

IC XC NIKA SAINTS PETER AND PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH

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Glory to Jesus Christ!

Glory to God for all things!

March 8, 2015	Sunday of Saint Gregory Palamas	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
March 11	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm
March 13	Friday	Akathistos Hymn for Holy Communion	6:00 pm
March 14	Saturday	Soul Saturday	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
March 15	Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Saints of the Day: Venerable Theophylactus, Bishop of Nicomedia (845). New Hieromartyr Priest John (1923). Martyr Vladimir (1942). Venerable Lazarus and Athanasius, Monks of Murman Island, Onega Lake (1391). Apostle Hermas of the Seventy (1 c). Hieromartyr Theodoretus of Antioch (361). Venerable Monk Dometius (363). Saint Felix of Burgundy, Bishop of Dunwich and Enlightener of East Anglia (648). Venerable Paul of Prusias, Confessor (840). Martyr Dio. Martyrs Quintilian and Capatolinus in Nicomedia. Saint Senan of Scattery Island (d c. 560). Saint Beoadh, Bishop (d. 525). Saint Duthac, Bishop of Ross (d.1065). Saint Rhian, Abbot.

Please remember in your prayers: Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS Yazigi, Bishop YOHANNA Ibrahim, of Aleppo. Hundreds of Assyrian Captives. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid, Vasil, Vasil. Deacons Mark, Demetrios, Philip. Mothers Raphaela, Michaela, Catherine, Anna. Monk Victor, Valentina, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Catherine, Helen, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Helen, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of the hundreds of Assyrian Orthodox captives were offered March 1 and today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the soul of Irene Alexander were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the souls of Tatiana Keblish and Michael Steciak were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

FOR YOUR CALENDAR: March 11, 9:00 am - Saint Anna Altar Society Baking Schedule: Cookies

THE PRAYER OF THE OPTINA ELDERS

O LORD, grant that I may meet all that this coming day brings to me with spiritual tranquility. Grant that I may surrender myself to Thy holy Will. At every hour of this day, direct and support me in all things. Whatever news may reach me in the course of the day, teach me to accept it with a calm soul and the firm conviction that all is subject to Thy holy Will. Direct my thoughts and feelings in all my words and actions. In all unexpected occurrences, do not let me forget that all is sent down from Thee. Grant that I may deal straightforwardly and wisely with every member of my family, neither embarrassing nor saddening anyone. O LORD, grant me the strength to endure the fatigue of the coming day and all the events that take place during it. Direct my will and teach me to pray, to believe, to hope, to be patient, to forgive, and to love.

SAINT SENAN was born at Kilrush in County Clare where his parents, Erguid and Comgella, owned land and were well to do farmers. In his youth he had to do some fighting for his overlord but it was while he was about the more peaceful occupation of looking after his father's cattle that the call came to forsake the world and devote himself to religious study. His conversion was caused by a great wave that broke at his feet as he was walking on the sea shore, then ebbed leaving a clear path for him across the bay, and finally closed behind him. He saw this as a sign that his lay life was over and, breaking his spear in two, he made a cross of it and set out for the monastery at Kilnamanagh in County Dublin.

Senan was obviously a resourceful man for he miraculously automated the mill at the monastery so that it ground the grain without him having to leave his books. He made great progress in his studies and after his ordination he visited other centres of learning before returning to his home country to found a number of religious houses. The most famous of his foundations was on Scattery Island, Iniscathaigh, and before he could build his monastery there he had to rid the island of a ferocious beast after which it was named, the Cata. The

monster is described as exceedingly fierce and breathing fire and spitting venom which make some believe that it was a tribe of wild cats. However, Senan protected by his faith, expelled it with the sign of the Cross, ordering it never to harm anyone again.

The Archangel Raphael is said to have aided him and there was an incident when Senan was searching for water for his monks that the Archangel directed the holly stick with which he was probing and water gushed out of the dry ground. Senan left his stick in the hole and on the next day he found that it had grown into a tree. Raphael also helped Saint Senan to ensure safe crossing to the island for his monks.

The ruins on Scattery include those of six churches, the Saint's grave which provides miraculous cures in the church known as Temple Senan and a spectacular round tower, the tallest in the whole of Ireland. He died on March 1st but his burial was postponed to the octave day of his death to enable those from the neighbouring communities to attend, so his festival is observed on March 8th.

