in the year 390 A.D. He is called the Old One or Vetni to distinguish him from Simeon the Stylite who, lived an ascetical life much later.

**SAINT DAVID, EMPEROR OF THE GEORGIANS (1089-1130 A.D.)** renewed and strengthened the State of Georgia. As a great zealot for the Christian Faith, he built many new churches and restored the old ones throughout Georgia. David is considered as the regenerator of the Orthodox Faith in Georgia.

#### **REFLECTION by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha**

The greatest treasure of any realm is the saintly and good men who live in it. Compared to this wealth, all other wealth is as nothing. Devout Christian emperors considered holy men in their realms as the greatest of God's blessing. The holy Emperor Constantine the Great spoke: "I give thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ that in my days there exist three divine lights: Blessed Abba Anthony, Abba Elenius and Abba Euchius." Before the battle of Kulikovo, crucial for the Russians, the devout Prince Dimitri of Don, with his chief assistants and dukes, went to the forest of Radonez to seek out the Venerable Sergius and implored his intercession before God. Even though the prince prepared his army for a liberating war against the Tartars, somehow, he placed greater hope in the prayers of one holy man than in a vast army and many weapons.

#### **HOMILY About the confusion of those darkened by sin by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha**

*"Who is this Who even forgives sins" (Saint Luke 7:49).*

Thus asked the unrepentant sinners: "Who is this [Jesus Christ]?" This is He Who mostly feels the sting of human sin; upon Whom all the sins of mankind fall as blows. This is He Who, at one time in Paradise, looked upon man as sinless. This is He Who created man without sin, and This is He Who Himself is without sin from always and forever.

Only He can forgive who can also seek revenge. The strong man seeks revenge by reprisal. The weak man seeks revenge by hatred. If you are able to return the delivered blow and you do not do it, does not mean that you forgave until you uproot the root of anger from your heart. Great is the One Lord Who can also seek revenge and forgive. Great is He in His justice for He will seek revenge on the unrepentant sinner. Great is He in His mercy for He will forgive the penitent sinner.

Oh, if only men would know the power of the forgiveness of sins! Behold, when the sins of the blind man were forgiven, he saw. When the sins of the deaf man were forgiven, he heard. When the sins of the hunchbacked woman were forgiven, she stood erect. When the sins of the woman with the issue of blood were forgiven, she also was healed. When the sins of the man afflicted by insanity were forgiven, he became sane. When the sins of the man possessed with demons were forgiven, he was freed. When the sins of the prostitute were forgiven, she too was cleansed. When the sins of the dead man were forgiven, he also became alive!

Oh, how terrible is the chain of sins! How heavy are the chains of many sins! These chains are not loosened by sinful hands. But when the hands of the All-Pure Lord touches them, they, of their own accord, become loosened and fall apart. When the voice of the Pure One reaches them, they fall apart. And, from the glance of the Pure One, they fall apart. Yes, even from the thoughts of the Pure One, they fall apart - these terrible chains of sins.

"Who is this Who even forgives sins?" O sinners, this is the All-Pure Lord and because of purity, Almighty.

O, Lord, All-Pure and Almighty free us from the chains of sins.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.

#### **Hamas Planned Church Bombings on Christmas**

Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood reportedly planned to murder Egyptian Christians on their holy day.

By Maayana Miskin <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/175848>

Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood planned a series of bombings at Egyptian churches, according to a report in the Kuwaiti paper Al-Watan, according to Channel 10 news.

According to the report, the attacks were to take place on Christmas. Terrorists in Sinai had succeeded in gathering explosives for the planned attack.

Egyptian intelligence reportedly foiled the plot after discovering communications between the two groups. Intelligence agents also listened in on calls between the Muslim Brotherhood and other Gaza-based terrorist groups.

The calls revealed plans to transfer weapons to armed groups in the Sinai Peninsula via smuggling tunnels between Gaza and Egypt.

Egyptian authorities have accused the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas of working hand-in-hand on several past occasions as well. Former Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi is awaiting trial for charges relating to alleged cooperation with Hamas in an attack on Egyptian soldiers.

Terrorists in Gaza have been known to be working with armed rebels in the Sinai region since the beginning of a major terrorist insurgency in the region several months ago. Local Islamist leaders have declared the Egyptian army "an enemy of Allah."

While rebels in Sinai have primarily targeted the Egyptian army, attacks on Christians in the country are nothing new. Coptic Christians in Egypt have repeatedly been victimized in violence between Muslim Brotherhood supporters and state troops.

Although Christians in Egypt have apparently been spared a deadly attack by Islamists, some 35 people were killed in a bombing attack against a church in Iraq on Christmas day. The Middle East's Christian population - which has existed since before the founding of Islam - has been steadily declining in the past few years, in great part due to a rise in radical Islam. Israel is the only country in the region with a growing Christian population.

[This article appeared on January 2, 2014.]