



St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

July - August 2021

Sermon on the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos

by St. John of Kronstadt

“Magnify O my soul, the honourable Translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven.”

(Refrain for the 9th Ode of the Canon)

Let us be happy, beloved brothers and sisters that we belong to the Holy Orthodox Church, worthily and rightly glorifying the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos on this eminent day out of all the days of the year with special solemnity. There exists on earth many societies and entire governments that do not consider the need nor the obligation to call upon and glorify the Queen of heaven and earth, the Mother of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and other saints and angels; to submissively serve Her lovingly, as the true Mother of God. Sadly in Russia nowadays we have heretics (among us) who actively dishonor the Mother of God, the saints, their icons, their relics and their festivals. O, if only they also unanimously with us glorified the worthy Queen of heaven and earth!

Today the Holy Church solemnly glorifies the honorable Dormition or translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven. A wonderful translation - she died without serious illness, peacefully. Her soul is taken up in the divine hands of Her Son and carried up into the heavenly abode, accompanied by the sweet singing of angels. And then, her most pure body is transferred by the apostles to Gethsemane where it is honorably buried, and on the third day it is resurrected and taken up to heaven. You see this on the icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos. On it is represented the life-bearing body of the Theotokos laying on a bier, surrounded by the apostles and hierarchs, and in the center of the icon the Lord holding in His hands the most pure soul of the Theotokos. The translation of the Mother of God is a paradigm of the translation in general of the souls of Christians to the other world.

We say that our dead have “fallen asleep” or “passed away.” What does this mean? This means that for the true Christian there is no death. Death was conquered by Christ on the cross. But there is a translation, i.e. a rearrangement of his condition, i.e. his soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end, that is what is meant by “falling asleep”. It is as if it were a temporary dream after which, by the voice of the Lord and

the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel, all the dead shall live and come forth each to his place: either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29). This is what the Christian means by translation. We should be ready for this translation, for the day of the general resurrection and judgment, for this indescribable world event, recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

This preparation for the meeting of the heavenly King before the dread judgment seat, after death, is essentially the person’s preparation throughout the whole of his life. This preparation means a change in all his thoughts, and the moral change of all his being, so that the whole man would be pure and white as snow, washing clean everything that defiles the body and spirit, so that he is adorned with every virtue: repentance, meekness, humility, gentleness, simplicity, chastity, mercifulness, abstention, spiritual contemplation, and burning love for God and neighbor.

Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul, the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. “We will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.

And so, ye participants in the Christian feasts, and especially the present feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, ye who are brightly adorned with every virtue and translated to the heavenly kingdom, to Her Son and God, proclaim to each and every one about preparing their souls to be the dwelling place of the Lord, about continual repentance, and about the incorruptible adornment of Christian virtue. Let your death also be unashamed and peaceful, serving as the pledge of a good answer at the dread judgment seat of Christ. 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.

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

Parish Council

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Church School Director: Alexei Doohovskoy

Trapeza Schedule

The sisterhood has distributed a sign-up link for the summer coffee hour to provide Bagels, Muffins/ Pastries, and Fruit. The coffee hour will be outside, so each week will be **weather dependent**. *Please check the weather before your Sunday when bringing food.* There will be big bottles of juices that the Sisterhood will buy and put in the fridges in the kitchen and basement. Each week, you can grab a bottle or two for coffee hour. Coffee will be made each Sunday morning.

Important - whoever is on for coffee hour is in charge of cleanup as well.

SignUp Genius link:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/60B054BA5A623A7FC1-summer>

Come Fall, we will return to our rotating groups but will scale back the effort by keeping it to Bagels, Muffins/Pastries, and Fruit. **Please email Judy Engalichev dujykot@comcast.net if you would like to be on the rotating schedule.**

PARISH NEWS

Thank you!

To all who helped put together the greenery and flower bouquets for Pentecost. The Church looked green and beautiful.

To all who donated picnic tables for the backyard so we may more comfortably gather again after Liturgy.

Congratulations

To Aaron and Clare Murphy on the birth of their daughter Evelina Nikoletta Anne on June 22.

To the family of the newly illumined Rosalie Xenia, daughter of John Caico and Alexandra Savitskia Caico.

Many years to all the families.

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Jane Rockwell, Peter and Dorothea Danas, Dimitri Nikshych and Laryssa Doohovskoy.

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

Sisterhood News

In May, the Sisterhood gathered to plan action items for the upcoming year - thank you to all who attended. First on our list is to start doing some special deep cleaning projects in the church and hall. More information will be forthcoming on that. If you wish to be put on the Sisterhood email list please send a message to: StXeniaSisterhood100@gmail.com

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.

FROM THE DIOCESE

METROPOLITAN HILARION: "THE NEW MARTYRS SHOW US HOW TO LIVE UNDER PERSECUTION"

Metropolitan Hilarion of Eastern America & New York, First Hierarch of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, discusses the actions of Constantinople, Church schisms, enduring persecution, and ties with Ukraine.

- Your Eminence, how are the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople in receiving schis-

atics and claiming power over the whole Church viewed from abroad?

- We are very sad and bewildered as we observe the actions of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in which we sense the influence of the powers that be in this world, and a dismissive attitude toward the truth of Orthodox Christianity in the land of Ukraine, which is holy for us. Astonishing, too, is the complete absence of a pastoral approach to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church headed by His Beatitude Onufry, Metropolitan of Kiev & All Ukraine.

For by "legalizing" schismatics and trying in every way to secure their recognition by the Local Orthodox Churches, Patriarch Bartholomew in fact excommunicates not only the overwhelming majority of our brother-archpastors, clergy, monastics, and laity of Ukraine, who are dedicated to Holy Orthodoxy, but all of us, as well. It is unclear why Patriarch Bartholomew and his Holy Synod hastened to make such a rash decision, without the counsel of the Russian Orthodox Church and other Local Orthodox Churches. The decision to rescind a 300-year-old document and efforts to justify their intrusion into the territory of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church appear at minimum clumsy and irresponsible.

Still, we try to pray for him and those around him, that the Lord may grant them wisdom, illumine and have mercy on them, even as we beseech Heavenly aid to His Beatitude, Metropolitan Onufry, and the entire Ukrainian Orthodox Church, the sole canonical Church of Christ in Ukraine.

- Persecutions of the Church in the Ukrainian land in one form or another have not ceased since the times of the 1917 revolution. In that context, how important for us is the memory of the New Martyrs as examples of endurance in the most difficult of circumstances?

- Of course, the example shown by our New Martyrs and Confessors shows us how to live under persecution. When a person deeply believes in God and trusts in His guidance with all his heart, he learns patience, humility, and the calm endurance of troubles; meanwhile, these virtues then spread to those around him. Such a person will always act according to the Gospel. Let us remember the martyrdom of Metropolitan

Vladimir (Bogoyavlensky) of Kiev & Galicia, who prayed for the forgiveness of his executioners and blessing them before being shot. A distant relative of St. Vladimir's, the Most Blessed Metropolitan Anastassy (Gribanovsky) of blessed memory, second First Hierarch of the Russian Church Abroad, called him "the leader of the God-crowned regiment" of new passion-bearers and confessors of Christ. Imagine the edifying blessing the clergy and flock of the time received when they learned of the example of New Hieromartyr Vladimir and his calm, prayerful attitude to his persecution and persecutors! We should also remember St. Tikhon (Bellavin), the Patriarch-Confessor, who, just as His Beatitude, Metropolitan Onufry today, was rejected by the Patriarchate of Constantinople. St. Tikhon accepted the brutality of that period of persecution as having been permitted by God, remembering the words of the Psalmist: "Be manful, and let thy heart be strengthened, and wait on the Lord." Therefore, the most difficult thing for us now is also the most important: to follow their example and firmly stand in the faith, humbly and thankfully accepting Divine Providence, knowing that He leads us to eternal life, and fervently praying for both the persecuted and the persecutors. We should hope that such prayer and such behavior will evoke the mercy of God.

– You were tonsured to the riassa with the name Hilarion in honor of Venerable Hilarion, Schemamonk of the Caves. Do you sense a special bond with the Kievan land?

– Without a doubt! In my cell, I have an icon of my Heavenly patron, Venerable Hilarion, Schemamonk of the Caves, with a portion of his holy relics. This icon is brought out to the middle of the Synodal Cathedral of our Lady "of the Sign" in New York for veneration by the faithful on his feast day. When I visit the Kiev Caves Lavra, I always make haste to his crypt and pray for his aid. Naturally, I have a particularly reverent attitude toward the Kiev Caves, Pochaev, and Svyatogorsk Lavras, and to other holy sites in Ukraine. My relatives live in that country, whom I try to visit and with whom I stay in contact.

This special relationship with the land of Kiev is augmented by the fraternal bonds between our Russian Church Abroad and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church.

Firstly, St. John (Maximovich), Archbishop of Shanghai & San Francisco, the Wonderworker, was born in the town of Adamovka 125 years ago; he lived and studied in Kharkov, where he met the future Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky) of blessed memory, who headed the Russian Church Abroad in 1920. Secondly, it is known that Metropolitan Anthony served on the Kievan metropolitan cathedra after the murder of Metropolitan Vladimir. Speaking of St. Vladimir, one cannot help but remember the head of the publishing brotherhood in Pochaev, Archimandrite Vitaly (Maximenko), who died as an archbishop abroad. It was he who reestablished the Pochaev publishing brotherhood abroad and set up a safe haven for it at Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville, NY. Archbishop Vitaly could not recount the last Akathist to the Dormition of the Mother of God served by Metropolitan Vladimir in the Caves Lavra without tears in his eyes. Then-Archimandrite Vitaly joined the Metropolitan in serving the akathist and was very touched by the manner in which the archpastor prayed during the last days of his earthly life. This is reflected in the Theotokion of the ninth ode of the canon in the service to the New Martyrs composed by the Russian Church Abroad in 1981 by Archbishop Anthony (Medvedev), the spiritual son of Archbishop Vitaly: "O all-hymned Mother: Even though thy great Church of the Caves hath been demolished by the wicked, wherein the Hieromartyr Vladimir, when the day of his murder drew nigh, read the akathist hymn with great compunction, praying to thee, yet thy mercy for repentant people doth not fail utterly. Rejoice, O joyous one, who in thy dormition hast not forsaken us!"

Archimandrite Dimitry (Byakai) and Archimandrite Nektary (Chernobyl), serving in our Mission in the Holy Land, and Archimandrite Gelasy (Maiboroda), who died a cleric of the Cathedral "of the Sign" in New York, as well as many other active members of the Russian Diaspora, were born in Kievan Rus and personally knew many martyrs and confessors. I had the joy of knowing these and other ascetics who held aloft the banner of Holy Russia in the Diaspora, fondly remembering their homeland, her martyrs and other saints.

But it is not only the past that evokes in us special reverence for Ukraine. The present monastic, hierar-

chal, and confessional feats of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Onufry, awoken in us feelings of love and respect for him and the Ukrainian Orthodox Church which he heads, the true heir of the Church which, baptized in the font of the Dniepr River, received the Orthodox Faith of our fathers.

– What can unite believers today?

– During Great Lent, the faithful are united by the universal feat of repentance of the whole Church, which each member carries out to the extent of his ability and opportunity, and afterwards, the Paschal joy of the Resurrected Christ. We are called upon to live in this joy. That is why Pascha is called "the feast of feasts and festival of festivals," always held above the Twelve Feasts. In general, the Holy Fathers write that the most ideal state of the human soul is the unity of the effort of Great Lent and the endearing joy of the radiant night of Christ's Pascha. So it seems to me, that if everyone tries to "serve the Lord with fear," together and patiently bearing our common cross of witness, and together "rejoice in Him with trembling," "rejoicing divinely, for Christ is risen," then this will firmly unite us and strengthen us. So be it, so be it!

– What challenges face mankind today?

– In my view, the most difficult challenge of our time is the universal secularization of society, which pulls people away from the saving bosom of Christ's Church. Some easily accept this, obtaining various pleasures as a reward for their tepid nature, while others try to fight it through an active striving toward God, preaching the Gospel not so much by word but by their very way of life. The latter inspire others and preserve them within Holy Orthodoxy.

– Who among the saints is for you an example to emulate?

– As a hierarch residing – and serving to the best of my ability – in complicated conditions abroad, I would say that the Holy Hierarch John (Maximovich) successfully fought the secularization of society that was beginning then, combining within himself various saintly qualities: of the prophets, the apostles, the hierarchs, the martyrs, the monastics and the unmercenaries. He knew perfectly well the lives of the saints,

remembering details of their lives, not only of the famous ascetics, and tried to emulate them. That is how, performing in his life the service the prophets, apostles, and other saints, he was able, with God's help, to attract, console, edify, and unite a great multitude of believers, who after 55 years since his repose (1966), continue to piously honor his memory. It is he whom we should imitate in our difficult times!

– What would you wish for the believers of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church?

– With a warm heart and brotherly love, I wish for them to overcome all crises, which will elevate them spiritually, renew the strengths of the People of God and open the eyes of others to God's Truth!

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LIVES OF THE SAINTS

The Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsis (*Commemorated June 21/July 4*) was born in the Asia Minor province of Cilicia. He was the son of a pagan senator, but his mother confessed Christianity. After the death of her husband the mother of Saint Julian resettled to Tarsis, where the son was baptised and raised in Christian piety. When Julian reached age 18, a persecution against Christians started under the emperor Diocletian (284-305). Among others arrested was also Saint Julian. They brought him before the governor Marcian for trial, where for a long time they urged him to renounce Christ. Neither tortures nor threats, nor promises of gifts and honours could convince the pious youth to offer pagan sacrifice and a denial of Christ. The holy confessor remained steadfast in his firm faith. For a whole year they led the martyr through the cities of Cilicia, in each of them subjecting him to interrogation and tortures, after which they threw him in prison. The mother of Saint Julian followed after her son and prayed, that the Lord would strengthen him yet more in faith and act. In the city of Aegea under the pretext of urging her son to offer sacrifice to idols, she besought the governor to permit her to visit the prison. She spent three days in prison with Saint Julian, beseeching him to be strong to the end.

Saint Julian was again brought to stand before the governor. Thinking, that the mother had persuaded her son to submit to the imperial decree, the governor began to praise her prudence. But suddenly the saint boldly confessed himself a Christian. And

the holy Martyr Julian all the more fearlessly and boldly denounced the pagan polytheism. The governor then gave orders to cut off the feet of the mother of Saint Julian, since she had accompanied her son from Tarsis. They tied the Martyr Julian into a sack, filled with sand and poisonous vipers, and threw it into the sea. The body of the sufferer was carried by the waves to the shores of Alexandria, and with reverence was buried by a certain pious Alexandrian Christian. The martyr's death occurred in about the year 305. Afterwards the relics of the holy martyr were transferred to Antioch. Saint John Chrysostom honoured the memory of the holy Martyr Julian with a sermon of laudation.

The PriestMartyr Pankratios, Bishop of Tauromeneia, (*Commemorated July 9/July 22*) born at a time, when our Lord Jesus Christ yet lived upon the earth.

The parents of Pankratios were natives of Antioch. Hearing about the good-news of Jesus Christ, the father of Pankratios took his young son with him and set off to Jerusalem, in order to see for himself personally the great Teacher. The miracles astonished him, and when he heard the Divine teaching, he then believed in Christ as the Son of God. He became close with the disciples of the Lord, especially with the holy Apostle Peter. And it was during this period that young Pankratios got to know the holy Apostle Peter.

After the Ascension of the Saviour one of the Apostles came to Antioch and baptised the parents of Pankratios together with all their household. When the parents of Pankratios died, he left behind his inherited possessions and went to a Pontine mountain and began to live in a cave, passing his days in prayer and deep spiritual contemplation. The holy Apostle Peter, one time passing through these parts, made a visit to Pankratios at Pontus, and took him along to Antioch, and then to Cilicia, where the holy Apostle Paul then was. And there the holy Apostles Peter and Paul ordained Saint Pankratios as bishop of the Cilician city of Tauromeneia.

Saint Pankratios toiled zealously for the Christian enlightenment of the people. Over the course of a single month he built a church, where he celebrated Divine-services. The number of believers quickly grew, and soon almost all the people of Tauromeneia and the surrounding cities accepted the Christian faith.

Saint Pankratios governed his flock peacefully for many years. But one time pagans connived against the saint, and seizing an appropriate moment, they fell upon him and stoned him. Thus did Saint Pankratios end his life as a martyr (I). The relics of the saint rest in the church named for him, at Rome.

The Procession (Carrying-forth) of the Venerable Wood of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord:

(*Commemorated August 1/August 14*) In the Greek Chasoslov (Orologion) of 1897 is explained thus the derivation of this feast: "By reason of the sicknesses, often everywhere occurring in August, from of old customarily it was done at Constantinople to carry out the Venerable Wood of the Cross along the roads and streets for the sanctifying of places and for the driving away of sicknesses. On the eve (31 July), carrying it out from the imperial treasury, they placed it upon the holy table of the Great Church (in honour of Saint Sophia -- the Wisdom of God). From this feastday up to the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, making litia throughout all the city, they then placed it forth for all the people to venerate. This also is the Issuing-forth of the Venerable Cross".

In the Russian Church this feast is combined also with a remembrance of the Baptism of Rus', on 1 August 988. In the "Account about the making of services in the holy catholic and apostolic great church of the Uspenie-Dormition", compiled in 1627 by order of the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus' Philaret, there is provided suchlike an explanation of the feast: "And on the day of the procession of the Venerable Cross there occurs a church-procession for the sanctification of water and for the enlightenment of the people, throughout all the towns and places".

Knowledge of the day of the actual Baptism of Rus' was preserved in the Chronicles of the XVI Century: "The Baptism of Great-prince Vladimir of Kiev and all Rus' was on August 1".

In the practice now of the Russian Church, the service of the Lesser Sanctification of Water on 1 August is done either before or after Liturgy. Together with the Blessing of Waters, there is made a Blessing of Honey (i.e. first-honey for the Saviour: "Saviour of the Water", "Saviour Moisture" [apparently in place of the vinegar and gall offered Him on the Cross?]). And from this day the newly harvested honey is blessed and tasted.



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
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(phone) (978) 204-0428



JULY 2021						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Jun 27 (Jun 14) Sunday of All Saints 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	Jun 28 (Jun 15) Apostles Fast Begins Fast: Fish, Wine & Oil	Jun 29 (Jun 16) Fast: Wine & Oil	Jun 30 (Jun 17) Fast	1 (Jun 18) Fast: wine & oil	2 (Jun 19) Fast: wine & oil	3 (Jun 20) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
4 (Jun 21) All Saints of Russia 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	5 (Jun 22) Fast	6 (Jun 23) Fast: fish, wine & oil	7 (Jun 24) Nativity of the Baptist Fast: fish, wine, & oil	8 (Jun 25) Fast: wine & oil	9 (Jun 26) Fast: wine & oil	10 (Jun 27) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine & oil
11 (Jun 28) 3rd Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 12:30 Great Vespers of Peter & Paul Fast: fish, wine & oil	12 (Jun 29) Ss. Peter & Paul 9:00 Matins & Divine Liturgy of Feast	13 (Jun 30) Fast: fish, wine & oil	14 (Jul 1) Fast	15 (Jul 2) Fast: wine & oil	16 (Jul 3) Fast: wine & oil	17 (Jul 4) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
18 (Jul 5) 4th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	19 (Jul 6) Fast: fish, wine & oil	20 (Jul 7) Fast: fish, wine & oil	21 (Jul 8) Fast: fish, wine & oil	22 (Jul 9) Fast: wine & oil	23 (Jul 10) Fast: wine & oil	24 (Jul 11) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
25 (Jul 12) 5th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	26 (Jul 13) Fast: fish, wine & oil	27 (Jul 14) Fast: fish, wine & oil	28 (Jul 15) St. Vladimir Fast: fish, wine, & oil	29 (Jul 16) Fast: fish, wine & oil	30 (Jul 17) Fast	31 (Jul 18) 5:30 All-Night Vigil



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AUGUST 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Jul 19) 6th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	2 (Jul 20) Prophet Elijah	3 (Jul 21)	4 (Jul 22) Fast	5 (Jul 23)	6 (Jul 24) Fast: wine & oil	7 (Jul 25) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
8 (Jul 26) 7th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	9 (Jul 27)	10 (Jul 28)	11 (Jul 29) Fast	12 (Jul 30)	13 (Jul 31) Fast	14 (Aug 1) Procession of the Cross 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
15 (Aug 2) 8th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	16 (Aug 3) Fast	17 (Aug 4) Fast	18 (Aug 5) 5:30 Vigil of Transfiguration Fast	19 (Aug 6) TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	20 (Aug 7) Fast	21 (Aug 8) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil
22 (Aug 9) 9th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: wine & oil	23 (Aug 10) Fast	24 (Aug 11) Fast	25 (Aug 12) Fast	26 (Aug 13) Fast: wine & oil	27 (Aug 14) 5:30 Vigil of the Dormition Fast	28 (Aug 15) DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy 5:30 All-Night Vigil
29 (Aug 16) 10th Sunday after Pentecost 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	30 (Aug 17)	31 (Aug 18)	Sep 1 (Aug 19) Fast	Sep 2 (Aug 20)	Sep 3 (Aug 21) Fast	Sep 4 (Aug 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil