

# IC XC NIKA 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!

<b>March 15, 2015</b>	<b>Sunday of the Veneration of the Holy Cross</b>	<b>Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>9:30 am</b>
March 18	Wednesday	Liturgy of Presanctified Gifts	6:00 pm
March 20	Friday	Akathistos Hymn to the Holy Cross	6:00 pm
March 21	Saturday	Soul Saturday	Divine Liturgy 9:30 am
	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
<b>March 22</b>	<b>Sunday of Saint John of 'the Ladder'</b>	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

**Saints of the Day:** Martyrs Agapius, Publius (Pauplios), Timolaus, Romulus, two named Dionysius, and two named Alexander, at Caesarea in Palestine (303). New Hieromartyr Priest Demetrius (1938). New Hieromartyr Priest Michael (1940). Hieromartyr Alexander of Side in Pamphylia (270-275). Martyr Nicander of Egypt (302). Venerable Monk Nicander of Gorodets (Novgorod) (1603). New Martyr Manuel of Crete (1792). Saint Hebarestes. Saint Zachariah, Pope of Rome (752).

**Please remember in your prayers:** Suffering Christians of Egypt, Syria, the Middle East and Ukraine. Bishop BOULOS and Bishop YOHANNA, of Aleppo. Archimandrites Athanasy, Nectarios, Pachomy. Archpriests Alvian, Eugene, Leonid, John, Jason, John, Vincent. Priests Jacobus, Leonid. 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, Nicole, Ashley, 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 Priest David Cochran, Pat Medvick, Archpriest Andrew Nelko, and Michael Kurap were offered today at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Theodore Litwen were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Stephania Litwen.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the souls of Donald Udics, Metropolitan IRENEY, Archimandrite Sebastian, Bill Fox and Archpriest Mykola Dovgan were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of Father John Udics.

**Memory Eternal.** Prayers for the repose of the soul of Martha Karpowich were offered at Liturgy and Litiya today at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

## 2015 CAMPING PROGRAMS at Saint Andrew's Camp

The weather outside is frightful (and cold!) but thoughts of a summer camping experience at Saint Andrew's Camp are delightful. It's not too early to make plans to attend one of the sessions at our only fully staffed sleep-over camp for children and teens.

**In 2015 there are four week-long sessions for kids 7-13 years-of-age, and one week for teens.**

Located in Jewell NY on the shore of Oneida Lake, the camp offers a unique experience of fun, faith, and worship in a truly Orthodox environment.

On the diocesan website you will find a banner news headline featuring the camp, and links to view three exceptional promotional posters. These posters will be printed and distributed to parishes for display soon.

Registration for the 2015 summer camping programs is available on-line at:

<http://saintandrewscamp.org/join-us/>

## Forgiveness Vespers Homily 2011 by + Archbishop Dmitri (Royster)

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Christ is in our midst! There's nothing more comforting to us than to know that Christ is with us. Once we have been received and become a part of His body which is the Church then Christ is always with us. I think sometimes in our Christian life we tend to forget that He is indeed with us.

Going back to the prayer that we pray constantly because the Lord said that when you pray, pray like this: and He recited the "Our Father." Right in the midst of the prayer there's this "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors". Oh, sometimes others try to soften that by saying "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us", but that's secondary. The main and most important petition is "forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors".

What does it mean "debts"? Every person that we come in contact with is just like us. We have been made in God's image and we have the solemn obligation to achieve the likeness of God. We all have the image; the likeness is to be achieved. One of the main and most important things that we have to remember is that Jesus

Christ came in the world to teach us exactly how to achieve that likeness. When the council of the Holy Trinity is recorded in the Old Testament: “Let us make us make man in our image”, and then pretty shortly after that, “and in our likeness”, the image is guaranteed. We have it. Like it or don’t like it, fulfill it or not fulfill it, live up to it, or show the exact opposite, we still have the image of God in us. That’s a tremendous obligation when you think about it. There’s no other creature that has been endowed with God’s image but the human being.

So when we say “forgive us” in the prayer “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”, we’re not just talking about some possible slip-up, a kind of accidental sin of some sort. No, “forgive us our debts” that is, that which we owe. And why do we owe each other? Because we’ve all been made in God’s image and likeness. Let us not forget that on this occasion of the first Sunday of the Great Fast.

Forgiveness: forgiveness is of the essence of our faith. As we pray in the Lord’s Prayer, “forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”. We always pray for forgiveness because forgiveness is of the essence because we have sinned against God, we have tried to replace Him in our daily life, with every conceivable substitute, something to take the place of God. But one of the things that this Great Fast period will bring to our minds and not just once, not just at this service, but constantly right until the very end, is that we have been made in God’s likeness. We have been made in His image, and we are to achieve God’s likeness. More than anything else, the goal of the Great Fast is to strengthen that effort of each one of us, to achieve the likeness of God. And so that we have no doubt of what God’s likeness consists of, God Himself came into the world, took upon himself our own nature, and lived and walked among us so that we might know exactly what it was to be in God’s image.

Jesus Christ, the One who was always with the Father, took upon Himself our nature and lived and walked among us and our reaction to that is the crucifixion. The victory over man’s reaction to God’s intervention was the resurrection from the dead. And that’s what we constantly love, praise, and glorify in our Orthodox church: the resurrection from the dead. If there’s anything that characterizes our Church any more than any other is this constant emphasis on the resurrection. What is the word for resurrection in the language that some of us have as background language? Воскресение [‘Sunday’ in Russian] means the resurrection day. So, Resurrection because we all have committed ourselves to a life that prepares us for the resurrection from the dead.

If we are here for any other purpose than that; than to achieve the likeness of God so that we can be in the resurrection not just behold it from afar, but be in it, be a part of it, belong to it, be resurrected from the dead. One of the most important parts of our preparation is precisely what we said earlier in the prayer: “forgive us our debts” -Let us forget about trespasses for a moment – “forgive us our debts”, that’s what we owe every single person that we come in contact with. Everyone that is standing next to us is made in God’s image too, so we owe him. “Forgive us our debts” because we haven’t paid our debts. We often mistreat the person next to us. Sometimes we are so selfish that we can only see our own good. “Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors”, because there are those who owe us as well. And we forgive them.

So let’s start the Great Fast as simply as possible: forgive! You forgive me, and I forgive you. Let’s all take that very seriously, take that home with us as we go home tonight. Say, “I must learn what it is to forgive” because that is why God Himself came to us, shared in our life. Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God became one of us came to us to teach us that forgiveness is of the essence of our life as human beings made in God’s image. To Him be glory, honor, and worship, now and unto ages of ages. Forgive me my brethren, in every way that I may have sinned against you!

Transcribed by Nadia Colias

*I would add this gloss: the debt we owe is to love one another as Christ has loved us. To the degree we have not loved each other thus, to that degree we are indebted to one another and need to ask forgiveness of the debt we have not paid.* Father Justin Frederick

### **The Power of the Cross** by Right Reverend Archimandrite Eusebius Stephanou, Th.D.

How can we claim to be the Apostolic Church when we lack the zeal of the Apostles?!

How can we say we are Orthodox when we show no enthusiasm to project the Cross to people in the Church that are spiritually perishing!

Our people are crying out for deliverance from the bondage and oppression of Satan. There are many hurting men and women out there craving in their hearts for the one and only answer to their need - the Crucified and Risen Christ. They come to Church hurting and burdened with pain and anguish and they leave the same way: pained and afflicted. The power of the Cross is not made available to them.

#### **Silencing the Message of the Cross**

Too many of our clergy administer the Body and Blood of Christ in the Communion, but omit the preaching of the Cross upon which the precious Blood was shed! O! What a caricature of Orthodoxy!

We like to stress that we Orthodox believe that the bread and the wine is truly the Body and Blood of Christ in the Communion, unlike the Protestants who regard the elements as mere symbols. What good is that kind of profession of faith when we are reluctant to trumpet the Gospel of salvation that in Jesus Christ we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of His grace?

If the Gospel happens to be heard from the pulpit at all, it usually is mentioned parenthetically. It is a betrayal of Christ when the message of the Cross is stated as a parenthesis - a passing thought - in the sermon, rather than as the central theme. It shows contempt for the Cross that offers supernatural power of redemption to every man and woman in their fallen state.

Our people are led into judgment and condemnation for receiving the Communion without having a personal experience of salvation that comes from the Cross of Calvary.

No Orthodox message from the pulpit can possibly be complete without making the death, and resurrection of the Savior central and meaningful to our people who cry out to be redeemed. Can we afford to play nice religious games when our own eternity as priests and bishops is at stake, as well as the eternity of the souls entrusted to us?