

St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

May - June 2022

On Holy Communion Of The Body And Blood Of The Savior

(For Great Thursday)

sermon by Metropolitan Hilarion (Alfeyev) ROC-MP

Who eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him (John 6:56) In those words, the Lord speaks of two things: of His being in us and of our being in Him. The Lord abides in us for He became man, assuming human flesh. In His Incarnation, he took on the flesh not of abstract humanity, but of every individual person. He assumed the flesh of each and every one of us. We abide in Him, for we take His Flesh into ourselves. It is the human flesh of the Incarnate Son of God, the very same flesh He took from us, and which, united with His Divinity, became completely deified. Through this intercommunion we become “in Him”: a material ontological union between us and God takes place. The barrier between God and man, created by human hands, was demolished by the hands of God, demolished with God’s Incarnation and His Mystical Supper, when He offered Himself as food and drink for us.

In the Canon that is read at Matins for Great Thursday we hear, “O God, the Lord and Creator of all, Thou art become poor, uniting a created nature to Thyself, while remaining free from passion. Since Thou art the Passover, Thou hast offered Thyself to those for whose sake Thou wast soon to die; and Thou hast cried: ‘Eat My Body, and ye shall be firmly established in the faith’ (Irmos, Canticle 3). This is what those words mean: becoming poor, the Lord, the Creator of the universe and of each person impoverished himself, took upon Himself our human flesh and in so doing united us to Himself, brought Himself as a sacrifice for us as the New Pascha. He says to us: Partake of My Body, and be confirmed in faith. Faith that our salvation is accomplished by Christ, faith that the chasms separating man from God no longer exist, faith that in communing of the Body and Blood of Christ, we are united to God both physically and spiritually.

The first to commune of God was the Most-holy Theotokos. When the Lord was Incarnate, He entered the womb of the Most-holy Virgin, and she took into

herself the Body of God Incarnate. That is spoken of in the Canon for Great Thursday: “Cause of all and Bestower of life, the infinite Wisdom of God has built His house, from a pure Mother who has not known man. For, clothing Himself in a bodily temple, Christ our God is greatly glorified.” That is to say, Wisdom, which created the world, which is the cause of all and the giver of life, created a temple for Himself, in the Most-pure Virgin, who had not known a husband. It is not coincidental that when we prepare for Holy Communion and when we give thanks after Holy Communion, we address in prayer not only the Lord, but also His Most-pure Mother, for she became the first temple in which Divinity took up residence. Following after her, we take within ourselves the Incarnate God, thereby becoming communicants of life eternal, of the Heavenly Bread, of the New Drink and the New Pascha, which is our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

According to the teachings of Sts. John Chrysostom, Cyril of Alexandria, Symeon the New Theologian, and other Fathers of the Church, in communing of the Holy Gifts of Christ, we become “relatives” of God, “sharers in One Body,” blood kin with Him; we become brothers and friends of God. According to St. Ignatius of Antioch, in Communing, we become “God-bearers,” and “Christ-bearers.” Communion leads us to salvation and theosis, both spoken of in the Canon for Great Thursday: “In My Kingdom,” Thou hast said, O Christ, to Thy friends, “I shall drink a new drink beyond your understanding; I shall be with you as God among gods. For the Father has sent Me, His only-begotten Son, to cleanse the world from sin.” The Lord became an actual person and in assuming actual human flesh, He deified our human nature. That is why, in Communing of the Holy Gifts of Christ, we become by grace that which He is by nature, “gods by grace.”

Once, upon returning to his cell after Communion, St. Symeon the New Theologian saw that his hands had become the hands of God, and that his entire body had

become the Body of God, and that every single particle, every single cell of his earthly, human, corruptible body had been united with Divinity, and had been permeated with Divine Light. It is no coincidence that in preparing for Holy Communion, we read St. Symeon's prayer, "From sullied lips, from an abominable heart, from an unclean tongue, out of a polluted soul...." It is with his words that we pray as we prepare for having our body, soul and heart become the Temple of the Divine. We ask him to help us be at least to some extent like he was, for Communion and theosis are granted to those who commune worthily, while for those who commune unworthily, Communion is "unto judgment and condemnation."

Who communes unworthily? Those who consciously violate God's Commandments, oppose the rules of the church, come to God's Temple and receive the Holy Mysteries, but in their hearts bear hatred toward their neighbors. Judas was one such unworthy communicant. He attended the Mystical Supper, and "the glorious disciples were illumined at the Supper during the washing of the feet, but ungodly Judas was darkened by the disease of avarice...." When approaching the Holy Chalice, we should remember, as the Holy Apostle Paul says, For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. We should remember that in accepting into ourselves God's Body and Blood, we assume great responsibility for our personal future. For if the Name of God does not shine forth through us, if the Body and Blood of Christ, which we receive as light, should become for us a consuming fire, then woe unto us, for we will be like unto the traitor Judas.

