



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

May - June 2018

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

St. Nikolai (Velimirovich)

Thus did the One ascend to Heaven Who held heaven within Himself. He who carries hell within himself will end up in hell, but he who bears heaven within his soul will ascend to heaven. And truly, no one can ascend to heaven other than those who have heaven within; and no one can end up in hell besides those who have hell within. The familiar is drawn to what is familiar and unites with the familiar; but it rejects what is not familiar. Matter submits to the spirit to the extent that the human soul is filled with the Divine Spirit; and the laws of nature are obedient to moral laws, which govern the world. Because the Lord Jesus Christ is the fullness of the Holy Spirit and the perfection of moral law, to Him is subject all matter—the entire physical world, with all the laws of nature.

Any person, as a spirit, can be victorious in his life over a certain law of nature, with the help of another law of nature—that is, he can overcome it with his own spirit. Christ, as the God-Man, could subject the laws of nature to Himself through the law of the Spirit, which is the supreme law of the created world. However, this concept, just as any other spiritual concept, can be but partially explained by ordinary earthly conceptualizations and reasoning—and that only by examples and comparisons.

Spiritual things only become clear beyond a doubt when the spirit sees them and perceives them. In order to see and feel the manifestations of the spiritual world, long and exhausting spiritual

practice is needed, after which, by God's grace, spiritual vision may be opened in a person; this vision allows him to see what seems unbelievable and impossible to ordinary mortals. Nevertheless, a person must first believe those who have seen the unbelievable, and strengthen their faith from day to day, striving to see what is inaccessible to the common gaze.

Not in vain does the Lord say, Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed (Jn. 20:29). The Lord God rejoices in their faith just as a father on earth rejoices that his children believe his every word. All the apostles were present at the Ascension of the Lord, gathered on the hill. This was their last collective meeting. However, this was not the last appearance of Christ. Later He appeared in a vision to the Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus, to the Apostle John on the island of Patmos, and to other apostles, as well as to martyrs, holy hierarchs, and confessors, over the course of the entire history of the Christian Church.

But the day will come—and that day is not far off—when all the righteous men and women who firmly believed in Him throughout their lives will see Him. And around Him in the heavens will gather all those who were baptized on earth in His name—not only with water, but also with the Spirit and Fire. And they will enter into His joy, which the Heavenly Father has prepared for all His chosen, and will inherit a joy that they have never known before.

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.

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

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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 -- dujykot@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.

May

6 Raisa, Natalie Avram and Anna Mukhanov
13 Katia Fredette, Natasha Kirichuk, Vera Sarantakis
20 Matushka Nancy, JoJo Crowley Dorothea Crowley
27 Pam Reed, Carolyn Savage, Diane Mendez

June

3 Mary Doohovskoy, AnneMarie Hakim,
Sonya Carrascal
10* Nancy Vaters, Brigid Amy Fischer,
L&A Doohovskoy
17* Olena Fedina, Irina Dokukina, Lena Rodzianko
24* Alexandra Gonzalez, Anna Kekis, Marina Pavlova

Sisterhood News

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the food drive held during Great Lent!

We delivered about 10 boxes to The Lazarus House and they were **very** thankful for our donation. (We kept getting hugs!)

Big thanks to the Vaters kids who helped Pam Reed make the delivery!



~ Please be reminded, the Sisterhood will meet Sunday, May 13th during Trapeza.

~ The Sisterhood of St. Nicholas Church in Enfield, CT (where Fr. Brendan Crowley serves) will be hosting a Ladies' Tea to raise funds for their church. Sunday, May 20th, 2PM - 5PM. Ages 12+. \$60/person (2 tickets for \$100). A notice is posted in our Church Hall for more information.

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Athanasia Tamvlakis, Peter Danas, Dimitry Emelianoff, Dimitri Nikshych, Masha Harris, and Laryssa Doohovskoy.

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

Congratulations

~ To the newly-illuminated Victoria, daughter of Sonya and Walter Carrascal, who was received into the Church on April 15th.

We ask God's Blessing and many years to all!

St. John of Damascus Church School News

The Last day of Sunday School will be **June 3rd**. We will have a festive day with some class presentations.

Vacation Church School will be July 9th and 10th with Vigil on the 11th and Liturgy for Sts. Peter and Paul on the 12th.

Please contact Matushka Nancy for more information or go to: <https://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 Doohovskoy at

stxeniachoir@gmail.com

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

Parish News

~ The Sunday School coin drive for the Prince Vladimir Youth Association collected \$592! Thank you to the children and families for your generosity! More information on the organization may be found here: <http://youthpv.org/>



~ Registration for **SAINT SERAPHIM CAMP, July 29 - Aug 5**, will soon be available.

St. Seraphim Camp has been serving the Russian Orthodox community for over 25 years. Orthodox children entering grades three through twelve are accepted. The campers sleep in tents and have wonderful dining facilities in the beautiful Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania. Each day the children participate in The Law of God, daily prayers, as well as the usual sporting events; river rafting, swimming, hiking, arts and crafts and bonfires. The camp has influenced thousands of lives over its history. We encourage you to consider the camp as a yearly part of your children's lives. All counselors are

known to us and carefully chosen. **If any adult would like to explore the possibilities of volunteering, they are free to contact us along with a letter of recommendation from their parish priest.**

For more information, please visit:
<http://stseraphimcamp.org/index.html>

Synod News

10th Pilgrimage to Holy Places of Russia on the 100th anniversary of the slaying of the Royal Family

~ June 15-July 1, 2018 ~

Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America and New York will lead a pilgrimage to Ekaterinburg and other holy sites of Russia on the 100th anniversary of the martyrdom of the Royal Family. Further information:
<http://www.synod.com/synod/pdf/12russiapi1grimage18eng.pdf>

THE MONK THEODORE SIKEOTES (*Commemorated April 22/ May 5*) was born in the mid VI Century in the village of Sikea, not far from the city of Anastasiopolis (Asia Minor), in a pious family. When his mother Maria conceived the saint, she had in a dream a vision, that a bright star had overshadowed her womb. A perspicacious elder, to whom she turned, then explained that this was the grace of God overshadowing the infant conceived in her.

When the boy reached six years of age, his mother presented him a golden sash, since she intended that her son should become a soldier. But in a dream vision by night there appeared to her the GreatMartyr George (Comm. 23 April), and he bid her not think about military service for her son, since the boy was destined to serve God. The saint's father, Kosma, had served as a messenger of the emperor Justinian the Great (527-565), and he died early. The boy remained in the care of his mother, with whom lived also his grandmother Epidia, his aunt Dispenia and his little sister Vlatta.

In school, Saint Theodore displayed great talents for his study, chief of which was an unchildlike ability for reasoning and wisdom: he was quiet, mild, he always knew how to calm his comrades, and he did not permit fights or quarrels amongst them. At his mother's house lived also the pious elder, Stephen. Imitating him, Saint Theodore at age 8 began during Great Lent to eat only a small morsel of bread in the eve-

nings. In order that his mother should not force him to take supper with everyone, the boy returned home from school only towards evening-time, after he had communed the Holy Mysteries together with the elder Stephen. At the request of his mother, the teacher began to send him off to supper at the end of lessons. But Saint Theodore nonetheless skipped off to the church of the GreatMartyr George, where the patron saint of the temple appeared to him in the form of a youth and ushered him into the church.

When Saint Theodore reached age 10, he fell deathly ill. They brought him to the church of Saint John the Baptist and placed him in front of the altar. The boy was healed by two drops of dew, fallen from the face of the Saviour on the dome of the temple. At this time by night the GreatMartyr George began appearing to the boy, and also leading him off to his own temple to pray until morning. His mother, fearing the night-time dangers of the forest path, spoke with her son about not going at night. One time, when the boy had already gone, she angrily went after him to the church, and she dragged him out by the hair and tied him to his bed. But that very night in a dream vision the GreatMartyr George appeared to her, and threateningly she commanded her not to hinder the lad from going to church. And both Elpidia and Dispenia had the same vision. The women then became persuaded of the special vocation of Saint Theodore and they no more hindered him from his efforts, and even his little sister Vlatta began to imitate him.

At twelve years of age the saint was granted in a vivid dream to behold Christ on the Throne of the Kingdom of Glory, and Who said to him: "Asceticise, Theodore, so as to obtain perfected reward in the Heavenly Kingdom".

From that time Saint Theodore began to toil all the more fervently. Both the First Week and the Cross-Veneration Week of Great Lent he spent in complete silence.

The devil thought upon how to destroy him. He appeared to the saintly lad in the form of his classmate Gerontios, and urged him to jump off a precipice, and even showed him in what manner how to. But his protector the GreatMartyr George saved the boy.

One time the boy set off for a blessing to the wilderness elder Glykerios. During this time there was a terrible drought throughout all the land, and the elder said: "Child, on bended knee let us pray to the Lord, that He send rain. And in such manner shalt we learn, whether our prayers be pleasing to the Lord". The old man and the boy, on bended knee, began to pray – and immediately it began to rain. Then the elder said to Saint Theodore, that upon him was the grace of

God, and he blessed him to become a monk, when the time should come.

At fourteen years of age Saint Theodore left home and lived nearby the church of the GreatMartyr George. His mother brought him food, but Saint Theodore left everything on the stones by the church, and he ate over the course of a day only a single prospora loaf of bread. And even at so young an age, the Monk Theodore was granted the gift of healing: through his prayer a demon-possessed youth was restored to health.

The Monk Theodore then fled human glory and he withdrew into complete solitude. Under a large boulder not far from the church of the GreatMartyr George, he dug out a cave and persuaded a certain deacon to cover over the entrance with ground, leaving only a small opening for air. The deacon brought him bread and water and he told no one, where the monk had hidden himself.

For two years the Monk Theodore lived in this seclusion and complete quiet. His kinsfolk bewept the saint and they thought, that he had been devoured by wild beasts.

But the deacon finally revealed the secret, since he was afraid that the Monk Theodore would perish in the narrow cave, and moreover he pitied the weeping mother. They plucked the Monk Theodore out of the cave half-alive.

The mother wanted to take her son home and restore him back to health, but the saint remained nearby the church of the GreatMartyr George, and after several days he was completely well.

News about the exploits of the youth reached the local bishop Theodosios. And thus in the church of the GreatMartyr George he was ordained to the dignity of deacon, and later -- to priest, although the monk was only 17 years of age.

After a certain while the Monk Theodore set off for veneration to the holy places in Jerusalem, and there at the Khozebite Laura near Jordan, he accepted monasticism.

When he returned to his native land, he again continued to live nearby the church of the GreatMartyr George. His grandmother Elpidia, his sister Vlatta and his mother on the advice of the monk withdrew to a monastery, and his aunt died in a good confession.

The ascetic life of the young priestmonk attracted to him people seeking salvation. The monk tonsured into monasticism the youth Epiphianos, and later on a pious woman, healed of sickness by the saint, brought him her son Philumenos. Then came also the virtuous youth John. Brethren thus gradually gathered around the monk.

The Monk Theodore continued to bear his burdensome exploits. At his request a blacksmith made for him an iron cage without a roof, and so tight that in it, it was possible only to stand. In this cage in heavy chains the monk stood from Holy Pascha until the Nativity of Christ. From the Baptism of the Lord until Holy Pascha he secluded himself in his cave, from which he emerged only for the making of Divine-services on Saturdays and Sundays. Throughout the whole of the Forty-Day Great Lent the saint ate only greens, and on Saturdays and Sundays spring-grain bread.

Asceticising in such manner, he received from the Lord the power over wild animals. Bears and wolves came up to him and took food from his hand. Through the prayer of the monk, those afflicted with leprosy were healed, and from whole districts devils were cast out. In the nearby village of Magatia, when locusts threatening the crops appeared, its people turned with a request for help to the Monk Theodore. He sent them off to church. After Divine Liturgy, which he served, the villagers returned home and learned that during this while all the locusts had died.

When the military-commander Maurice was returning to Constantinople by way of Galatia after a Persian war, the monk predicted to him, that he would become emperor. The prediction came true, and the emperor Maurice (582-602) fulfilled the request of the monk -- he sent the monastery bread each year for the multitude of people being fed there.

The small temple of the GreatMartyr George could not accommodate all those that wanted to pray in it. Then through the efforts of the saint a beautiful new church was built. During this while the Anastasiupolis bishop happened to die. The people of the city besought the Ancyra metropolitan Paul to install the Monk Theodore as their bishop.

So that the saint should not resist, the messengers of the metropolitan and the Anastasiupolis people dragged him out of his cell by force and carried him off to the city.

Having become bishop, Saint Theodore toiled much for the welfare of the Church. But his soul yearned for the solitary communion with God. After several years he set off to venerate at the holy places in Jerusalem. And there, concealing his identity, he settled at the Laura monastery of the Monk Sava, where he lived in solitude from the Nativity of Christ until Pascha. Then the GreatMartyr George led him to return to Anastasiupolis.

Secret enemies tried to poison the saint, but the Mother of God gave him three small pieces of grain. The saint them and remained unharmed. Saint Theo-

dore felt weighed down with the burden of being a bishop and he besought the Constantinople patriarch Kyriakos (595-606) for a release to return to his own monastery and celebrate Divine-services there.

The sanctity of the monk was so evident, that during the time of his celebrating the Eucharist, the grace of the Holy Spirit, in a visage of radiant porphyry, overshadowed the Holy Gifts. One time, when the monk lifted the discus with the Divine Lamb and proclaimed "Holy Things unto the Holy", -- the Divine Lamb raised itself up into the air, and then resettled itself again upon the discus.

All the Orthodox Church venerated the Monk Theodore as a saint, even while he was yet alive.

In one of the cities of Galatia, a terrible event occurred: during the time of a church procession the wooden crosses being carried began of themselves to strike and chip at one another, with the result that the Constantinople Patriarch Thomas (607-610, Comm. 21 March) summoned to him the Monk Theodore, asking of him the secret of this terrible portent. Having the gift of foresight, the Monk Theodore explained, that this was a sign of coming misfortunes for the Church of God (he was thus prophetically indicating the future heresy of the Iconoclasts). In grief the holy Patriarch Thomas besought the monk to pray for him for a quick death, so that he should not see the coming woe.

In the year 610 the holy Patriarch Thomas reposed, having besought blessing of the Monk Theodore. And in the year 613 the Monk Theodore Sikeotes also expired to the Lord.

THE HOLY APOSTLE JAMES, SON OF ZEBEDEE, (*Commemorated April 30/May 13*) one of the 12 Apostles, was called by our Lord Jesus Christ for apostolic service together with his brother, the Apostle John the Theologian. It was to them and to the holy Apostle Peter pre-eminently over the other Apostles that Jesus Christ revealed His Divine Mysteries: at the Resuscitation of the Daughter of Jairus, on Mount Tabor (at the Transfiguration), and in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Saint James, after the Descent of the Holy Spirit, preached in Spain and in other lands, and then he returned to Jerusalem. He openly and boldly taught about Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world, and with the words of Holy Scripture he denounced the Pharisees and the Scribes [scholars], reproaching them with malice of heart and unbelief. The Jews had not the ability to refute the apostolic discourse and for money they hired the pseudo-philosopher and sorcerer Hermogenes, so that he would enter into a disputation with the apostle and confute his arguments about

Christ as the Promised Messiah having come into the world. The sorcerer sent to the apostle his student Philip, who was converted to belief in Christ. Then Hermogenes himself became persuaded of the power of God, he burnt his books on magic, accepted holy Baptism and became a true follower of Christ.

The unbelieving among the Jews persuaded Herod Agrippa (40-44) to arrest the Apostle James and sentence him to death. Saint James calmly heard out the death sentence and continued to bear witness about Christ. One of the false-witnesses against the apostle by the name of Josiah was struck by the courage of Saint James. He came to believe in the truth of the words about the coming of Christ the Messiah. When they led forth the apostle for execution, Josiah fell at his feet, repenting his sin and asking forgiveness. The apostle hugged him, gave him a kiss and said: "Peace and forgiveness be unto thee". Then Josiah confessed before everyone his faith in Christ, and he was beheaded together with Saint James in the year 44 at Jerusalem.

THE HOLY CONFESSOR JOHN THE RUSSIAN

(*Commemorated May 27/June 9*) was born towards the end of the XVII Century in Little Russia and was raised in piety and love for the Church of God. Upon attaining the age of maturity he was called up into military service, and he served as a simple soldier in the army of Peter I and took part in the Russo-Turkish War. During the time of the Prutsk Campaign of 1711 he together with other soldiers was taken captive by the Tatars, who handed him over to the commander of the Turkish cavalry, who took his Russian captive home with him to Asia Minor, to the village of Prokopia (in Turkish, Urkiul). The Turks tried to convert the captive Christian soldiers to Mahometanism: some with threats and allurements, while others that were more stoically hardy, they beat and tortured. Saint John was not swayed by the promise of earthly blessings and he bravely endured the ferocity, the humiliations and beatings. His master tortured him often in the hope, that his slave would accept Mahometanism. But Saint John resolutely resisted the will of his master and he answered: "Neither by threats, nor with promises of riches and delights wilt thou be able to turn me away from my holy faith. I was born a Christian, and a Christian I shalt die". The bold words and firm faith of the confessor, his fearlessness and righteous life, finally humbled the fierce heart of the master. He ceased to torment and revile the captive, and no more urged him towards a renunciation of Christianity, but had him only instead take care of the cattle and keep up the stable, in a corner of which was the bed-cot of Saint John.

From morning until late evening the saint of God served his Turkish master, judiciously fulfilling all his commands. In the winter cold and summer heat, half naked and bare of foot he did his duty. Other slaves frequently mocked him, in seeing his zeal. Righteous John never became angry with them, on the contrary, as occasions arose he helped them in their servitude and comforted them in their misfortune. Such sincere kindness of heart of the saint had its effect on the souls of both the master and the slaves. The master began to confide in Righteous John so much, and to esteem him for his integrity and decency, that he offered him to live as though free and to resettle, wheresoever he desired. But the ascetic suggested that he should remain in the vicinity of the horse-stable, where each night he could without hindrance asceticise in solitary prayer, strengthening people in goodness and love for God. Sometimes he left his quiet shelter and under cover of night he went to the church of the GreatMartyr George, where on the portico he prayed fervently on bended knees. And in this church on feastdays he communed the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

During this while Righteous John continued as before to serve his master, and despite his own poverty, he always helped the needy and the sick and shared with them his meagre food.

Towards the end of his difficult and ascetic life Saint John became infirm, and sensing the nearness of his end, he summoned the priest, so as to receive the final blessing for the departure of the soul. The priest, fearing to go with the Holy Gifts to the house of the Turkish commander, enclosed the Holy Gifts in an apple and so without problem gave them to Righteous John. Having glorified the Lord, he communed the Holy Mysteries of Christ and then expired to God. The righteous end of the holy Confessor John the Russian occurred on 27 May 1730. When they reported to the master that his servant John had died, he summoned the priests and gave over to them the body of Saint John, and they gave him burial befitting a Christian. At the funeral there gathered almost all the Christian inhabitants of Prokopia, and they accompanied the body of the saint to the Christian cemetery.

Three and an half years later the priest was miraculously informed in a dream, that the relics of Saint John had remained incorrupt. Soon the relics of the saint were transferred to the church of the holy GreatMartyr George and placed in a special reliquary. The new saint of God began to be glorified by innumerable miracles of grace, accounts of which spread to the remote cities and villages. Christian believers from various places came to Prokopia to venerate the holy relics of Saint John the Russian and they received

through his prayers graced healings. The new saint came to be venerated not only by Orthodox Christians, but also by Armenians, and even Turks, recouring with prayerful petition to the Russian saint: "Servant of God, disregard us not in thine mercy".

In the year 1881 part of the relics of Saint John were transferred to the Russian monastery of the holy GreatMartyr Panteleimon by the monks of Holy Mount Athos, after they were miraculously saved by the saint of God during the time of a dangerous journey. Through the means of both this monastery and the inhabitants of Prokopia, in 1886 there was started construction of a new church, since the church of the holy GreatMartyr George, where the relics of Saint John were situated, -- had become decrepit.

On 15 August 1898 the new church in the name of Saint John the Russian was consecrated by the Caesarea metropolitan John, with the blessing of the oecumenical patriarch Constantine V.

In 1924 the inhabitants of Caesarea Prokopia, having resettled to the Island of Eubeia, took with them also part of the relics of Saint John the Russian. For several decades the relics were situated in the church of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine and Helen at New Prokopia on Eubeia, but in 1951 they were transferred into a new church in the name of Saint John the Russian. Thousands of pilgrims flocked here from all the corners of Greece, particularly on the day of his memory, 27 May. Righteous John the Russian is widely venerated on Holy Mount Athos, particularly in the Russian Panteleimonov monastery.

THE REMEMBRANCE OF THE FIRST OECUMENICAL COUNCIL (*Commemorated May 29/June 11*) is celebrated by the Church of Christ from the times of antiquity. The Lord Jesus Christ left the Church a great promise: "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shalt not prevail against It" (Mt. 16: 18). In this joyous promise is the prophetic declaration that, although the life of the Church of Christ on the earth will pass through difficult struggle with the enemy of salvation, victory is on its side. The holy martyrs witnessed to the veracity of the words of the Saviour, undergoing suffering in confessing the Name of Christ, but the sword of the persecutor doth yield before the victory-bearing Sign of the Cross of Christ.

During the IV Century the persecutions of Christians ceased, but within the Church itself arose heresies, the struggle with which occasioned the Church to convene OEcumenical Councils. One of the most pernicious of heresies was Arianism. Arius, an Alexandrian presbyter, was a man of immense pride and ambition. In repudiating the Divine dignity of Je-

sus Christ and of His equality with God the Father, Arius falsely taught that the Son of God is not One-in-Essence with the Father, but was rather created by the Father in time. The Local Council, convened with the Alexandria Patriarch Alexander presiding, condemned the false-teachings of Arius. But Arius would not submit, and having written to many bishops a letter of complaint against the determinations of the Local Council, he spread his false-teaching throughout all the East, therein receiving support in his errors from certain of the Eastern bishops. Making investigation into the arising dissensions, the holy emperor Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine (Comm. 21 May) took recourse of bishop Hosius of Cordova and, having received from him assurance, that the heresy of Arius was directed against the most fundamental dogma of Christ's Church, he decided to convene an OEcumenical Council. With Saint Constantine presiding, in the city of Nicea in the year 325 there gathered together 318 bishops -- the representatives of Christian Churches from various lands.

Among the bishops present was many a confessor, who had suffered during the time of persecutions and who bore upon their body the marks of torture. Among the participants of the Council were likewise great luminaries of the Church -- Saint Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia (Comm. 6 December and 9 May), Saint Spiridon, Bishop of Trimiphuntum (Comm. 12 December), and others, venerated by the Church as holy fathers.

With the Alexandria Patriarch Alexander came his deacon, Athanasias (himself afterwards Patriarch of Alexandria, Comm. 2 May), -- termed the "Great", in proving a zealous champion for the purity of Orthodoxy. The emperor, Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine, presided over the sessions of the Council. In his speech, pronounced in reply to the welcoming by bishop Eusebios of Caesarea, he said: "God hath helped me cast down the impious might of the persecutors, but incomparably more distressful for me than any soldier, any bloodspilling of battle and incomparably more ruinous is the inner internecine strife in the Church of God".

Arius, having among his supporters 17 bishops, remained arrogant, but his teaching was repudiated and he was excommunicated from the Church. The holy deacon of the Alexandrian Church Athanasias in his speech conclusively confuted the blasphemous conjectures of Arius. The fathers of the Council declined the acceptance of a symbol of faith as proposed by the Arians. Instead, they affirmed the Orthodox Symbol (Creed) of the Faith. The Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine proposed to the Council to insert into the text

of the Symbol-Creed of the Faith the wording "One-in-Essence" ("Edinosuschnyi") which he frequently had heard in the speeches of the bishops. The fathers of the Council unanimously accepted this suggestion. In the Nicean Creed the holy fathers formulated the Apostolic teachings about the Divine dignity of the Second Person of the MostHoly Trinity -- the Lord Jesus Christ [trans. note: i.e. that He is "homo-ousios" ("one selfsame essence") rather than merely "homoi-ousios" ("similar in essence") with God the Father -- this being the very significant "controversy over a mere iota"]. The heresy of Arius, as an error of haughty reason, was exposed and repudiated. After resolving this chief dogmatic question, the Council established also Twelve Canons (Regulae-Rules) on questions of churchly governance and discipline. There was decided likewise the question about the day of celebration of Holy Pascha. By decision of the Council, Holy Pascha ought to be celebrated by Christians not on the same day with the Jewish (Passover), but invariably on the 1st Sunday after the day of the Vernal Equinox (which in the year 325 came on 22 March).

THE HOLY MARTYRS VITUS, MODESTUS, AND CRESCENTIA THE NURSEMAID, (*Commemorated June 15/June 28*) suffered for Christ during the reign of emperor Diocletian (284-305). The holy Martyr Vitus was son of an illustrious Sicilian dignitary, the pagan Gelas. While still a young lad, Saint Vitus was enflamed with an ardent love for the Lord Jesus Christ and he prayed incessantly to Him. The Lord gave him the grace of wonderworking. He healed the sick and converted many pagans to Christ. Learning about this, the governor Valerian summoned Gelas and advised him to turn his son away from faith in Christ; and how that were the emperor at some time to issue an edict for the persecution of Christians, not only the lad, but all the household of Gelas would suffer. But Gelas was not able to persuade Saint Vitus and he began to beat the lad. The governor Valerian learned that Saint Vitus had refused to offer sacrifice to the gods, and summoned him to trial before him. The holy lad firmly confessed his faith before the court and unconditionally refused to offer sacrifice to idols. They beat him again. When the governor, giving the signal for increasing the torture, lifted his hand, it immediately withered. The governor received healing through the prayer of the saint and, dissolving the trial, he gave back the holy lad to Gelas, having commanded that he not turn him away from faith in Christ.

In order to corrupt his son in fleshly sin, Gelas surrounded him in luxury, and brought pretty girls to him. They filled him with tasty food, arranged ban-

quets and entertainment, but the expected results were not forthcoming. Saint Vitus did not cease to pray, and he asked God's help in temptations. Angels appeared to him and prayed with him. When Gelas went to take his son and glanced at the Angels, he immediately went blind. Gelas gave a vow to recant from idols, and Saint Vitus healed him. But, stubborn of heart, Gelas did not keep his vow. Paternal love for his son turned to hatred for him, and he decided to kill him. In order to save the boy, his tutor Saint Modestus and his nurse Saint Crescentia -- who were Christians, secretly took him from his parental home. At the river they saw a boat. An Angel went into the boat together with them and they reached the Italian district of Lucanium, where the saints lived quietly -- hidden away from torturers. The holy lad never ceased to heal the sick and he converted pagans to Christianity. Here also news about him spread about.

Saints Vitus and Modestus went to present themselves before Diocletian. Taken with the fine appearance of the lad, he at first urged him to offer sacrifice to idols. The holy lad denounced senseless idol-worship and he healed a demoniac son of Diocletian. The emperor offered Saint Vitus great honours, fame and riches -- on the condition that he recant from the Christian faith. The lad refused and with his former courage he confessed himself a Christian. They locked him up in prison together with Saint Modestus. When Jesus Christ appeared to the prisoners -- strengthening them in their deed and giving His help, the fetters fell

from their hands. Ascribing the miracle to magic, Diocletian gave command to throw Saint Vitus into a cauldron of boiling oil. The saint stood in it, as though in cool water, and remained unharmed. Then a fierce lion was set loose at him. The lad signed himself with the sign of the cross, and the beast peacefully lay down at his feet and began to lick his foot. They hung the holy martyrs on pillars and began to rip at them with iron claws. Saint Crescentia came out of the crowd of spectators, confessed herself a Christian and reproached the emperor for his cruelty. He sentenced her also to torture. Saint Vitus called out to God: "O God, save us by Thy power and deliver us". An earthquake started. Many pagans perished under the collapsed buildings, and Diocletian in fear fled to his chambers. An Angel released the martyrs from the pillars and took them to Lucanium. The holy Martyr Vitus prayed to God, that He would accept their souls in peace and not deprive His benefaction from all, who would keep their memory. From Heaven came a Voice: "Thy prayer is heard". The saints with joy gave up their souls to God. The sufferings of the holy Martyrs Vitus, Modestus and Crescentia occurred in about the year 303. The memory of these saints is celebrated also on 16 May. The relics of Saint Vitus were transferred to Prague (Prah). Holy Nobleborn prince Vyacheslav of the Czechs (Comm. 28 September) constructed a temple in honour of the holy Martyr Vitus, in which he was afterwards buried.



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MAY 2018						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Apr 29 (Apr 16) 4th Sunday of Pascha: The Paralyzed Man. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Apr 30 (Apr 17)	1 (Apr 18) 6:30 Vespers of Mid-Pentecost and Akathist to St. Xenia	2 (Apr 19) Mid-Pentecost Fast: Fish, wine & oil	3 (Apr 20)	4 (Apr 21) Fast: wine & oil	5 (Apr 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
6 (Apr 23) 5th Sunday of Pascha: The Samaritan Woman. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	7 (Apr 24)	8 (Apr 25)	9 (Apr 26) Fast: wine & oil	10 (Apr 27)	11 (Apr 28) Fast: wine & oil	12 (Apr 29) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
13 (Apr 30) 6th Sunday of Pascha: The Blind Man. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	14 (May 1)	15 (May 2)	16 (May 3) 6:30 Vigil of Ascension Fast: Fish, wine & oil	17 (May 4) ASCENSION OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy of Ascension	18 (May 5) Fast: wine & oil	19 (May 6) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
20 (May 7) 7th Sunday of Pascha: Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	21 (May 8) St. John the Theologian	22 (May 9)	23 (May 10) Fast: Fish, wine & oil	24 (May 11) Ss. Cyril and Methodius	25 (May 12) Fast: wine & oil	26 (May 13) 4:30 General Pannyhida 5:30 All-Night Vigil
27 (May 14) PENTECOST 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Vespers w/Kneeling Prayers	28 (May 15) Day of the Holy Spirit Fast free	29 (May 16) Fast free	30 (May 17) Fast free	31 (May 18) Fast free	Jun 1 (May 19) Fast free	Jun 2 (May 20) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free



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JUNE 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 27 (May 14) PENTECOST 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Vespers w/Kneeling Prayers	May 28 (May 15) Day of the Holy Spirit Fast free	May 29 (May 16) Fast free	May 30 (May 17) Fast free	May 31 (May 18) Fast free	1 (May 19) Fast free	2 (May 20) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
3 (May 21) 1st Sunday after Pentecost. All Saints. Tone 8 Ss. Constantine & Helen 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	4 (May 22) Fast	5 (May 23) Fast: wine & oil	6 (May 24) Fast	7 (May 25) Fast: fish, wine & oil	8 (May 26) Fast	9 (May 27) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
10 (May 28) 2nd Sunday after Pentecost. All Russian Saints. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	11 (May 29) Fast	12 (May 30) Fast: wine & oil	13 (May 31) Fast	14 (Jun 1) Father & Matushka to Russia until July 1st. Fr. Constantine will be serving. Fast: wine & oil	15 (Jun 2) Fast	16 (Jun 3) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
17 (Jun 4) 3rd Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	18 (Jun 5) Fast	19 (Jun 6) Fast: wine & oil	20 (Jun 7) Fast	21 (Jun 8) Fast: wine & oil	22 (Jun 9) Fast	23 (Jun 10) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
24 (Jun 11) 4th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	25 (Jun 12) Fast	26 (Jun 13) Fast: wine & oil	27 (Jun 14) Fast	28 (Jun 15) Fast: fish, wine & oil	29 (Jun 16) Fast	30 (Jun 17) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil