



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September - October 2017

Sermon on the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God

Bishop Tikhon (Shevkunov) | 14 October 2011

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!

Today the Holy Church marks the day of the Protection of the All-Holy Theotokos. This is essentially a Russian celebration, but happens in a very few parishes of other Orthodox Churches. Most of you know that this feast arose in Greece, in Constantinople. In the Blachernae temple, St. Andrew the Fool-for-Christ, an well-known ascetic in Constantinople at that time, beheld the Mother of God during the Divine Services standing above all the faithful, holding her Protection above them, her archiepiscopal omophorion, invisible protecting each worshipper, each one who was in the church, striving whole-heartedly toward God. Only two people saw this spiritual vision: Andrew the Fool-for-Christ and his disciple. The rest continued praying as before. They stood reverently, paying attention to the words of the prayers. But what a difference there is between those two, who saw the Holy Theotokos, and us who stand with faith in church while faith raises our souls up to God?

In each of our lives there have been supernatural occurrences, one or several, which indubitably confirmed for us the existence of the of the spiritual world, that the Lord God, whose nature is inconceivable, the Ruler and Master of the world, directs all the fates of men, and he leads a man from this life, from temporal life, to eternal life. Before Him each of us must give an account for the way we have spent our lives, for each deed and for every thought which we have made and brought to fruition in this world. And there is indeed a great difference between the ascetics, chosen ones of God, who like in the reality of the spiritual world, and us, who only from time to

time are made worthy of special revelations, special visions. What is this mystery, and in what does our unworthiness and insufficiency consist?

We have come today to the temple of God in order to offer Him the sacrifice of repentance, prayer, and candles. What more can a man give to God? In general, the relationship between God and man takes place only on the level of sacrifice. Here in our temple there is an altar to God, whereon God Himself offers Himself in sacrifice to us. He offers all of Himself, just as the great sacrifice was offered on Golgotha, when the Lord Jesus Christ lowered Himself, Divinity lowered itself to the level of mankind and offered itself entirely in sacrifice out of love for us, in order that He might raise us up from a condition of death to one of eternal life, whereunto we are all called.

We all know about the sacrifice of Christ, and we all live by this sacrifice. But God also awaits a sacrifice from us. The only sacrifice that is a true gift and a true sign of love is that which is important and dear to us that we give up from ourselves to someone else.

Contemporary man, unfortunately, is not, as rule, prepared for sacrifice. We have no decisiveness to cut our from ourselves our habits that run contrary to the commandments of Christ, that get in the way of divine communion, and which are empty or harmful for us, being very dear to our passions. And these weaknesses, sicknesses, sins, habits, and (most importantly) our laziness, we are unable to offer in sacrifice to God by cutting them out from ourselves. But this is the only thing that God is waiting for.

Observe how people come to church and, in the first years they have a wondrous and fruitful spiritual life, when they come to know God, come

to the Church and begin to live a new life. Why? Because, of course, their first zeal has given them the strength to offer their former habits and attachments in sacrifice to God, and God in return has given them wondrous grace and spiritual power, wonderful foresight and communion with God. But then, when he comes back to a normal state, to everyday life, then a new sacrifice is required from us. But we offer it with greater and greater difficulty and this causes the life of the Christian to bear little fruit, and to become more and more tiresome. He understands intuitively and by the experience of his previous life that this is the right path, but he is unable to renounce that which he knows it necessary to renounce. He understands that it is necessary to offer these weaknesses and laziness to God in sacrifice, and then to begin again a strong and renewed spiritual life, but Orthodox Christians make such a step with great difficulty. It is the now the case that, even until his death, a man abides in a divided state, having not the power to step over his own pride, over his own predilection for ease and pleasure which, it would seem, are not sinful in themselves ... But in order to enter a new spiritual state, in order to excise one's passions, such a sacrifice is entirely necessary.

Andrew the Fool-for-Christ was just such a man, who sanctified his entire life by the greatest method and, as the Holy Fathers write, by the science of sciences, which is Divine communion. Gradually he excised from himself all that stood between him and God: passions, pride, self-opinion that came from people exalting him. And

it was precisely this man who was made worthy of the vision of the All-holy Theotokos. But this was only one of the many visions that he had. Saint Seraphim, the Elders of Optina, the Saints of our time, according to whose spiritual lives we orient ourselves, they lived and now live as a constant sacrifice, offering themselves in sacrifice to God.

These words sound terrible to the external man, who still does not know what the love of God is. But if any man thinks about these words — a husband, for example, who brings something that is very important to him as an offering to his spouse — then he will understand that he has enriched himself, inasmuch as he has deeply understood the importance of their relationship. A mother begins to understand this when she offers her hours, days, and strength to her children, giving up her own future; and in this she finds her happiness. Every Christian understands this, who is able to be raised to the state of Divine communion, and in this he find that true happiness which exists on the earth, rather than those things which unhappily come to an end when we pass from temporal life to eternal life.

May the Lord raise us also to this spirit of the Saints, even if only in part. May He grant us to understand the mystery of which the Lord spoke when He said "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice." May we ascend to that spiritual stature where the sacrifice of God, offered to us ourselves, will be as mercy, as happiness and joy. Very few are capable of this, but each of us is called to it. Amen.

St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. HILARION of Eastern America & New York. The parish newsletter is published bi-monthly under the direction of the Rev. Michael Crowley. In order to ensure timely delivery to our far-flung parish, please submit all notices by the 15th of the month prior to publication to Father Michael at frmichael@stxenia.org. Thank you.

Rector:

V. Rev. Michael Crowley
34 Elm Street
North Andover, MA 01845
(978) 204-0428

Confessions on Saturday during Vigil, on Sunday during the Hours, and by appointment.

Parish Council

President: Rev. Michael Crowley (978) 204-0428
Fr. Constantine Desrosiers (603) 775-0320
Dcn. Alexander Doohovskoy (978) 369-4486
Starosta: John Kekis (978) 456-9865
Treasurer: Alexis Rodzianko (603) 275-8251
Sisterhood: Pamela Ann Reed (978) 254-5043
Cemetery: Natalie Pishenin (978) 761-3449
Choir: Laryssa Doohovskoy (978) 841-5960
David Nettleton (203) 895-7636
Dimitri Nikshych (603) 659-0015
Anthony Sarantakis (978) 263-2016
Roberto Gonzalez (978) 692-1229
Pavel Kazlouski (781) 888-0477
Dan Hakim (201) 543-4260

Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast

If you cannot be at church on your assigned Sunday, please contact someone directly to switch. If you are not on this list and would like to help, please add your name on the hard copy posted in the church hall and you will be added for the next round. If you have any questions, contact Judy Engalichev -- dujy-kot@comcast.net.

Trapeza can be whatever you would like to prepare, anything is appreciated. **Note: If you are preparing anything containing nuts or other allergens, please put a small label to that effect in front of your dish. Nut allergies are especially fatal to small children.**

A note about Trapeza etiquette: Standing, even for short periods of time, is often extremely difficult for older people and expectant mothers. It would be an act of Christian charity to allow them to collect their meal first and to be seated. It should go without saying that this courtesy should also be extended to visiting clergy.

September

3 Potluck
10 Pekar Family, Ailena Kazlouski,
Anna Radovic
17 Raisa, Natalie Avram and Anna Mukhanov
24 Church Feast

October

1 Katia Fredette, Natasha Kirichuk,
Vera Sarantakis
8 Matushka Nancy, JoJo Crowley,
Dorothea Crowley
15 Pam Reed, Carolyn Savage, Diane Mendez
22 Mary Doohovskoy, AnneMarie Hakim,
Sonya (Mukhanov)
29 Nancy Vaters, Brigid Amy Fischer, L&A
Doohovskoy

Sisterhood News --

*Please Note – Our Annual Parish Feast is
September 24th*

Plans are underway, mark your calendars and stay tuned to find out how you can help.

Contact: Pam Reed for more information
peterpamreed@comcast.net

Thank you to:

~ Olivia Gonzalez and Anysia Doohovskoy for organizing the kids in cleaning the Church, hall, and basement this summer. It was a HUGE help!

~ Everyone who bought school supplies for local kids in need and to Natalie Pishenin and Alex Gonzalez for organizing the effort.

Please Remember in Your Prayers --

Athanasia Tamvlakis, Peter Danas, Dimitry Emelianoff, and Masha Harris.

Also, please be sure to inform the Sisterhood if someone is in the hospital or shut in at home.

Congratulations –

~ To the Kronaeur family on the wedding of their daughter Kristina to Elliott Jonah Schwartz on August 6th!

~ To the Nettleton family on the Baptism of their baby Thomas on August 12th!

