

FC|RC HKA 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 Demetrios Richards • e-mail: dwr00nhr@twcny.rr.com
Parish Web Page: www.cnyorthodoxchurch.org

GOD HAS GONE UP WITH A SHOUT! THE LORD — WITH THE SOUND OF A TRUMPET!

May 24, 2015	Sunday of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am
May 30	Saturday	Great Vespers	4:00 pm
May 31	Holy Pentecost	Divine Liturgy	9:30 am

Grant Rest O Lord, to all veterans departed this life and make their memory to be eternal!
Grant Many Years, Lord, to all those serving in the Armed Forces and preserve them!

Saints of the Day: Venerable Symeon Stylites (the Younger) of the Wonderful Mountain (596). Venerable Nicetas Stylites, Wonderworker of Pereyaslavl-Zalesski (1186). Saint Xenia of Petersburg, Fool-for-Christ (Glorification 1988). Martyrs Meletius Stratelates, Stephen, John, and 1,218 soldiers with women and children, including: Serapion the Egyptian, Callinicus the Magician, Theodore, Faustus, the women Marciana, Susanna, and Palladia, two children Cyriacus and Christian, and twelve tribunes: Faustus, Festus, Marcellus, Theodore, Meletius, Sergius, Marcellinus, Felix, Photinus, Theodoriscus, Mercurius, Didymus, all of whom suffered in Galatia (218). Saint Gregory, Archbishop of Novgorod (1193). Venerable Vincent of Lerins (ca. 450). Nun-martyr Martha, Abbess of Monemvasia (990).

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, Mary, Valentina, Dimitri, Nina, Daniel, Helen, Catherine, Anna, Peter, Helen, Michael, Stephanie, Zara, Nolan, Emelie, Michael, Ed, Nettie, Anita, Maria, Michael, John, James, Nancy, Susan, Daniel, Aaron, Nicole, Ashley, Mark, Jennifer, Nina, Nadine, Michael, Anna, Gregory, Marianna, Isaiah, Jamie, Albert, Kevin, Robert, Robert, Andrew, David, Warren.

God Grant Many Years! Prayers for the health of Mark and Cathy Nestor, Michael Uzawa, Nolan David Albrecht and Matushka Fran Vansuch were offered at Liturgy and Moleben at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of the Stryjek Family: Harry, Mary, Anna, Katherine, Theodore and Theodore were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Stephanie Litwen.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Tom Ketzak, Norma Udics, Nicholas Konet and newly-departed Anna Vakulchik were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of Father John Udics.

Memory Eternal. Prayers for the repose of Joseph and Julie Firlet and Kazmir Karpowich were offered today at Liturgy and Litiya at the request of the "Memory Eternal Requiem Service Fund."

THE VENERABLE SIMEON THE STYLITE OF THE WONDERFUL MOUNTAIN was born in Antioch in the year 522 A.D. during the reign of Emperor Justin the Elder. His father perished in an earthquake and he was left alone with his mother Martha. At age six, he withdrew to the desert to a spiritual father John under whose guidance he submitted himself to a life of austere fasting and prayerful asceticism to the astonishment of all who saw him. Enduring horrible demonic temptations, he received great comfort and grace from the Lord and His angels. The Lord Christ appeared to him under the guise of a handsome youth. After this vision, a great love for Christ burned in Simeon's heart. He spent many years on a "pillar" praying to God and chanting psalms. Under God's guidance, he withdrew to a mountain named "Wonderful" by the Lord Himself. Because of the name of this mountain, Simeon was surnamed the "Man of the Wonderful Mountain." Because of his love for God, he was endowed with the rare gift of grace, by which he healed every infirmity, tamed wild beasts, discerned into distant parts of the world and the hearts of men. He left his body and gazed at the heavens and conversed with angels, frightened and cast out demons, prophesied, at times lived without sleep for thirty days and even longer without food and received nourishment from the hands of angels. The words of the Lord were completely fulfilled in him: "He that believes in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do" (Saint John 14:12). In the year of our Lord 596 A.D. and in the seventy-fifth year of his life, Saint Simeon presented himself to the Lord that he, together with the angels, may satisfy himself gazing upon the face of God.

THE HOLY MARTYR MELETIUS STRATELATES, WITH 1218 SOLDIERS, THEIR WIVES AND CHILDREN Meletius was accused of demolishing a pagan temple during the reign of Emperor Antoninus. Nailed to a tree, Meletius gave up his holy soul. Many soldiers under his the command, who refused to deny Christ their Lord, suffered with him. They all honorably suffered in the eleventh century and took up habitation in the kingdom of Christ the God.

VENERABLE NICETAS, THE STYLITE

As a youth, Nicetas lived an unrestrained and sinful life. Entering into church by chance, he heard the words of the Prophet Isaiah: "Wash yourselves (from sin) and you will be clean" (Isaiah 1:16). These words entered deeply into his heart and caused a complete turnabout in his life. Nicetas left his home, wife, property and entered a monastery near Pereyaslavl, where he lived an ascetical life of difficult mortifications until his death. He wrapped chains around himself and enclosed himself in a pillar for which reason he was called a Stylite. God endowed him with abundant grace so that he healed men of various tribulations. He cured Prince Michael Chernigov of palsy. Certain evil doers spotted the chains on him and, because of their brightness, thought they were made of silver. They killed him one night, removed the chains and carried them away. This occurred on May 16, 1186 A.D. After his death, he appeared to the Elder Simeon and ordered that his discovered chains be placed next to his body in the tomb.

SAINT VINCENT OF LERINS +450 Commemorated May 24

A leading theologian of the Church of Gaul in the 5th century, Saint Vincent settled in the island monastery of Lerins off the southern coast of France in order that "avoiding the concourse and crowds of cities... I can follow without distraction the Psalmist's admonition, "Be still, and know that I am God." Here he wrote his celebrated Commonitorium, a "Reminder," where he wrote down "those things which I have truthfully received from the holy Fathers," which they "have handed down to us and committed to our keeping." Among these things is the celebrated definition of orthodoxy as that which has been believed in the Church "everywhere, always, by everyone." Saint Vincent lived in an age of great historical uncertainty; barbarian tribes were a constant menace and although four hundred years of Christian tradition had already passed, the foundations of the faith had been only recently clarified by decisions made in the Ecumenical Councils--the Council of Nicea (325), the Council of Constantinople (381) and the Council of Ephesus (431). It is, therefore, not surprising that Saint Vincent was so concerned to preserve the authority of Christian tradition. This is not to say that he was opposed to progress or doctrinal development; each age must face its won particular problems and develop a Christian response in answer to them. "But it must be progress in the proper sense of the word, and not a change in faith. Progress means that each thing grows within itself, whereas change implies that one thing is transformed into another.... The growth of religion in the soul should be like the growth of the body, which in the course of year develops and unfolds, yet remains the same as it was."

"In ancient times, our forefathers sowed the seeds of the wheat of faith in that field which is the Church. It would be quite unjust and improper if we, their descendents, gathered, instead of the genuine truth of wheat, the false tares of error. On the contrary, it is logically correct that the beginning and the end be in agreement, that we reap from the planting of the wheat of doctrine the harvest of the wheat of dogma. In this way, none of the Characteristics of the seed is changed, although something evolved in the course of time from those first seeds and has now expanded under careful cultivation. What may be added is merely appearance, beauty, and distinction, but the proper nature of each kind remains."

His defense of the traditions of the Fathers and his condemnation of innovation and novelty in the Church are as appropriate today as they were in his time:

"The Church of Christ, zealous and cautious guardian of the dogmas deposited with it, never changes any phase of them. It does not diminish them or add to them; it neither trims what seems necessary, nor grafts things superfluous; it neither gives up its own nor usurps what does not belong to it. But it devotes all its diligence to one aim: to treat tradition faithfully and wisely; to nurse and polish what from old times may have remained unshaped and unfinished; to consolidate and to strengthen what already was clear and plain; and to guard what already was confirmed and defined. After all, what have the councils brought forth in their decrees but that what before was believed plainly and simply might from now on be believed more diligently; that what before was preached rather unconcernedly might be preached from now on more eagerly."

O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust (I Tim. 6:20)

HOMILY About how the love of God is shed abroad in the hearts of men by Saint Nikolai of Zhicha

"The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given to us" (Romans 5:5).

Love is joy and love anoints the heart of man with joy. Brethren, love is power and love anoints the heart of man with power. Love is peace and love anoints the heart of man with peace. And from joy, power and peace, courage is born and love anoints the heart of man with courage.

The love of God, as a fragrant oil, is shed abroad in our hearts by no other than the Holy Spirit, the All-gentle and All-powerful Spirit. Completely undeserved by us, the Spirit of God is shed abroad in us: the love of God in our hearts in the Mystery [Sacrament] of Chrismation. However, in time we neglect this love and by sin we alienate ourselves from God and fall into the disease of spiritual paralysis. And the Holy Spirit unwilling to abide in an impure vessel, distances Itself from our heart. When the Holy Spirit distances Itself from us, then joy, power, peace and courage also departs from us immediately. We become sorrowful, weakened, disturbed and fearful. But the All-good Spirit of God only distances Itself from us but does not abandon us completely. He does not abandon us but He offers to us who are sick, remedies through the Mystery of Repentance and the Mystery of Holy Communion. When we again cleanse ourselves through the Mysteries [Sacraments] of Repentance and Communion then He, the Holy Spirit of God, again abides in us and the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. We fall, we rise, we fall and we rise! When we fall, the Spirit of God stands by us and raises us if we desire to be raised. However, when we are raised, the Spirit of God stands within us all until we, by sin and foolishness, do not desire to fall. Thus, we in this life interchangeably become a fertile field and a wilderness, sons of repentance and prodigal sons, fullness and emptiness, light and darkness.

O All-good Holy Spirit of God, do not depart from us either when we want You and when we do not want You. Be with us all the time until our death and save us for life eternal.

To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.