SAINT THEOPHYLACTUS, BISHOP OF NICOMEDIA. When the emperor's advisor Tarasius, as a layman, was elected Patriarch of Constantinople, then with him and from him, many of his friends, admirers, and others of the laity received the monastic tonsure. Among them was Theophylactus. Tarasius appointed him Bishop of Nicomedia. As a bishop, Theophylactus was a good shepherd to his entrusted flock and proved to be exceptionally filled with compassion toward the less fortunate and indigent. After the death of Saint Tarasius, the Patriarchal Throne was occupied by Nicephorus and shortly after that, the Imperial Throne was occupied by Leo the Armenian, who was an Iconoclast and, as such, raised up a absolute storm in the Church of Christ. Even though Iconoclasm had been anathematized by the Seventh Ecumenical Council [Nicaea, 783 A.D.], nevertheless, Emperor Leo re-instated it and by this wanted to supplant Orthodoxy. Saint Theophylactus opposed the emperor to his face and, when the emperor would not yield, Theophylactus said to him, "O emperor, violent injury will unexpectedly befall you, and you will not find anyone who will save you from it." Because of these words and by the order of the emperor, Theophylactus was ousted from his position and banished into exile, where he spent thirty years undergoing many hardships and insults and, where, in the end, he rendered his soul to the Lord about the year 845 A.D.

THE HOLY PRIEST-MARTYR THEODORETUS. The Emperor Constantine built a cathedral church of special beauty in Antioch. The people called this church "the golden church" because of the gold-plated exterior and interior and because of the many appointments of gold and silver housed in it. The emperor donated a great deal of land to this church for the upkeep of the clergy whose number was significant. The custodian of these appointments and all other precious items in the church was the presbyter Theodoretus, and rare devotion. When Julian the Apostate began his reign, he denied Christ and, even though he was baptized, stirred up a persecution against Christians. Julian, his uncle of the same name, came to Antioch and began to plunder the "golden church." He summoned Theodoretus, the custodian of the treasury, to court and counseled him to deny Christ. Not only did Theodoretus refuse to deny Christ, but he also insulted the Emperor Julian because of his apostasy from the True Faith and his return to idolatry, as a dog returning to his own vomit. When the wicked judge, out of rage, urinated in the "golden church," Saint Theodoretus prophesied a horrible death for him, which shortly happened. Theodoretus was beheaded by an axe for his faith in Christ. From the time that Judge Julian had urinated in the church, he felt pains in the lower part of his body. The entire lower half of his body was eaten away by worms, so that he vomited up his apostate soul in the most horrible pains. Also, according to the prophecy of Theodoretus, Felix, Julian's assistant, died of a hemorrhage from the mouth immediately after the beheading of this righteous man. Saint Theodoretus was beheaded in the year 362 A.D. and was translated to the All-glorious kingdom of Christ the King.

Sermon for Saint Gregory Palamas Sunday by Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Today we remember the name of Saint Gregory Palamas, one of the great Saints of Orthodoxy, who against heresy and doubt, proclaimed, from within the experience of the ascetics and of all believers, proclaimed that the grace of God is not a created Gift - it is God Himself, communicating Himself to us so that we are pervaded by His presence, that we gradually, if we only receive Him, open ourselves to Him, become transparent or at least translucent to His light, that we become incipiently and ever increasingly partakers of the Divine nature.

This is not simply a promise; this is a certainty which we have because this has happened to thousands and thousands of those men and women whom we venerate as the Saints of God: they have become partakers of the Divine nature, they are to us a revelation and certainty of what we are called to be and become.

And today one step more brings us into the joy, the glory of Easter. In a week's time we will sing the Cross - the Cross which was a terror for the criminals, and has become now a sign of victory and salvation, because it is to us the sign that God's love has no measure, no limits, is as deep as God is deep, all-embracing as God is all-embracing, and indeed, as tragically victorious as God is both tragic and victorious, awe-inspiring, and shining the quiet, joyful light which we sing in Vespers.

Let us then make ourselves ready to meet this event, the vision of the Cross, look at it, and see in it the sign of the Divine love, a new certainty of our possible salvation; and when the choir sings this time more loudly the canon of the Resurrection, let us realise that step by step God leads us into a victory which He has won, and which He wants to share with us.

And then we will move on; we will listen to the Saint who teaches us how to receive the grace which God is offering, how to become worthy of Him; and a step more - and we will see the victory of God in Saint Mary of Egypt and come to the threshold of Holy Week. But let us remember that we are now in the time of newness, a time when God's victory is been revealed to us, that we are called to be enfolded by it, to respond to it by gratitude, a gratitude that will make us into new people - and also with joy! And joy full of tears in response to the love of God, and a joy which is a responsible answer to the Divine love. Amen! (11 March 1990)