~ To the Voronova family on the birth of their baby boy, Benhamin, on August 15th!

~ To Noah Lamoureaux on his Chrismation on August 27th!

St. John of Damascus Church School News --

During September, the Sunday School classes will meet to rehearse the memory work done last spring in preparation for the Metropolitan's visit on Sept 24th. Regular classes will begin October 1st. Please contact Matushka Nancy for more information or go to:
<http://www.stxenia.org/churchschool.html>

Choir News --

If you have a private service - wedding, baptism, funeral, etc. – and would like to have choir singers, please contact Laryssa directly at stxeniachoir@gmail.com.

If you are interested in singing in the choir, please see Laryssa Doohovskoy.

Parish News –

Katia Reilly has posted a blog of her time in the Holy Land this summer. The link is found here:
<http://katerinapreilly.weebly.com/holy-land.html>

From the Diocese website –

http://eadiocese.org/news_170809_1.html

"ST. SERAPHIM CAMP – A GENUINE TRIUMPH OF ORTHODOXY!"

The Eastern American Diocese has a longstanding tradition of hosting various children's camps throughout the summer months. When we talk about summer camps, we usually think of scout camps, particularly the camps of St. George Pathfinders of America (ORUR) and the Association of Russian Explorers Outside of Russia (NORR). But over the past 25 years, a new camp in honor of Venerable Seraphim of Sarov has emerged in the Pocono Mountains. Founded in 1992 by the parishioners of Christ the Savior Church in Wilkes-Barre, PA, St. Seraphim Camp has grown to become the single largest summer camp in the Eastern American Diocese, and it shows no signs of slowing down. We visited the Poconos on Friday the 4th and Saturday the 5th of August to find out the secret behind this very popular summer camp.

"The camp started out in 1992 as a parish project back when I used to serve in this area," said Archpriest Alexis Duncan (rector of Nativity of the Mother of God Church in Albany, NY, and the camp's founder). "After two years, more and more people wanted to attend, and that is when Archbishop Laurus (later Metropolitan) encouraged us to open up the camp to the public." As the organizers searched for a suitable campsite, word of the newly formed camp began to spread like wildfire. Through the prayers of St. Seraphim, Fr. Alexis was able to get in touch with a local Boy Scout troop, who graciously offered their facilities at Camp Acahela for use by the newly established Orthodox summer camp.



Camp Acahela is located in the town of Blakeslee, PA, and sits on a 242-acre peninsula formed by the joining of the Lehigh and Tobyhanna Rivers. The location is perfect for an Orthodox summer camp, not only because of its close proximity to New York City, but also because the camp offers a wide range of activities for the children, such as whitewater rafting, archery, a rifle range, and much more. The Boy Scouts even have a camp chapel, which is converted into a temporary Orthodox church every year with the installation of a mobile iconostasis. All of these factors make it very easy to organize an Orthodox summer camp without having to purchase land or build new facilities. "The first year that we came to Camp Acahela, everything sort of exploded," said Fr. Alexis. "We had well over 100 kids, and those numbers have consistently grown over the years." Currently, the camp attracts an average of 200 kids per year.

The most obvious difference between St. Seraphim Camp and the scout camps in the Eastern American Diocese is the use of the English language. While the scout camps are primarily conducted in Russian, St. Seraphim Camp is English-speaking. "When we started the camp, we wanted to give those children who did not speak Russian an opportunity to attend an Orthodox summer camp," said Fr. Alexis. "But since St. Seraphim Camp is always held after the scout camps, we started noticing that many Russian-speaking children were signing up, as well. This year, it's safe to say that the majority of our camp is bilingual."



Another feature that differentiates St. Seraphim Camp from other camps is that there is no formal scouting program. "It is not a scouting camp. I grew up in a Russian scouting

camp where we wore uniforms, raised the flags, marched, and so on. But that is not for everyone," said Archpriest Andrei Sommer (Vice Chairman of the Synodal Youth Committee). "Some people prefer one camp over another, while others may attend both. But as the Russian Orthodox Church continues to grow and encompass people from various non-Russian backgrounds and traditions, it is important for us to address these traditions and provide a camp that addresses their specific needs. This camp is unique because it is one of the only ROCOR camps in this country that is simply Orthodox – it doesn't have any specific patriotic or scouting theme."