Is not the meaning of "sufferings of Hades" the fact that man finds himself with God, but that the very presence of God becomes for him an unbearable weight and torment? And was not that presence at the Mystical Supper such an inexpressible torture for Judas? After all, his soul was divided: Perhaps some part of his soul yet remained with the Lord, while another part had already given itself over to the Devil. Sitting at the same table with his Teacher, in his heart he was already carrying out his plan to betray Him.

We should not forget this awful lesson. Even if we often commune, even if we carefully prepare for Holy Communion, we must remember that in the matter of God, being divided is impermissible. Approaching the Holy Chalice, we should desire with our whole heart and mind, our entire being, and even with our body, to be united with the Lord. We should want to give our life to God, devoting every breath, sense, thought, and action to Him. Only then will we be worthy communicants, only then will we be like the Most-holy Theotokos, will we become a temple of Divinity, only then will we be worthy of deification, to which each of us is called.

Our entire service today speaks to us about that deification. When in the present life we commune of the Body and Blood in the appearance of bread and wine, we hope that in the life to come, we will commune of God even more fully, more perfectly. As we will sing on the night of Pascha, "Grant us to partake of Thee more fully in the unwaning day of Thy Kingdom."

The blissful happiness found in Paradise is the fact that people abide in God, and God in them. For those in Paradise, this union with Him is a source of never-ending joy, of inexhaustible happiness, of inexpressible bliss. As to those who are unworthy of that bliss, God abides in them, but they are outside Him, and it is that which becomes for them a source of never ending torment.

Let us keep all of that in mind when we commune of the Holy Mysteries of Christ, let us "discern" the Body and Blood of the Lord. Let us prepare for Holy Communion not only by observing the fast and reading the appointed prayers, but first and foremost by devoting all our life, all our works, and ourselves to God. Receiving into ourselves the Holy Mysteries, let us bear them worthily, carefully, piously, as the Most-holy Theotokos bore the Infant Christ within her womb. Let us ask God that we might be able to commune of the Holy Mysteries of Christ until the end of our days on earth, that on the day of our death we might not be deprived of Holy Communion, and that in life eternal we might be worthy to commune of God "in the never-ending day of His Kingdom." Amen.

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

Rector:

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

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

Parish Council

President: Archpriest Michael Crowley (978) 204-0428
 Warden: Andrei Doohovskoy (339) 223-4168
 Secretary: Subdeacon David Nettleton (203) 895-7636
 Treasurer: Nicholas (Charles) Kronauer (978) 265-6369
 Sisterhood: Pam Reed (617) 590-7617
 Cemetery: Natalie Pishenin (978) 761-3449
 Anthony Sarantakis
 Dmitri Nikshych
 Isaac (Shedly) Justinien
 Choir Director: Laryssa Doohovskoy (978) 841-5960
 Church School Director: Alexei Doohovskoy

Trapeza Schedule

* = strict fast

Please limit coffee hour to 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.

Coffee will be made each Sunday morning.

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

MAY

1 Justinien, Mat. Masha Doohovskoy, Hakim, Head
 8 Brotherhood Cookout – Myrrh-Bearing Women Sunday
 15 Khusanova, Natalia & Raisa Avram, Orbite
 22 Nettleton, Chaplain, Mary Doohovskoy, Dolan
 29 Mat. Helena Doohovskoy, Dimatteo, Nikshych, Anna Johnson

JUNE

5 Soloviev, McLellen, Lehmkuhl, Jackson
 12 Potluck - Pentecost
 19 Fredette, Kirichuk, Sarantakis
 *26 Reed, Savage, Mendez, Murphy

PARISH NEWS

Congratulations

~ To the Head family – Brian (Birinus), Christina, Noah, Nathan, and Natalie on their Baptism on March 12th.

~To the Rost family – Nicholas, Julia (Julianna), Hunter (Tatiana), Shepherd (Spyridon) on their Baptism March 19th.

~ To the Mat Masha and Fr. Dimitri Doohovskoy family on the baptism of their son, Ivan Doohovskoy on March 26th.

~To Peter and Chrystal (Chryse) Paetzold on their baptism April 9th.

~To Marquis (Stylianos)Bevel on his Baptism April 20th.

Many Years to All!!!

Please Remember in Your Prayers

Jane Rockwell, Peter 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

~ Thank you to everyone who helped with all the Pascha potlucks, Pascha eggs, prosphora baking and Food drive donations. Also, thank you to everyone on the different Sisterhood Committees. Our Parish is so Blessed to have so many wonderful volunteers generating ideas and getting things done!

~ The Sisterhood is hosting a potluck Sisterhood Picnic on **May 14th at 1:30pm** at the church! It is a time for the women of the sisterhood to gather and spend time together, to deepen our relationships, and just to have fun. This will be the first event of many, so be on the lookout for more events to come. Although this Picnic is for the Sisterhood to enjoy some kid-free time, we understand that nursing babies need their mamas and so are of course, always welcome! We can't wait to see you there!

