



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

September - October 2019

What the Cross Means for Christians

by I. M. Andreyev

The Cross is the mighty and profound symbol of Christianity, a symbol whose meaning is inexhaustible. The eight-pointed Cross is the symbol of Orthodoxy.

Gazing upon the Cross with his mind and heart, the Christian goes deeper into that symbol and grows spiritually. Just as a plant needs fertile soil, moisture, and sunlight in order to grow, so a Christian needs the Cross of Christ in his spiritual and physical life, for the Cross of Christ provides him with nourishment, drink, warmth, and light.

Does everyone know what the Cross is for Christians? Does everyone understand that the depth of meaning and substance of that Christian symbol is truly inexhaustible? Let us attempt to concentrate a bit in order to piously reflect on the Cross, on that same Cross which the Holy Church brings out on the Sunday of Orthodoxy to remind us of the Passion of Christ.

Our difficult, awful, evil, hurried time does not allow us to focus our concentration. People crave entertainment, a variety of experiences, productions, ideas, feelings, and actions. The Cross calls us toward the opposite. In it there is no movement, no change, no external variation. The Cross demands that we concentrate our attention upon the depths of the soul. Then, in its simplicity, stillness, and silence, its infinite substance and bottomless depth of meaning opens up to us.

The Holy Apostle Paul wanted to know nothing in the world “save Jesus Christ, and Him Crucified” (I Corinthians 2: 2). This was because to know the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified on the Cross, gives one everything he needs. The Cross was made of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the tree, which the first man touched, despite the Lord’s commandment forbidding him to do so. On the Cross, our Lord Jesus Christ tore up the manuscript of Adam’s sin and likewise accomplished the salvation of man. Watered with the Divine Blood, that Cross, which had come from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which had brought people death, was transformed into the Tree

of Life. Each Cross bearing the image of the Crucified Savior, wordlessly says to us... “Here is what I have done for you. What have you done for Me?” On the Cross is written everything that we need to know about God and about ourselves... our fall and our restoration, our sin and Divine Mercy. The Cross instructs us in great patience and humility, love and forgiveness of all, crucifixion of our flesh and hope in eternal salvation. The outstretched, crucified arms clearly bear witness to the fact that the Lord does not desire the death of a sinner, and that He is ready to forgive and embrace everyone who truly repents, regardless of how sinful they might be.

We find prototypes of the Cross in the Old Testament. The Patriarch Jacob blessed Joseph’s children Ephraim and Manasseh crosswise (Genesis, chapter 48). Moses used his staff to make the sign of the Cross on the waves of the Red Sea (Exodus, chapter 14). The latter example shows us that the Cross has the power to overcome even the laws of nature. There are other examples in which through the Cross “the natural order is overcome.”... Thus, for example, the Holy Martyr St. Vasilissa of Nicomedia, having protected herself with the sign of the Cross, stood unharmed in the midst of the flames. Thus, the Holy Bishop Julian, after making the sign of the Cross over the cup of poison, drank it without suffering any harm. The Cross is also the banner of military victory. When the Amalekites attacked the Hebrews after their exodus out of Egypt, Moses, supported by the priests, prayed with arms extended in the form of a Cross, and the Amalekites were defeated (Exodus 16: 11). St. Cyprian of Carthage explains that the Israelites were victorious because the cruciform stretching out of the arms was a prototype of the Cross of Christ. The clearest evidence of the victorious power of the Cross of Christ was demonstrated in Emperor Constantine the Great’s seeing a brilliantly shining Cross in a clear, cloudless sky, and hearing the words “In this [sign] you shall conquer.”

The Cross also grants healing. In the Old Testament, the bronze serpent, which prefigured the Cross, healed all those who had been bitten by the deadly ser-

pents sent by God as punishment for the Hebrews' complaining. If a prototype of the Cross held such healing power, how much more powerfully does the Cross of Christ itself heal! From ancient times and still today, the Orthodox Church has considered the Cross a great defense against all disease, whether physical or spiritual. This is why since antiquity, Christians have worn the Cross on their breast. To wear such a Cross was considered to be: 1) a confession that you were a Christian, and 2) a defense, "to ward off any evil." Even today, one often sees written on Crosses to be worn on the breast, the words, "O Lord, Save and Protect [me]!" When a priest blesses such a Cross, he prays that it might be "for him that shall bear it on himself may it be for a saving defense and preservation against every evil of soul and body and for the increase of increase him of Thy spiritual gifts and Christian virtues" and that it might be filled with "Thy power and strength for the repulsion and dispelling of every snare of the devil," and be "the preservation of soul and body from the face of enemies visible and invisible and from every evil." (Supplemental Book of Needs).

The Cross is a great, invincible weapon that conquers all. However, one needs to know how to use that weapon, that power. For even an ordinary weapon, a firearm or other weapon, can be an impotent one in the hands of someone inexperienced, and can even be a danger to the one who wields it. The invincible and almighty power of the Cross becomes so, and is conditional upon faith and piety. One cannot use the power of the Cross, one cannot utilize it as a weapon in the absence of faith and piety, for it is a weapon of the Holy Truth of Christ. One must not make the sign of the Cross over oneself or others without faith and piety.

The enemies of the Cross are the enemies of Christ. During the time of the Zaporozhian Syetch, such enemies were discovered quite simply... It was enough to simply observe how a person read the "Our Father" and crossed himself with the Orthodox sign of the Cross.

The Cross is first of all the symbol of our salvation. In signing ourselves with the sign of the Cross, we pray to God the Father through His Son's Cross (when we say the Lord's Prayer) or to our Savior, God the Son Himself through the Cross of His Golgotha (when we address prayers to the Lord Jesus Christ), or to God the Holy Spirit (in the prayer "O Heavenly King") — again through the Savior's Cross, through the Cross by which He acquired the right to send us the Comforter. Signing oneself with the sign of the Cross has particular meaning when praying for for-

giveness and salvation, for we cannot be forgiven or saved on account of any personal merits, no matter how great they might be! It is only thanks to the Passion of Christ, at the price of His precious blood, and only after our repentance and the fruits of repentance, that we dare hope in forgiveness and salvation. Such is the primary, profound meaning of signing oneself with the sign of the Cross. If we comprehend that, how can we possibly make the sign of the Cross carelessly?

The Cross is the most-powerful, almighty source of comfort and strength in times of sorrow, despondency, and despair. The Cross is the last hope of those who despair, and it never puts to shame those who have hope. It is enough but to imagine the Savior Crucified, and with only a tiny corner of your heart to intend to repent, and immediately, without delay, the Savior, who kisses the intention, sends His almighty help. Countless numbers of people have been saved from committing suicide because, for just a moment, they turned their thoughts in faith to the crucified Savior.

It was from the Cross that the prayer for forgiveness of enemies went forth. It was from the Cross that the repentant wise thief was granted mercy. It was from the Cross that the Holy Apostle John the Theologian (and with him, all faithful Christians) was adopted by the Most-holy Theotokos, the hope that cannot be put to shame of those without hope.

The Mother of God stood at the Cross — with her arms crossed on her breast. She was the first to cross her arms before the Cross of her Son and God, being crucified with Him in her maternal heart, remembering on Golgotha the Righteous Symeon's prophetic words "and a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." Comprehending that, dare we not reveal the thoughts within our hearts? And crossing our arms over our breasts, dare we not remember in our hearts her holy crossed arms?

Approaching the Holy Chalice, we always fold our arms cross-wise across our breast. We do not sign ourselves with the sign of the Cross (lest, in doing so, we jostle the Holy Chalice), but we hold a cross [our crossed arms] over our breast. When we commune, we stand as it were at the cross, together with the Most-holy Theotokos, for we commune of the Body and Blood of the Crucified One.

"With fear of God and faith draw nigh." Can one possibly approach without fear and faith, the Crucified Savior, upon seeing Whom the sun went dark, the

earth shook like a living being? Out of fear, the Angels were incapable of seeing the Lord's Passion.

The Cross teaches us humility and patience, sobriety and discernment, purity of heart, faith, hope and Christ's sincere love, love that is so sharply different from ordinary human love. Ordinary earthly love is egocentric and selfish, while Christ's true love is sacrificial and compassionate. The guide to true love is always the Cross, from which true love in fact is "more powerful than death."

All of the Holy Mysteries of the Church of Christ are intimately tied to the Cross... In Holy Baptism, everything is done under the sign of the Cross. In Chrismation; the same. Repentance is a "second Baptism," a "Baptism of tears." Holy Unction is an augmented Baptism of tears of repentance. Holy Matrimony is a Baptism into life together as husband and wife. Ordination is Baptism into service to the Church. Without the Cross, the Holy Eucharist would be utterly unimaginable. Reflecting on the Mystery of the Cross as Eucharist [i.e. Thanksgiving], St. John Cassian the Roman, asserts that this Mystery will be performed eternally by Christ the High Priest in the Kingdom of Heaven, for Christ's Sacrifice on the Cross can never be forgotten even unto ages of ages.

To a true Christian, the Cross of Christ cannot but evoke a reciprocal, grateful, compassionate and sacrificial love for the Lord, together with a yearning to be crucified with Christ. After all, the Cross wordlessly prays about that very thing. In bearing a Cross upon one's breast, or signing oneself with the sign of the Cross, or crossing one's arms over one's breast, we Christians testify that we are ready to carry the Cross without complaint, to carry it humbly, voluntarily, and joyfully, for we love Christ and want to share in His suffering, for His sake. The Cross of Christ not only calls us to voluntary suffer, but also shows us the example of undeserved travails crowned with the highest honor, the Crown of Thorns upon His Holy Head. And the whole "Karamazov" question... how can the suffering of innocent children be justified... is resolved so clearly and profoundly simply by just looking upon the Savior, the Innocent One, nailed to the Cross. However, the Cross is not simply a symbol of suffering. It is also a symbol of victory, and of the triumph of love and truth. It is also a symbol of the eternal joy that follows temporary suffering, a joy that nothing can ever take from us. The Cross truthfully promises us that every little tear will be wiped away, that all sorrow borne for Christ's sake, will turn to joy, that the droplets of tears, blood, and sweat a Christian who

loves Christ sheds before his death will become diamonds, rubies and pearls of inexpressible beauty in the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Cross calls us to spiritual struggle, and promises us help, victory, triumph, and the glory of the Resurrection.

All of the above makes it possible to understand why a Christian's entire life, from the day of his birth to his final breath on earth, and even after his death, is accompanied by the Cross. A new mother, after the pain of giving birth, "forgets herself in her joy that a person has been born into the world" and signs herself and the newborn infant with the sign of the Cross. The infant is baptized in the Holy Font in water that has been blessed by the Cross. With his first steps of intellectual and emotional development, a child learns – with his hand at first guided by a close relative – about the Cross and the sign of the Cross.

A Christian child's first conscious religious action should be to independently sign himself with the sign of the Cross. A Christian makes the sign of the Cross upon awakening (one should teach oneself that that should be the first thing he does); it should be his final action upon going to bed. A Christian signs himself with the sign of the Cross before and after eating, before and after studies, upon going outside, before beginning any work, before taking medication, before opening a letter received in the mail, upon receiving unexpected happy or sad news, upon entering someone else's home, a train, or a ship, and in general, at the beginning of any journey, recreational walk, or excursion, before bathing, visiting the sick, going to court, to an interrogation, to jail, into exile, before an operation, before a battle, before academic or other lectures, before and after a meeting or gathering, etc. However, just as one must not wear a Cross as an amulet, one should not turn the sign of the Cross into a talisman, for both the Cross and the sign of the Cross are simply external expressions of that which must be in a Christian's heart: humility, faith, and hope in the Lord.

When a Christian dies, others, his relatives cross his arms over his chest, and form his fingers into the sign of the Cross. At the grave, the final Cross is erected. The Dread Judgment will begin with the appearance of the Cross of Christ.

Everything [I have stated] above] is but a tiny page out of the "book about the Cross," a book consisting of countless numbers of pages.

Glory to Thy Precious Cross, O Lord!

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

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 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

- 1 Potluck
- 8 Olena Fedina, Ksenia Guryeva,
Elena Rodzianko
- 15 Nettleton, Chaplain, Bottos
- 22 Gonzalez, Kekis, Pavlova
- 29 Justinian, Masha Doohovskoy, Carrascal

OCTOBER

- 6 Raisa, Natalie Avram, Alesia Alevtina
- 13 Matushka Nancy, JoJo, Dorothea
- 20 Engalichev, Lynch, Harris
- 27 Soloviev, McLellen, Lehmkuhl

PARISH NEWS

Thank you!

Through the generosity of our parishioners, St Xenia's was able to collect 28 fully provisioned backpacks for grades 2-5. (Approximately 6 backpacks were filled for each grade). The backpacks themselves were obtained through FOCUS North America, an Orthodox charitable non-profit based out of Pittsburgh PA. FOCUS NA encourages local parishes to outreach to the communities in which they are located. St. Xenia's picked up that mantle for the benefit of the numerous homeless and needful children in Methuen.

The 28 backpacks, as well as a large number of teacher supplies (tissues, hand sanitizers, folders and student desk items, etc.) were delivered to the Methuen Superintendent of Schools office in timely advance of the school year.

The backpacks were greeted happily and thankfully by the people who work in the office. The supplies will be distributed to principals and teachers who have children in need in their schools and classrooms. Since St Xenia's has done this ministry previously our contacts were especially grateful for our commitment to the children's' needs.

A big thank you to all who participated!!

Parish Feast ~

Our Parish Feast will be held on Tuesday, September 24. Please be on alert for the many volunteer opportunities – from cleaning in advance to providing food and desserts, to set-up and clean-up. We look forward to a festive day together.

Winter Jacket Drive ~

We will, once again, have a winter jacket drive. This year we will target grades K-4, as recommended by our school contacts. New and very gently used jackets will be appreciated. Stay tuned for the collection dates!!

Please Remember in Your Prayers ~

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

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

Congratulations!

To Richie and Fotini Dimatteo on the birth of their son James Richard born 7/29. Mother and baby are doing well. Many years to all!

Choir News ~

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

Sunday School News ~

Congratulations and thank you to Alexei Doohovskoy on his new position as Sunday School Director!

On Sunday, September 8, there will be a Molieben for the start of the Sunday School year. Classes will begin Sunday, Sept. 15. Classes and locations will be posted on the bulletin board.

DIOCESE NEWS

BOSTON, MA: ANNUAL CHURCH MUSICIANS' CONFERENCE TO BE HELD AT HOLY EPIPHANY CHURCH

From October 2-6, 2019, Holy Epiphany Church in Boston (Roslindale), MA will host the 28th Annual Russian Orthodox Church Musicians' Conference, with the theme "Ensuring the Future of Liturgical Chant in our Parishes."

The lectures, master-classes, and rehearsals will be held at the church:

**963 South Street
Roslindale, MA 02131**

The conference will conclude with a hierarchal Divine Liturgy.

For more details or to register, visit the conference page [here](#).

MONK ARSENI OF KOMEL'SK (+ 1550)
(Commemorated Aug 24/Sept 6). The monk Arsenii of Komel'sk was born in Moscow, and was descended from a family of nobility, the Sakharusov. In his youth he took monastic vows at the Trinity-Sergiev monastery, and he occupied himself there with the copying of books: a Gospel is known of copied by him in the year 1506. In the years 1525-1527 the monk was hegumen at the Trinity-Sergiev monastery. He often withdrew to the solitary Makrisch monastery. Great Prince Vasilii IV (1505-1533) -- making a visit at the monastery at that time, was surprised to behold the hegumen of a prosperous monastery in old clothes covered with patches. The brethren explained that the Monk Arsenii wished to travel in the wilderness.

Setting out together with his own cell elder to the Komel'sk forest -- located 50 versts from Vologda, the Monk Arsenii made a large wooden cross and with this cross on his shoulders he set out through the forest to pick out a spot for a future wilderness monastery. Coming to a marshy place through a swamp, the monk stumbled under the heavy cross and fell. An heavenly beam of light flashed upon the ascetic at this very moment and convinced him to establish it on this site. He set up the cross and built the first cell.

The local inhabitants, going therabouts to hunt wild animals, killed the cell-mate of the Monk Arsenii, and he himself was forced to withdraw into the Shilegonsk forest. There soon gathered at his new monastery several monks, and afterwards there settled at it fugitives from a Tatar incursion upon the surrounding populace. The Monk Arsenii, seeking after silence, desired to live in a more quiet spot. In the year 1530 Great Prince Vasilii gave him a gramota (deed) for land in the Komel'sk forest at the Kokhtisha River. The monk began here to clear the forest together with his student Gerasim. By prayer the saint tamed the wild beasts. When several monks had gathered about him, he built a church in honour of the Placing of the Veil of the Most Holy Mother of God. Visiting the Shilegonsk monastery, the monk instructed the peasants, who had settled in the area of the monastery. He bid them reverently to observe feastdays and Sundays. One time when a peasant had heard him and started to work on a

feastday, a wind suddenly arose scattering all his sheaves.

Having spent his life in fasting, prayer and constant work, the monk died on 24 August 1550. His Life was written soon after his death, but burned during the time of a conflagration in the Komel'sk monastery in 1596. In shortened form it was restored from the surviving manuscripts and added to with posthumous miracles by a monk of the monastery, John. A hundred years later after the death of the monk, the hegumen Joasaph built at the monastery a stone church in honour of the Placing of the Veil of the Most Holy Mother of God. Two chapels of this church show the spiritual bond of teacher and student. The left chapel was dedicated to the Monk Sergei of Radonezh, and the right -- to the Monk Arsenii of Komel'sk.

COMMEMORATION OF RENEWAL OF TEMPLE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST IN JERUSALEM (HAVING ITS REPUTATION FROM THE

RESURRECTION) (335) (Commemorated Sept 13/Sept 26) The Commemoration of the Renewal of the Temple of the Resurrection of Christ at Jerusalem celebrates the solemnity on the occasion of the consecration of the Church of the Resurrection of Christ, built by the Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great and his mother Equal-to-the-Apostles the empress Helen. This feastday is still called among the people by its unique title "having reputation from the Resurrection" ("Voskresenie slovuschee") and it means that it reputed to or pertains to the Resurrection, in distinction from the Feast of the Luminous Resurrection of Christ, and refers particularly to the consecration of the Church in honour of the Resurrection of Christ.

The history of the construction of this temple is thus. After the voluntary Passion and Death on the Cross of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, the holy place of His suffering was long trampled on by pagans. When the Roman emperor Titus in the year 70 conquered Jerusalem, he razed the city and destroyed the Temple of Solomon on Mount Moriah, leaving there not a stone upon a stone, as even the Saviour had foretold about in conversation with the disciples (Mt. 13: 1-2). Later on the zealous pagan emperor Adrian

(117-138) built on the place of the Jerusalem destroyed by Titus a new city, which was named after his name -- Aelia Adriani (Aelia Capitolina) and made it forbidden to call the city by its former name. The Holy Sepulchre of the Lord he gave orders to cover over with ground and stones and on that spot to set up an idol; and on Golgotha where the Saviour was crucified, in 119 he constructed a pagan-temple dedicated to the goddess Venus. In front of the statues they offered sacrifice to demons and performed pagan rites, accompanied by wanton acts. In Bethlehem, at the place the Saviour was born of the AllPure Virgin, the impious emperor set up an idol of Adonis. He did all this intentionally, so that people would forget completely about Christ the Saviour and that they would no more remember the places where He lived, taught, suffered and arose in glory.

When there began the reign of Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great (306-337), the first of the Roman emperors to recognise the Christian religion, he together with his pious mother the empress Helen decided to rebuild the city of Jerusalem and on the place of the suffering and Resurrection of the Lord to erect a new temple, to purify from the foul pagan cults the places connected with memory of the Saviour, and again to consecrate them. The nobleborn empress Helen journeyed to Jerusalem with a large quantity of gold, and Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great wrote a letter to Patriarch Makarios I (313-323), in which he requested him to assist in every possible way for the task of the renewal of the Christian holy places. Having arrived in Jerusalem, the holy empress Helen destroyed all the idolous pagan temples and had the desecrated places re-consecrated. She was ardent with the desire to find the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and she gave orders to dig up the place, where stood the temple of Venus. There they discovered the covered over Sepulchre of the Lord and the place of the Skull, not far from where they found three crosses and nails. In order to determine, upon which of the three crosses lay the Saviour, Patriarch Makarios gave orders to touch alternately against a dead person, whom they happened to be carrying by towards a place of burial. Just as the Cross of Christ touched the dead person, he immediately came alive. With the greatest of joy the

nobleborn empress Helen and Patriarch Makarios raised up high the Life-Creating Cross and displayed it to all the people standing about.

The holy empress quickly set about the construction of a large church, which enclosed in its walls the place of the Crucifixion of the Saviour -- Golgotha, and the Sepulchre of the Lord, located a not large distance from each other, and as the holy Apostle and Evangelist John wrote about this: "At that place, where He was crucified, was a garden and in the garden a new tomb, in which still no one had been put; there they did place Jesus because of the Jewish Friday, since that the tomb was nearby" (Jn. 19: 41-42). The Church of the Resurrection was 10 years in building, and the holy empress Helen did not survive to the completion of construction. Having returned to Constantinople, she reposed in the year 327. After the time of her arrival in Jerusalem the holy empress built churches in Bethlehem, on the Mount of Olives, at Gethsemane and in many other places, connected with the life of the Saviour and events in the New Testament.

The completion of construction of the New Testament temple of the Resurrection of Christ, called "Martyrion", in memory of the sufferings of the Cross of the Saviour, co-incided with the passage of the First Council of Tyre, and with it the thirty year reign of the Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine the Great. Wherefore at the assemblage of 13 September 335 the consecration of the temple was particularly solemn. At the consecration of the church participated hierarchy of the Christian Churches from many lands: Bythnia, Thrace, Cilicia, Cappadocia, Syria, Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Arabia, Palestine and Egypt. To the solemnity of the renewal were invited only the fathers that concluded the Tyre Council. On this day was consecrated all the city of Jerusalem. The commemoration of this remarkable event by the fathers of the Church was established as 13 September.

MARTYR CALLISTRATUS AND HIS COMRADES (+ 304). (*Commemorated Sept 27/Oct 10*) Saint Callistratus was a native of Carthage. An ancestor of Saint Callistratus, Neoscorus, has served under the emperor Tiberius in Palestine, under the command of the procurator of

Judea Pontius Pilate, and was a witness to the suffering on the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, His martyr's death and glorious Resurrection. The father of the saint was a Christian, and he raised his son in faith and piety. Also like his father, Saint Callistratus became a soldier and excelled among his pagan military comrades by good conduct and gentle disposition. During the nights when everyone slept, he usually stayed up at prayer. One time a soldier sleeping nearby him heard Saint Callistratus invoking the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he reported this to the military commander, who in turn summoned Callistratus, interrogated him and wanted to make him offer sacrifice to idols. To this the saint answered firmly with a resolute refusal. Then the military commander gave orders to beat the saint and then, covered with wounds, to drag him over sharp stones. The beating and the torments did not sway the firm will and brave endurance of the sufferer. The torturer gave orders to sew up the saint in a leather sack and drown him in the sea. By Divine Providence however the sack came upon a sharp rock tearing it, and Saint Callistratus, supported by dolphins, came to dry land unharmed. Viewing such a miracle, 49 soldiers came to believe in Christ. Then the military commander threw Saint Callistratus together with the believing soldiers into prison. Before this, all of them were subjected to innumerable floggings.

In confinement Saint Callistatus continued to preach the Word of God to the soldiers and he bolstered their spirits for the martyr's act. Summoned again to the military commander, the sufferers firmly confessed their faith in Christ, after which they bound them hand and foot and threw them into a water-dam. But there their bonds broke, and with bright faces the holy martyrs stood in the water, rejoicing in their Baptism, which coincided with the act of martyrdom. Over them were beautiful bright crowns, and all heard a voice: "Be brave, Callistratus, with thine company, and come rest in the eternal habitations". At the same time with this, the earth shuddered and an idol standing not far off fell down and smashed. Beholding this happening, another 135 soldiers also believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. The military commander, fearing a mutiny in the army, did not set about to judge them, but again impris-

oned Saint Callistratus with the others, where they fervently prayed and gave thanks to the Creator, for having given them power to endure such sufferings. At night by order of the military commander they chopped the martyrs to pieces with swords. Their holy remains were buried by the remaining-alive 135 soldiers, and afterwards on the spot of their sufferings, as Saint Callistatus had foretold, a church was built.

ICON OF MOTHER OF GOD NAMED "PROSPERESS OF LOAVES"

("SPORITEL'NITSA KLEBOV"). (*Commemorated Oct 15/Oct 28*)

The Icon of the Mother of God, named "Prosperess of Loaves" ("Sporitel'nitsa Khlebov"), was written at the blessing of the starets-elder of the Visitation Optina wilderness monastery, the priest-schemamonk Amvrosii (Ambrosii) (23/XI/1812 - 10/X/1891). Father Amvrosii, a great Russian ascetic of the XIX Century, was ardent with a childlike faith towards the Mother of God. He in particular revered all the feastdays of the Mother of God and on these days he redoubled his prayer. With the icon, "Prosperess of Loaves", Father Amvrosii blessed the Shamordinsk women's monastery established in honour of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, and founded by him not far from the Optina monastery.

On this icon the Mother of God is depicted sitting upon the clouds, and Her hands are extended in blessing. Beneath -- is a compressed field, and on it amidst the grass and flowers stand and lay sheaves of rye. Starets Amvrosii himself decreed the day of celebration -- 15 October, and called the image "Prosperess of Loaves", indicating by this, that the MostHoly Mother of God -- "is an Helper for people in their labours for the acquiring of their daily bread". Before his blessed death, Father Amvrosii ordered a large quantity of photo-replicas of this icon and distributed and sent them off to his spiritual children. For the singing of an akathist before the holy image, the starets composed a particular response: "Hail, Thou Full-of-Grace, the Lord is with Thee! Grant unto us unworthy ones the dew of Thy grace and the showing forth of Thine mercy!"



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SEPTEMBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Aug 19) 11th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	2 (Aug 20)	3 (Aug 21)	4 (Aug 22) Fast	5 (Aug 23)	6 (Aug 24) Fast: wine & oil	7 (Aug 25) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
8 (Aug 26) 12th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	9 (Aug 27)	10 (Aug 28)	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 5:30 All-Night Vigil
15 (Sep 2) 13th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	16 (Sep 3)	17 (Sep 4)	18 (Sep 5) Fast	19 (Sep 6)	20 (Sep 7) 6:30 Vigil Fast: wine & oil	21 (Sep 8) NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Noon Church Cleaning 5:30 All-Night Vigil
22 (Sep 9) 14th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	23 (Sep 10) 6:30 Vigil of St. Xenia	24 (Sep 11) Glorification of St. Xenia 9:30 Meeting of the Bishop, Hours & Hierarchical Divine Liturgy 12 noon Banquet	25 (Sep 12) Fast: wine & oil	26 (Sep 13) 6:30 Vigil of the Cross	27 (Sep 14) ELEVATION OF THE CROSS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	28 (Sep 15) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
29 (Sep 16) 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	30 (Sep 17)	Oct 1 (Sep 18)	Oct 2 (Sep 19) Fast: wine & oil	Oct 3 (Sep 20)	Oct 4 (Sep 21) Fast: wine & oil	Oct 5 (Sep 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil



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OCTOBER 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Sep 29 (Sep 16) 15th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Sep 30 (Sep 17)	1 (Sep 18)	2 (Sep 19) Fast: wine & oil	3 (Sep 20)	4 (Sep 21) Fast: wine & oil	5 (Sep 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
6 (Sep 23) 16th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 7 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	7 (Sep 24)	8 (Sep 25)	9 (Sep 26) Fast: fish, wine & oil	10 (Sep 27)	11 (Sep 28) Fast: wine & oil	12 (Sep 29) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
13 (Sep 30) 17th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 Vespers & Litya of Protection	14 (Oct 1) Protection of the Theotokos 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	15 (Oct 2)	16 (Oct 3) Fast	17 (Oct 4)	18 (Oct 5) Fast: wine & oil	19 (Oct 6) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
20 (Oct 7) 18th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	21 (Oct 8) Clergy Conference in Jordanville	22 (Oct 9) Clergy Conference in Jordanville	23 (Oct 10) Clergy Conference in Jordanville Fast: wine & oil	24 (Oct 11)	25 (Oct 12) Fast: wine & oil	26 (Oct 13) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
27 (Oct 14) 19th Sunday after Pentecost. Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	28 (Oct 15)	29 (Oct 16)	30 (Oct 17) Fast	31 (Oct 18)	Nov 1 (Oct 19) Fast	Nov 2 (Oct 20) 5:30 All-Night Vigil