Priest Richard Reed (rector of St. Joseph of Optina Church in Virginia Beach, VA) has been coming to the camp for six years and noted that, "This is one place where the kids can be in an Orthodox environment 24/7. When we are here, we are not really in the world – we are in an Orthodox oasis where the kids are able to practice and live their Faith. Here they are able to learn what it means to be Orthodox Christians."



St. Seraphim Camp is traditionally held on the first week of August to coincide with the feast of Venerable Seraphim Sarov (August 1 n.s.). Every day begins with morning prayers, followed by breakfast and classes on the Law of God. These classes are led by a group of 8-10 priests from all across the Diocese, who take time off from their busy schedules in order to spend time with the children. Classes are rather informal and usually take place outside, where the children are divided into groups based on gender and age. "We try not to replicate something that they will get in their home parish, such as the basics of the Law of God. Since most of these kids already have a fundamental understanding of the Orthodox Faith, we are able to delve into more complicated and relevant topics," said Fr. Alexis.

As we visited each individual group, we heard topics such as understanding the Orthodox approach to suicide, same-sex marriages, transgender issues, etc. "We can't get away

from some of the modern topics that are being thrown at our kids in school. These topics are being forced down their throats in school, and so when they come here, they ask us questions – this is great! We are able to guide them in an Orthodox direction," explained Fr. Andrei.



While the older kids talk about these serious and relevant topics, the younger kids talk about things like the lives of saints like Venerable Seraphim of Sarov and the Holy Hierarch John of San Francisco, myrrh-streaming icons, and living a life in Christ.

After the young campers complete their Law of God classes, the rest of the day is spent on what Fr. Alexis calls "the fun stuff." The camp provides the children an opportunity to float down the whitewater rapids of the Lehigh River, play sports, shoot rifles and bows, participate in interesting craft projects such as t-shirt making and rock painting, building camp fires, organizing talent shows and dances, swimming in the pool, and much more. But no matter what activity the kids participate in, one thing never changes – the clergy are always there. Since each priest is assigned a group of children, they are able to continue their interaction with the kids well beyond the Law of God classes. "I constantly have kids come up to me throughout the day and ask personal questions that they did not want to ask during the group sessions," says Fr. Andrei. "Through these interactions, we are able to establish a personal relationship with each of the kids in our group – this is truly wonderful!"



This personal relationship with the clergy is key to the camp's success, and it always leads to the kids eventually opening up and talking about the challenges of being Orthodox in today's world. Priest Gabriel Weller (rector of Holy Myrrhbearers Church in Harrisonburg, VA) recalled one of these conversations. "I had some older counselors tell me that when they go out and eat, they do not make the sign of the Cross or pray because people stare at them. And I said – well, you gotta pray! You gotta have people look at you! Being a witness to Christ is what we are all about – I mean, that's what we are here for. We are not of this world. We also talk about St. Seraphim and how he spoke of gaining that inner peace through which thousands will be saved around you. We explain to the kids that they never know what kind of an impact they can have on those around them if they are bold enough to love God and not be ashamed of their Faith."



At the end of the fun-filled week, all of the commotion suddenly stops and a peaceful silence comes over the entire camp. As we approached the main dining hall, we began to hear the familiar words of the pre-Communion prayers be-

ing chanted over the loudspeaker. All 250 campers and counselors were quietly standing in line for confession, as the older kids read the Communion rule. The young boys who were recently playing pranks on one another in the woods stood quietly in line, pondering their sins and offenses. Next to them stood the girls, who all wore proper head-coverings. The priests were spread out over the dining hall, hearing confessions and offering guidance to the children. Then it came time for the akathist to St. Seraphim, which was beautifully sung by a youth choir.

Later that day, the youth gathered under the open skies at the camp chapel for the All-Night Vigil. As the youth choir prayerfully sang the service, the clergy continued to hear confessions late into the evening. After the service, the campers returned to their tents and the rest of the evening was spent in quiet prayerful contemplation awaiting the Divine Liturgy. The last day of the camp was truly a triumph of Orthodoxy! Having spent the week with their brothers and sisters in Christ, and having confessed their sins, the campers all together partook of the Holy Mysteries of Christ.