~ If you would like to be on the Sisterhood email list, please send your email to:
StXeniaSisterhood100@gmail.com

Building Expansion - The builder, John Tucci, has informed us that he intends to begin the project mid-May! May God Bless this project.

Lilac Nights 2022 - Friday, June 17, 2022

7pm - midnight

Dinner and Dancing ~ Live Swing Orchestra

Tickets:

Adults \$50

Students \$30

Children 5 and under Free

\$75 at the door if tickets are still available

Order tickets here: <https://forms.gle/BiucN-L4BcWciEJK77>



The flyer is purple with white and blue text and floral decorations. It includes the following information:

- Dinner Dance**
- Dress:** Semi-formal
- Prices: \$50/adult, \$30/student, FREE 0-5
- Date: 6.17.22
- Time: Dinner at 7pm
- Location: St John of Damascus Hall, 300 West Street, Dedham, MA 02026
- Contact: LilacNights2022@gmail.com
- Organized by: St Xenia's Church Sisterhood and Holy Epiphany Sisterhood
- A QR code is located at the bottom left.

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.

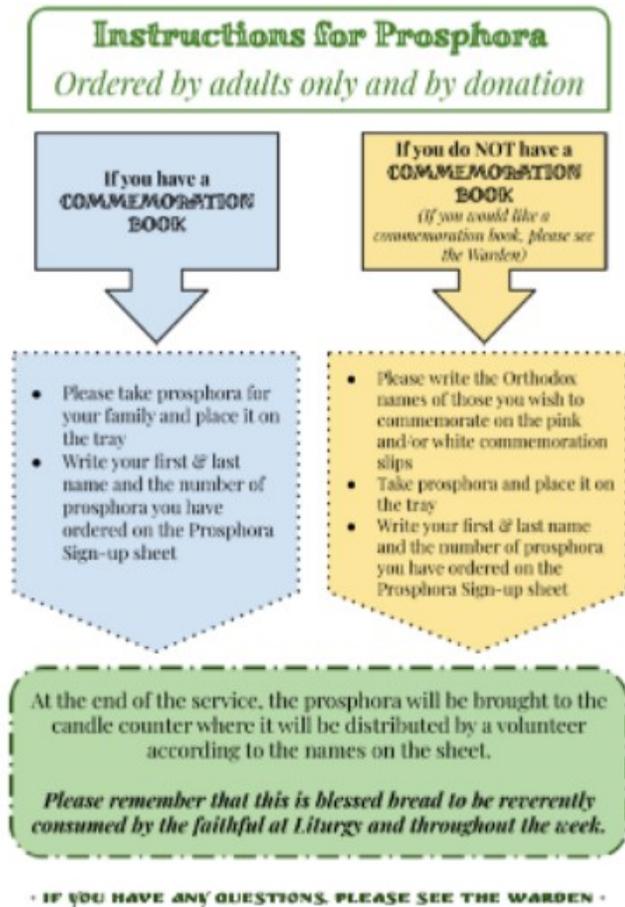
Church School and Youth Group News

St. Seraphim Camp registration for July 31-August 7 is now open. <https://stseraphimcamp.org/>

Volunteers are always needed to help with St. Seraphim camp. If you are interested, please visit: www.stseraphimcamp.org/volunteer

The **St. Artemius Youth Group** is St. Xenia's youth group for children of the parish, ages 13-18. If your child/children are ages 13-18 and you have not been receiving e-mails about the youth group, please feel free to reach out to Aaron Murphy via e-mail at: aaroncmurphy@gmail.com

Parish Protocol ~ Prospora



DIOCESE NEWS

"HOLY IMAGES EN ROUTE": HOW THE WONDERWORKING ICONS TRAVELED DURING THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic caused by the malignant virus limited the travels not only of people, but also of the holy icons. Nevertheless, these wonderworking images, given relaxations in travel restrictions and even the slightest opportunity, departed their homebase churches and went off to comfort the faithful, to this end even crossing oceans. The guardians of these holy icons discuss where they went and how, and the particular circumstances they faced:

The "Protectress of the Russian Diaspora" – the wonderworking Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God and her guardian, Bishop Nicholas of Manhattan, vicar of the Eastern American Diocese:

– 2020 was a difficult year. After the feast of Holy Pascha, the Kursk Root Icon, with the blessing of the Synod of

Bishops, was to travel to San Francisco and remain in the Western American Diocese until the feast of Holy Pentecost, and later in the German Diocese until Transfiguration. A trip to Russia was planned in October, to Kursk and Belgorod, and that winter the holy icon was to visit Europe. All of these travels had to be cancelled. Throughout this time, the holy image remained in the churches of the Synodal Headquarters in New York City – the Cathedral of the Sign and the lower St. Sergius Church.

In April, Metropolitan Hilarion blessed an aerial procession. We found a faithful parishioner who could help us with this. We schedule the procession to take place on Lazarus Saturday. We discussed the details with Archpriest Serafim Gan and the pile. But on Lazarus Saturday, there were strong winds and they predicted rainy weather. We would have to leave for Long Island at 6 o'clock in the morning. The weather did not change, and we decided to make peace with these setbacks and postpone our flight.

Passion Week and the Pascha of the Lord passed. We did not forget our intention to bless New York City and its environs. We decided to fly on the Midfeast of Pentecost. Early in the morning on the day of the feast, we prayed before the Kursk Root Icon in St. Seraphim Memorial Church in Sea Cliff, NY. Having prayed, we went after Liturgy with parish rector Fr. Serafim and Protodeacon Eugene Kallaur to the airplane, where the pilot was waiting for us.

We had a plan to fly around the Five Boroughs and the adjacent counties of New York and New Jersey, and call down the blessing of the Mother of God on our land and her inhabitants. During the flight, we read the akathist to the Kursk Root Icon and blessed all four directions with the icon. The Mother of God blessed our land through this aerial procession.

We did not plan any major travels with the icon in 2021. For the feasts of Christ's Nativity, Theophany, the days of Great Lent, and Holy Pascha, the icon remained at the Synod of Bishops. A series of restrictions on church attendance was lifted and parishioners came to venerate the icon. After Pascha, the holy image visited Holy Dormition Convent "Novo-Diveevo" in Nanuet, NY, and at the end of May, at the invitation of the rector of St. Nicholas Cathedral in Seattle, Archpriest Alexei Kotar, I traveled there with the icon for the Sunday of the Samaritan Woman. This was my first time flying on an airplane in a year and a half. I remember the silence in the airport, the people were wearing masks on the plane, and we were constantly being given disinfectant wipes. But the most important thing was that the icon had once more begun to travel!

This visit was a special consolation for the parishioners, because a year prior, there had been large protest demonstrations near their memorial church. Now our people, our

parishioners, asked for the intercessions and the protection of the Mother of God.

On the feast of Holy Pentecost, the icon [visited Holy Trinity Church](#) in Vineland, NJ, and in July – [attended the St. Vladimir Day Celebrations](#) in Jackson, but these were short trips.

In August, the icon flew overseas for the first time in near two years, when we and the clergy [visited Puerto Rico for the first time](#). There, the Russian Church Abroad had a mission in honor of Venerable John Climacus, served by Archpriest Gregorio Justiniano. We blessed the cross and land where they will be building an Orthodox church. The local clergy and parishioners greeted the Kursk Icon with much spiritual joy.

[Holy Epiphany Church in Boston](#) had the opportunity to receive the Kursk Icon on the Transfiguration of the Lord, August 19. On the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, I accompanied the wonderworking image on a [visit for the patronal feast of Holy Assumption Church](#) in Stafford, VA. The following day, August 29, [we served in St. John the Baptist Cathedral](#) in Washington, where the Kursk Root Icon met with the Hawaiian Iveron Icon. That day, cathedral rector Archpriest Victor Potapov and his Matushka Maria celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary.

In September, the Kursk Icon was present for the celebrations in Howell, NJ, dedicated to the [800th anniversary of the birth of the Holy Right-Believing Great Prince Alexander Nevsky](#), and then returned to the Synodal Cathedral.

In 2022, with the blessing of the Synod of Bishops, the Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God will visit the Diocese of Great Britain & Western Europe (during Great Lent), the Diocese of German (after the feast of Holy Pascha), and the Canadian Diocese (in August).

The myrrh-streaming Icon of the Mother of God "Softener of Evil Hearts" and her guardian, Sergei Fomin – the man who has traveled with the icon to countries and continents for the past 20 years:

– When the restrictions began, there was a feeling of uncertainty: where and when could we travel, how would the travel itself and the visits to the parishes be organized? And, honestly, at first such strict limitations by the government were not taken very seriously, and we did not think that they would last for so long. All of the measures being taken were considered excessive.

There was a time when the icon stayed home, at the church in Bachurino. We held divine services as usual, twice a week, and the church did not even close on Pascha in 2020, when many churches in Moscow were closed.

Little by little, we got our bearings and began to travel. At first, we visited some churches in the region around Moscow, where, in light of the restrictions, only clergy and a select few parishioners gathered. Once, we were returning from one of the churches with the icon when we received a call and were told that there was a cross procession entering onto MKAD (the Moscow Ring Road – trans.), and were asked to join. We were not able to join that time, but we traveled around MKAD with the icon ourselves another time. We later informed our rector, Fr. Dimitry Kuvyrtalov, and he suggested circling Moscow on MKAD every Tuesday after a moleben in the church. Usually about 20 cars would gather at the church in Bachurino, and parishioners would take other icons. Each car had its own holy icons before which the passengers would pray. This was March 2020, Great Lent. Very many still were not permitted to travel, and MKAD was not congested. We drove 67 miles in a single day.

We celebrated Pascha in St. Michael the Archangel Church in Letovo at night, and then Liturgy was in Bachurino the next morning.

When the lockdowns and most of the restrictions were lifted in the countryside, we began to travel: we went to Kurgan and Magnitogorsk, flew to Sevastopol, Simferopol, and Sochi.

We did not travel abroad for two and a half years. Our first time leaving the country since the pandemic began was in August 2021 to Mount Athos.

We got a visa and did a PCR test. On the border, the Greeks were testing at random. I was chosen in the random test group, and then in Ouranoupoli, upon boarding the ferry, we had to pass another test, this time for everyone. Thus in two days we took three tests.

On the way to Athos, I was stunned to see how few people there were on the ferry, when it is usually hard to even find a place to sit. There were virtually no seagulls; the entire way to Zograf Bulgarian Monastery, the seagulls only appeared once, flying over the ferry, and then we did not see them again. Usually, the seagulls fly by and are thrown bread, they catch it on the fly, but now they did not even seem interested in the bread.

Another thing out of the ordinary was the huge number of jellyfish. You would look at the sea and there were hundreds, thousands of them, the whole sea appeared to be stuffed with brown jellyfish. I had never seen them there at all before.

All of the precautionary measures ended in Ouranoupoli, virtually everyone was walking around without masks in the monasteries, but the Great Lavra, Vatopedi, and other Greek monasteries were closed to pilgrims.

It was fairly unrestricted in the monasteries themselves, and you could occupy a *stasidion* and pray comfortably. There were orders of magnitude fewer pilgrims. The monks of St. Panteleimon Monastery and in Zograf, where we visited, received the icon with great joy.

In the summer of 2021, we traveled twice to Kaluga Oblast, to the churches where Schema-Archimandrite Eli (Nozdrin) serves.

In the autumn of 2021, we went on pilgrimage to the West Coast of the United States. In California, we visited San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, and other, smaller parishes. Joy of All Who Sorrow Cathedral in San Francisco had been closed for almost a year, and when the icon came, many people turned out – everyone had missed church, and all who were able came to pray.

In Phoenix, AZ, we visited Antiochian and Romanian churches, as well as All Russian Saints Church in Las Vegas, NV.

One Greek received the icon at home, where many Greek and Russian Orthodox gathered, who usually attend St. Anthony Greek Monastery (we cannot currently go there).

After the U.S, we first visited Romania with the icon. It was present for Liturgy in the diocesan cathedral in Constanța. When the icon was in San Francisco, one man from Romania found out about the icon by miraculous means, found more information online, then found our address and organized the icon's visit to Romania.

There were very strict measures in place in Romania at the time, and people were in masks even outdoors. Thus, the icon was in attendance at the divine services only once in the diocesan cathedral of Constanța and in two monasteries, although molebens were organized in private homes, and we prayed once in an iconographic workshop. People found out about the icon and traveled from 125-250 miles away.

There we also met many families of the descendants of the post-revolutionary émigrés from the Russian Empire. Some of their forebears were clergy. They have preserved many old items, including books in Church Slavonic.

In December, the icon visited the East Coast of the United States, beginning its travels in the churches of Florida (1, 2), and then visiting the churches of New York (1, 2), [Brooklyn](#), New Jersey (1, 2), and [Connecticut](#).

Unfortunately, we still have not been able to visit many churches of various jurisdictions that have invited us and that await us, but we hope that we will have time on our next trip. During Great Lent, we would like to renew our 10-year-old tradition of visiting the U.S. with the icon, where for the past five years we have regularly spent Pas-

sion Week and Pascha in Holy Trinity Monastery in Jordanville.

The myrrh-streaming "Hawaiian" Iveron Montreal Icon of the Mother of God and her guardian, Deacon Nectarios Yangson, who lives on Oahu:

– It is a great blessing and honor to once again travel with the icon to the churches and monasteries. The holy icon was on the island [of Oahu] for about a year and a half; we had not left in that time. But the Mother of God was not idle; in that time, we built a church! Just north of Honolulu, in a town called Kailua. It was an old Baptist church that we remodeled and converted; we bought it with no money, no resources. We did not know what bank would help us! We found an Orthodox bank that helped us. They had never done a loan like this, but they felt that they needed to help the Mother of God.

So we built a church, but now of course we needed to fill it! There was a wonderful gentleman who told us that he had bought a wonderful iconostasis from the old Russian cathedral in Miami which is now the OCA cathedral, and had sold their iconostasis to this man about 30-40 years ago. He had it in his small chapel in Reno, NV for many years, and asked us if we wanted it. We said of course, and he shipped it to us. We asked him how wide it was, and he could not tell us, as it was disassembled. Even pressed for an estimate, he said it was maybe 30, 40, 50 feet. But we needed to build the ambo and solea and needed to know the width to make it fit.

Ultimately, I told my father, who is a contractor and was doing a lot of the construction work for the church and has sacrificed a lot of his own resources for the Church. He told me, "You know, the Mother of God has helped us throughout this whole process. We will just build it." So they built the ambo and solea. And then the iconostasis arrived by container. The ambo and solea are 36 feet, six inches exactly, and the iconostasis is 36 feet, five inches. We just assembled it and put it into place and was near perfect. Our pastor emeritus, Archpriest Anatoly Levin, said, "Do you realize that this was built for us 100 years ago? They built this iconostasis for our church. This is the divine providence of God's love." This is how God multi-tasks, allowing these things to be with certain people throughout history and finally ending up with us. And who knows if its final place is with us, or if we will eventually outgrow it?

So this is what we did for a year, and people from all over the world donated to help the parish there, thank God. The parish is now doing very well and growing.

A few weeks ago, I got the call from the Mother of God that it was time to move and to move on, to leave the island and go out into the world. Since that time, we brought the icon to California. The first church we went to was the cathedral in San Francisco. There were thousands of peo-

ple there, and when we brought the icon in, she was streaming so much myrrh that it was dripping onto the floor. We placed her on the analogion and the covers were soaking wet. It felt like Pascha; they could smell the fragrance in the air throughout the church and people were yelling "Christ is Risen" to one another. It was a powerful experience.

From there, we brought the icon throughout California, and from there to [Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, New York and New Jersey and down to Florida and Georgia](#). I was in Florida for several days, and then across three states in as many days. It was interesting, I did not know exactly where we were going to go. I knew that I was going to California and then to Washington, DC, but I did not know after that. I thought, "I am going to Florida or to Ohio?". I was in the small mission parish of Archpriest Nectarios Trevino, who came into ROCOR from the Carpatho-Russian Church. At the epiclesis during Divine Liturgy in his church, I was asking the Mother of God where our path would lead next. I knew we had to move onward. Right away, all within the hour, I got a series of texts: "Can you come here to Tampa? Can you come here to Naples? Can you come here to Hollywood, to Ft. Lauderdale, to Miami, etc.?" It presented itself like this perfect path, and the schedule was done in 20 minutes. From there, on to Atlanta, and then up to Jordanville, NY.

It was funny, because even Bishop Nicholas and I were talking in Washington, and he said, "You have no idea where you are going, do you?". And I said, "I have no clue, the Mother of God has not told me yet." He replied, "Yes, she does that. Every now and then, she will surprise you, and you just have to wait."

Everywhere we went, there were many people seeking the help and guidance and love of the Mother of God. Everyone needs her, we need her in the world, and she came at the most opportune moment, I think. Since that time, I have found out that Hawaii is on lockdown for government workers, which I still am. I do not know what the future will hold when I reach the island; I may be stuck there again for another year! But at least for now, the holy icon is here with the people where she belongs.

O Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Interviews by Subdeacon Gregory Levitsky & Tatiana Veselkina

LIVES OF SAINTS

The PriestMartyr Jannuarius the Bishop, and with him the Holy Martyrs -- Deacons Proculus, Sossius and Faustus, Desiderius the Reader, Eutychius and Acution (*Commemorated April 21/May 4*) accepted a martyr's death for Christ about the year 305 during the time of the persecution by the emperor Diocletian (284-305).

They arrested Saint Jannuarius and led him to trial to Timothy, the governor of Campagna (central Italy). For

his firm confession of Christian faith, they threw the saint into a red-hot furnace. But like the Babylonian youths, he came out from there unharmed. Then by order of Timothy they stretched him out on a bench and beat at him with iron rods so much, that they lay bare the bone.

Among the gathered crowd were the holy deacon Faustus and the reader Desiderius, who wept at the sight of the suffering of their bishop. The pagans surmised that they were Christians, and threw them together into prison with the Priestmartyr Jannuarius, in the city of Puteolum. At this prison were situated two deacons locked up earlier for confessing Christ -- Saints Sossius and Proculus, and two laymen -- Saints Eutychius and Acution.

On the following morning they led out all the martyrs into the circus to be torn to pieces by wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch them. Timothy declared, that all the miracle occurred from sorcery by the Christians, but with this however he became blinded and cried out for help. The gentle Priestmartyr Jannuarius made prayer for his healing, and Timothy recovered his sight. The blindness of soul however did not depart the torturer and he, with a still greater rage accusing the Christians of sorcery, gave orders to cut off the heads of the martyrs at the walls of the city (+ 305).

Christians from surrounding cities took up the bodies of the holy martyrs for burial, and those of each city took along one, so as to have an intercessor before God. The inhabitants of Neopolis (Naples) took for themselves the body of the Priestmartyr Jannuarius. Together with the body they gathered up from the earth his dried blood. When they set the vessel with this blood upon the relics of the holy martyr, having been put on the church of the city of Neopolis, the blood liquified and became warm, as though only just shed. Many miracles proceeded from the relics of the Priestmartyr Jannuarius. During the time of the eruption of Vesuvius, when the inhabitants of the city prayed to the Priestmartyr Jannuarius, the lava stopped, not reaching the city. A pious woman placed an icon with the image of the priestmartyr to her dead son, and he arose.

The Monk Pachomios the Great, (*Commemorated May 15/May 28*) together with Anthony the Great (Comm. 17 January), Makarios the Great (Comm. 19 January), and Euthymios the Great (Comm. 20 January), was both an exemplar of wilderness dwelling, and a founder of the monastic "life-in-common" coenobitism in Egypt. The Monk Pacholios was born in the III Century in the Thebaid (Upper Egypt). His parents were pagans and he received an excellent secular education. From youth he had the traits of good character, he was prudent of sensible in mind. When Pacholios reached age 20, he was called up into the army of the emperor Constantine (apparently, in the year 315). They settled the new conscripts into the edifice of a city prison under a guard of sentries. The local Christians came with supplies of food, they fed the soldiers and they took sincere care of them. When the youth learned, that these people acted thus for the sake of their God, fulfilling His

commandment about love for neighbour, this made a deep impression upon his pure soul. Pacholios made a vow to become a Christian. Having returned from the army after the victory, Pacholios accepted holy Baptism, resettled himself into the lonely settlement of Shenesis and immediately he began to lead a strict ascetic life. Sensing the need for spiritual guidance, he turned to the Thebaid wilderness dweller Palamon. He was fondly accepted by the elder, and he began to proceed through monastic efforts on the example of his instructor.

One time, after 10 years of wilderness life, the Monk Pacholios was making his way through the desert, when he halted at the ruins of the former village of Tabennis and here he heard a Voice, ordering him to form at this place a monastery. Pachomios reported about this to the elder Palamon, and they both considered the words heard to be a command from God. They set out to Tabennis and began by building there a small monastic hovel. The holy elder Palamon blessed the beginning foundations of the monastery and made a prediction of its future glory. But soon also the Monk Palamon expired to the Lord. An Angel of God then appeared to Saint Pacholios in the form of a schemamonk and entrusted to him an ustav-rule of monastic life. And soon his own elder brother John came and settled there together with him.

The Monk Pachomios underwent many a temptation and assault from the enemy of the race of man, but the Monk Pachomios bravely warded off all the temptations by his prayer to God and endurance.

Gradually there began a gathering of followers to the Monk Pachomios. Their teacher impressed everyone by his love for work, whereby he managed to accomplish all kinds of monastic tasks: he cultivated a garden, he conversed with those that arrived seeking guidance, and he tended to the sick. The Monk Pachomios introduced a monastic rule of "life-in-common", making everything the same for everyone in food and attire. The monks of the monastery were to toil at the obediences assigned them for the common good of the monastery. Among the various obediences was the re-copying of books. The monks were not to possess their own money nor to accept anything from their kinsfolk. The Monk Pachomios considered that an obedience, fulfilled with zeal, was higher than fasting or prayer, and he demanded from the monks an exact observance of the monastic rule, strictly chastising flaggards.

To the Monk Pachomios one time came his sister Maria, who for a long time had wanted to see her brother. But the strict ascetic refused seeing her and via the gatekeeper he gave her the blessing to enter upon the path of monastic life, promising his help with this. Maria wept, but did as her brother had ordered. The Tabennis monks built her an hut on the opposite side of the River Nile. And to Maria also there began to gather nuns, and soon there was formed a women's monastery with a strict monastic rule, provided by the Monk Pachomios.

The number of monks at the monastery grew quickly, and it necessitated the building of 7 more monasteries in the vicinity. The number of monks reached 7,000,

-- all under the guidance of the Monk Pachomios, who visited at all the monasteries and administered them. But at the same time Saint Pachomios remained a deeply humble monk, who was always ready to comply with and accept the remarks of each brother.

Severe and strict towards himself, the Monk Pachomios had great kindness and condescension towards the spiritually immature deficiencies of monks. One of the monks was ardent for the deed of martyrdom, but the Monk Pachomios swayed him from this yearning and instructed him quietly to fulfill his monastic obedience, taming the pride in himself and training him in humility. One time a monk would not heed his advice and went off from the monastery, during which time he was set upon by brigands, who under the threat of death forced him to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. Filled with despair, the monk returned to the monastery. The Monk Pachomios ordered him to pray intensely night and day, keep strict fast and live in complete solitude. The monk followed his advice, and this saved his soul from despair.

The monk taught to avoid against judging others and he himself feared to be judgemental of anyone even in thought.

It was with an especial love that the Monk Pachomios concerned himself over the sick monks. He visited them, he cheered up the disheartened, he urged them to be thankful to God and put their hope in His holy will. For the sick he lightened the fasting, if this should aid in their recovery of health. One time in the absence of the monk, the cook did not prepare the monks any cooked food, on the presumption that the brethren loved to fast. Instead of doing his obedience, this monk plaited 500 mats, something which the Monk Pachomios had not encouraged. In punishment for the disobedience, all the mats prepared by the cook were ordered burnt.

The Monk Pachomios always taught the monks to have hope only upon the help and mercy of God. At the monastery it happened that there was an insufficiency of grain. The saint spent the whole night at prayer, and in the morning there came from the main city a large quantity of bread for the monastery, at no expense. The Lord granted the Monk Pachomios the gift of wonderworking and healing the sick.

The Lord revealed to him the ultimate fate of monasticism. The monk learned, that successive monks would not have such zeal in their efforts as did the first, and they would walk in the darkness of not having experienced guides. Prostrating himself upon the ground, the Monk Pachomios wept bitterly, calling out to the Lord and imploring mercy for them. In answer he heard a Voice: "Pachomios, be mindful of the mercy of God. About the monks to come, know that they shalt receive recompense, since that they too shalt have occasion to suffer the life burdensome for the monk".

Towards the end of his life the Monk Pachomios likewise fell ill from a pestilence that afflicted the region. His closest and beloved disciple, the Monk Theodore (Comm. 17 May), tended to him with a filial love. The

Monk Pachomios died in about the year 348 at age 53, and he was buried on an hill near the monastery.

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 a 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.



ST. XENIA ORTHODOX CHURCH
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MAY 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 (Apr 18) Thomas Sunday Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Noon Prayers in Cemetery	2 (Apr 19)	3 (Apr 20) Radonitsa 10:00 General Pannyhida in Cemetery	4 (Apr 21) Fast: wine & oil	5 (Apr 22)	6 (Apr 23) Fast: fish, wine & oil	7 (Apr 24) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
8 (Apr 25) Myrrhbearing Women Tone 2 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	9 (Apr 26)	10 (Apr 27)	11 (Apr 28) Fast: wine & oil	12 (Apr 29)	13 (Apr 30) Fast: fish, wine & oil	14 (May 1) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
15 (May 2) The Paralyzed Man Tone 3 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	16 (May 3)	17 (May 4) 5:30 Vespers of Mid-Pentecost	18 (May 5) Mid-Pentecost 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine & oil	19 (May 6)	20 (May 7) Fast: wine & oil	21 (May 8) St. John the Theologian 5:30 All-Night Vigil
22 (May 9) The Samaritan Woman Tone 4 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	23 (May 10)	24 (May 11) Ss. Cyril and Methodius	25 (May 12) Fast: fish, wine & oil	26 (May 13)	27 (May 14) Fast: wine & oil	28 (May 15) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
29 (May 16) The Blind Man Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	30 (May 17)	31 (May 18)	Jun 1 (May 19) 5:30 Vigil of Ascension Fast: fish, wine & oil	Jun 2 (May 20) ASCENSION OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	Jun 3 (May 21) Ss. Constantine & Helen	Jun 4 (May 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil



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JUNE 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
May 29 (May 16) The Blind Man Tone 5 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	May 30 (May 17)	May 31 (May 18)	1 (May 19) 5:30 Vigil of Ascension Fast: fish, wine & oil	2 (May 20) ASCENSION OF THE LORD 9:30 Hours & Divine Liturgy	3 (May 21) Ss. Constantine & Helen Fast: wine, & oil	4 (May 22) 5:30 All-Night Vigil
5 (May 23) First Ecumenical Council Tone 6 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	6 (May 24)	7 (May 25)	8 (May 26) Fast: wine, & oil	9 (May 27)	10 (May 28) Fast: wine, & oil	11 (May 29) 4:30 General Pannyhida 5:30 All-Night Vigil
12 (May 30) PENTECOST 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Noon Vespers w/Kneeling Prayers	13 (May 31) Day of the Holy Spirit Fast free	14 (Jun 1) Third day of Holy Trinity Fast free	15 (Jun 2) Fast free	16 (Jun 3) Fast free	17 (Jun 4) Fast free	18 (Jun 5) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast free
19 (Jun 6) All Saints Tone 8 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	20 (Jun 7) Beginning of Apostles' Fast Fast	21 (Jun 8) Fast: wine, & oil	22 (Jun 9) Fast	23 (Jun 10) Fast: wine, & oil	24 (Jun 11) Fast: wine, & oil	25 (Jun 12) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: fish, wine, & oil
26 (Jun 13) All Saints of Russia Tone 1 9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Fast: fish, wine, & oil	27 (Jun 14) Fast	28 (Jun 15) Fast: fish, wine, & oil	29 (Jun 16) Fast	30 (Jun 17) Fast: wine, & oil	Jul 1 (Jun 18) Fast	Jul 2 (Jun 19) 5:30 All-Night Vigil Fast: wine & oil