But the beauty of St. Seraphim Camp is that it does not end when the camp week is over. Interaction between the campers usually continues throughout the year on social media and at various functions, such as the St. Herman Youth Conferences. The friendships that begin at St. Seraphim Camp tend to last for many years, and some even culminate in marriage. "This is why we bring our youth here," said Fr. Gabriel. "So that they can gain Orthodox friends across the country and eventually find an Orthodox spouse. Since we are so far apart from each other, it's hard for our youth to find someone to date unless they are willing to date someone outside of the Faith. Here we are able to establish a network of friends, and as a result there have been marriages that have come out of this camp, including three just this year." Fr. Richard reaffirmed this, saying, "The benchmark

for St. Seraphim Camp is the amount of marriages that come from here. That shows me that we are doing something right."

Providing the youth with an opportunity to interact with clergy and each other in an Orthodox environment may be the primary goal of St. Seraphim Camp, but does it work? Even though camp attendance is constantly growing, can we be certain that the kids are growing spiritually as well? "Absolutely," says Fr. Richard. "I notice it when I come back each year. I notice it when the kids talk about their lives and how they have grown over the past year when we were not together. So, even though I might not be able to see it right this minute – I'll see their spiritual growth next year when they come back, and this is a great blessing for me. As a priest, I see that I am doing what God wants me to do. I'm able to have an impact on the kids who will be the future of our Church and our country."



As much as St. Seraphim Camp provides an unforgettable experience for our children, it also provides the clergy some much-needed bonding time. Fr. Andrei says, "For the clergy, this is almost like a continuation of the pastoral conferences." Fr. Richard goes on further to explain, "The clergy get together around a campfire at night and the things that we discuss are topics that we just can't get to during the conference. This is a great place where we can get together to be honest and open with each other and learn from one another. The secret here is that the clergy get just as much out of this camp as the kids do."

Although it is not easy to live in the woods for an entire week, Fr. Gabriel believes that the benefits are worth the sacrifice. "It is a struggle to be here, but it is totally worth it. We connect with people all over the country here. It is a warm and fuzzy type of feeling." This feeling of love for the children is what unites all of the volunteers who take time off from their busy schedules in order to ensure that our children have a place where they can have fun and at the same time become better Orthodox Christians. Fr. Andrei

said it best: "The biggest plus of coming here is the joy of giving. It is just wonderful to give it all to these kids! Giving is the best thing!"

Subdeacon Peter Lukianov

Media Office of the Eastern American Diocese

The Appearance of the Kaluzhsk Icon of the Mother of God (*commemorated September 15/September 2*)

occurred in 1748 in the village of Tinkova, near Kaluga, at the home of the landowner Vasiliï Kondrat'evich Khitrov. Two servants of Khitrov were examining old things in the attic of his home. One of them, Evdokia, noted for her unconstrained temper, was given to rough and even indecorous language. Her companion began to admonish her and while arguing she discovered a large package covered in a grimy sackcloth. Undoing it, the girl saw the picture of a woman in dark garments with a book in her hands. Considering it to be the portrait of a woman monastic and wanting to bring Evdokia to her senses, she accused her of being disrespectful to the hegumeness. Evdokia answered the scolding words of her companion, and becoming increasingly angry, she spit at the picture. Immediately she became convulsed and fell down senseless. Her frightened companion reported about what had happened throughout the household. The next night, The Queen of Heaven appeared to Evdokia's parents and told them, that their daughter had jeered at Her blasphemously and She ordered them to make a molieben before the insulted icon, and to sprinkle the invalid with holy water at the molieben. After the molieben Evdokia recovered, and Khitrov took the wonderworking icon into his own home, where abundantly issued forth healings to those approaching it with faith. Afterwards they conveyed the icon to the parish temple in honour of the Nativity of the MostHoly Mother of God in the village of Kaluzhka. A copy of it was dispatched to Kaluga. At the present time it is situated in the cathedral church of Kaluga.

Through this icon the Mother of God has repeatedly manifest Her protection of the Russian Land during its difficult times. The celebration of the Kaluga Icon on 2 September was established in remembrance of the deliverance from an ulcerous plague in 1771. A second celebration was established 12 October, in memory of the saving of Kaluga from the French invasion of 1812. In 1898 there was established a celebration on 18 July in gratitude to the Mother of God for

safe-guarding against cholera. Celebration is made likewise on the 1st Sunday of the Peter fast.

The Holy GreatMartyr Nikita (*commemorated September 28/September 15*) was a 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 Nikita believed in Christ and accepted Baptism from the Gothic bishop Theophilus, a participant in the First OEcumenical Council. Pagan Goths began to oppose the spread of Christianity, which resulted in interne-cine strife.

After the victory of Fritigern, -- heading a Christian army and inflicting defeat on the pagan Athanarik, the Christian faith began to spread increasingly among the Goths. Bishop Wulfil, the successor to Bishop Theophilus, created a Gothic alphabet and translated into the Gothic language many priestly books. Saint Nikita 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, Athanarik after his defeat again contrived to gather his own forces, return to his own country and reestablish his former power. Having remained a pagan, he continued to hate Christians and persecute them. Saint Nikita, having undergone many tortures, was thrown into a fire, where he died in the year 372. The friend of Saint Nikita, a Christian named Marianus, by night retrieved the body of the martyr, -- unharmed by the fire and illumined by a miraculous light, and gave it over to burial in Cilicia. Afterwards it was transferred to Constantinople. Part of the relics of the GreatMartyr Nikita were later transferred to the monastery of Vysokie Dechany in Serbia.

The Holy First-Martyress and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thekla (*commemorated October 7/September 24*)

was born in the city of Iconium. She was the daughter of rich and illustrious parents, and moreover she was distinguished by extraordinary beauty. At 18 years of age they betrothed her to an eminent youth. But having heard the preaching of the holy Apostle Paul about the Saviour, Saint Thekla with all her heart came to love the Lord Jesus Christ, and she steadfastly resolved not to enter into marriage, but rather to devote all her life to preaching the Gospel. The mother of Saint Thekla was opposed to her daughter's plans and demanded that she enter into marriage with the bridegroom betrothed to her. Saint Thekla's fiancee likewise made a complaint to the governor of the city against the Apostle Paul, accusing him of turning his bride against him. The governor locked up Saint Paul

in prison. During the night Saint Thekla secretly ran away from her house, and she bribed the prison guards, giving them all her gold ornaments, and so made her way into the prison to the prisoner. For three days she sat at the feet of the Apostle Paul, hearkening to his fatherly precepts. The disappearance of Thekla was discovered, and servants were sent out everywhere in search of her. Finally they found her in the prison and brought her home by force.

At his trial the Apostle Paul was sentenced to banishment from the city. And with Saint Thekla they again began urging her to consent to the marriage, but she would not change her mind. Neither the tears of her mother, nor her wrath, nor the threats of the governor were able to separate Saint Thekla from her love for the Heavenly Bridegroom, the Lord Jesus Christ. Her mother in a insane rage demanded from the judges a death sentence against her unyielding daughter, and Saint Thekla was sentenced to burning. Without flinching, the holy martyress went into the bon-fire and made the sign of the cross over herself. At this moment the Saviour appeared to her, blessing her present deed, and inexpressible joy filled her holy soul. The flames of the bon-fire shot up high, but the martyress was surrounded by an halo and the flames did not touch her. Thunder boomed, and a strong down-pour of rain with hail extinguished the bon-fire. The torturers scattered in fear. Saint Thekla, kept safe by the Lord, quit the city and with the help of a certain Christian youth searched out the Apostle Paul. The holy apostle and his companions, among which was also the Disciple Barnabas, were hidden away in a cave not far from the city, praying fervently, that the Lord would give strength to Saint Thekla in her sufferings.

After this, Saint Thekla went together with them preaching the Gospel in Antioch. In this city she was pursued by a certain dignitary named Alexander, who was captivated by her beauty. Saint Thekla refused his offer to enter into marriage, and so for being a Christian she was condemned to death. Twice they set loose upon her hungry wild animals, but they would not touch the holy virgin, but instead lay down meekly and licking at her feet. The Providence of God preserved the holy martyress unharmed through all her

torments. Finally, they tied her to two oxen and began to chase after her with red-hot rods, but the strong cords broke asunder like cob-webs, and the oxen ran off, leaving Saint Thekla unharmed. And the people began shouting: "Great is the God of the Christians!" The governor himself became terrified, reasoning it out finally, that the holy martyress was being kept safe by the Almighty God, Whom she served. He then gave orders to set free the servant of God Thekla.

With the blessing of the Apostle Paul, Saint Thekla then settled in the desolate surroundings of Isaurian Seleucia and dwelt there for many years, constantly preaching the Word of God and healing the sick through her prayer. Saint Thekla converted many pagans to Christ, and the Church names her worthily as "Equal-to-the-Apostles" ("Ravnoapostol'na"). Even a pagan priest, seeking to assault her purity and punished for his impudence, was brought by her to holy Baptism. More than once the enemy of the race of man tried to destroy Saint Thekla through people blinded by sin, but the power of God always preserved this faithful servant of Christ.

When Saint Thekla was already a 90 year old woman, pagan sorcerers became incensed at her for treating the sick for free. They were unable to comprehend that the saint was healing the sick by the power of the grace of Christ, and they presumed that the virgin-goddess Artemis (Diana) was her especial patroness. Out of envy against Saint Thekla, they sent their followers to defile her. When they had already approached quite close to her, Saint Thekla cried out for help to Christ the Savior, and the hill split open and hid the holy virgin, the bride of Christ. And thus did Saint Thekla offer up her holy soul to the Lord.

Holy Church glorifies the "First-Suffering" Thekla as "of women the glory and guide for suffering, opening up the way through every torment". From of old many a temple was dedicated to her, one of which was built at Tsargrad (Constantinople) by the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine (Comm. 21 May). And then too, the name of the First-Martyress Equal-to-the-Apostles Thekla, a prayer intercessor for the ascetic, is remembered during the tonsure of women into monasticism.



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
P.O. Box 147 - Methuen, MA 01844
(phone) (978) 204-0428



SEPTEMBER 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Aug 27 (Aug 14) 12th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 Great Vespers & Litya Fast: wine & oil	Aug 28 (Aug 15) DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:00 Matins & Divine Liturgy	Aug 29 (Aug 16)	Aug 30 (Aug 17) Fast	Aug 31 (Aug 18)	1 (Aug 19) Fast	2 (Aug 20) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
3 (Aug 21) 13th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	4 (Aug 22)	5 (Aug 23)	6 (Aug 24) Fast: wine & oil	7 (Aug 25)	8 (Aug 26) Fast: wine & oil	9 (Aug 27) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
10 (Aug 28) 14th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 11:30 Moleben for New School Year	11 (Aug 29) Beheading of the Baptist Fast: wine & oil	12 (Aug 30)	13 (Aug 31) Fast: wine & oil	14 (Sep 1) The Church New Year	15 (Sep 2) Fast	16 (Sep 3) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
17 (Sep 4) 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	18 (Sep 5)	19 (Sep 6)	20 (Sep 7) 6:30 Vigil of Feast Fast: wine & oil	21 (Sep 8) NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	22 (Sep 9) Fast: wine & oil	23 (Sep 10) Archiepiscopal Visit of Met. HILARION 5:30 All-Night Vigil
24 (Sep 11) Archiepiscopal Visit of Met. HILARION Glorification of St. Xenia 9:00 Hierarchical Hours and Divine Liturgy 12 Noon Parish Feastday Dinner	25 (Sep 12)	26 (Sep 13) 6:30 Vigil of the Feast	27 (Sep 14) ELEVATION OF THE CROSS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	28 (Sep 15)	29 (Sep 16) Fast	30 (Sep 17) 5:30 All-Night Vigil



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
P.O. Box 147 - Methuen, MA 01844
(phone) (978) 204-0428



OCTOBER 2017						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Sep 18) 17th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	2 (Sep 19)	3 (Sep 20)	4 (Sep 21) Fast: wine & oil	5 (Sep 22)	6 (Sep 23) Fast: wine & oil	7 (Sep 24) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
8 (Sep 25) 18th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	9 (Sep 26)	10 (Sep 27)	11 (Sep 28) Fast: wine & oil	12 (Sep 29)	13 (Sep 30) 6:30 Vigil of the Feast Fast: wine & oil	14 (Oct 1) Protection of the Theotokos 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy 5:30 All-Night Vigil
15 (Oct 2) 19th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	16 (Oct 3)	17 (Oct 4)	18 (Oct 5) Fast: wine & oil	19 (Oct 6)	20 (Oct 7) Fast: wine & oil	21 (Oct 8) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
22 (Oct 9) 20th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 7th Ecumenical Council 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	23 (Oct 10)	24 (Oct 11)	25 (Oct 12) Fast: wine & oil	26 (Oct 13)	27 (Oct 14) Fast	28 (Oct 15) St. Demetrius Saturday 4:00 General Pannyhida 5:30 All-Night Vigil
29 (Oct 16) 21st Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	30 (Oct 17)	31 (Oct 18) Afternoon - St. John of Kronstadt Party for Families	Nov 1 (Oct 19) Fast	Nov 2 (Oct 20)	Nov 3 (Oct 21) Fast	Nov 4 (Oct 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil