



# St. Xenia Parish News

170 North Lowell Street, Methuen, MA 01844

January – February 2025

## Great Consecration of the Church, May 26, 2025

### Background

Once a building has been consecrated as a church it may not be used again for a secular purpose. Before construction of a new building as a church, the local diocesan bishop must bless the endeavor. Before construction begins, the bishop lays a foundation stone that may or may not contain relics of a saint. After construction of the new church has been completed the building can be consecrated.

The consecration is usually performed by the diocesan bishop, but if he is unable to perform the consecration he may ask another bishop, archimandrite, or possibly a senior priest to perform the service on his behalf.

While the consecration encompasses the whole church, the ceremony centers around the holy altar and holy altar table in particular. As salvation for an Orthodox Christian is union with Christ, called Life in Christ, the center of this Life in Christ is the holy altar, the consecration of a church is, in effect, the baptism and chrismation of the church.

### Preparations

In preparation for the consecration, the altar table is cleared, leaving it uncovered with nothing on it. The consecration begins with the celebration of an All-Night Vigil on the eve of the consecration service. At this time all the materials needed for the Consecration service are assembled.

### Consecration

On the day of the consecration, the service begins with blessing of a quantity of waters by an appointed priest. Matins (Orthros), a morning service, may be held using a covered table before the Royal Doors set with a candle, diskos, asterisk, and a cover for the diskos where, upon his arrival, the bishop places the holy relics.

### Processions

The service begins with reading of Psalm 143, followed by reciting of petitions and prayers. The people and singers, led by the bishop, who carrying the covered diskos on which the holy relics have been placed, and priests, make a procession around the church three times, reminiscent of the three processions around the font at baptism. Each time the procession reaches the front of the church, the bishop places the diskos with the holy relics on a table placed there earlier and reads from the Holy Scriptures.

After the third procession is completed, the bishop chants a dialogue from Psalm 24 as he enters the church; this represents Christ the King entering and taking over the

building by defeating the power of the devil. After the dialogue is completed the bishop, holding the diskos on which are the holy relics, makes the sign of the cross and enters the church.

### Sealing of the holy relics

In the early days of Christianity when the Church was heavily persecuted, the Christians met in underground burial places where they celebrated the Eucharist on the graves of martyred saints. After the Church was recognized this custom was continued by placing relics in the altar table during the consecration of the church. This is a reminder that the Church was built on the blood of the martyrs and their faith in the Lord.

After the bishop has entered the church, he continues into the altar. In the altar he places the diskos on the altar table. There he removes the relics and places them in a small box. The bishop then pours holy chrism over the relics, symbolizing the union between our Lord and his martyrs. With prayers and the reading of Psalm 145, the bishop then places the box with the relics in a cavity in the altar table where it is sealed in with a wax/mastic that contains fragrant spices as were used by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus to anoint our Lord's body before his burial. In this, the holy altar represents Christ's tomb.

### Washing and anointing the altar table

After placing the relics in the altar table (disposition), the bishop proceeds to the washing and anointing of the altar table. For this purpose the bishop is vested in a special white linen garment over his vestments called a *sratchitza* or *savanon*. The baptism of the altar table begins with the prayer of consecration by the bishop, followed by petitions by the deacon. The bishop then is given a basin of water and, with a blessing and prayer, pours the water over the table three times and washes it while Psalm 84 is read. Symbolizing baptism, the table is cleaned by washing and made holy by the grace of the Holy Spirit.

After the table is dried, the bishop sprinkles rosewater on it and continues reading Psalm 51. The assisting priests then dry the table with the *antimins*. Having anointed the table with chrism, once in the center and on each side, the bishop proceeds to spread the chrism over all the table while reciting a section of Psalm 133. The excess chrism is wiped off by the priests with the *antimins*, and icons of the four Evangelists are fastened, one at each corner, to the altar table.

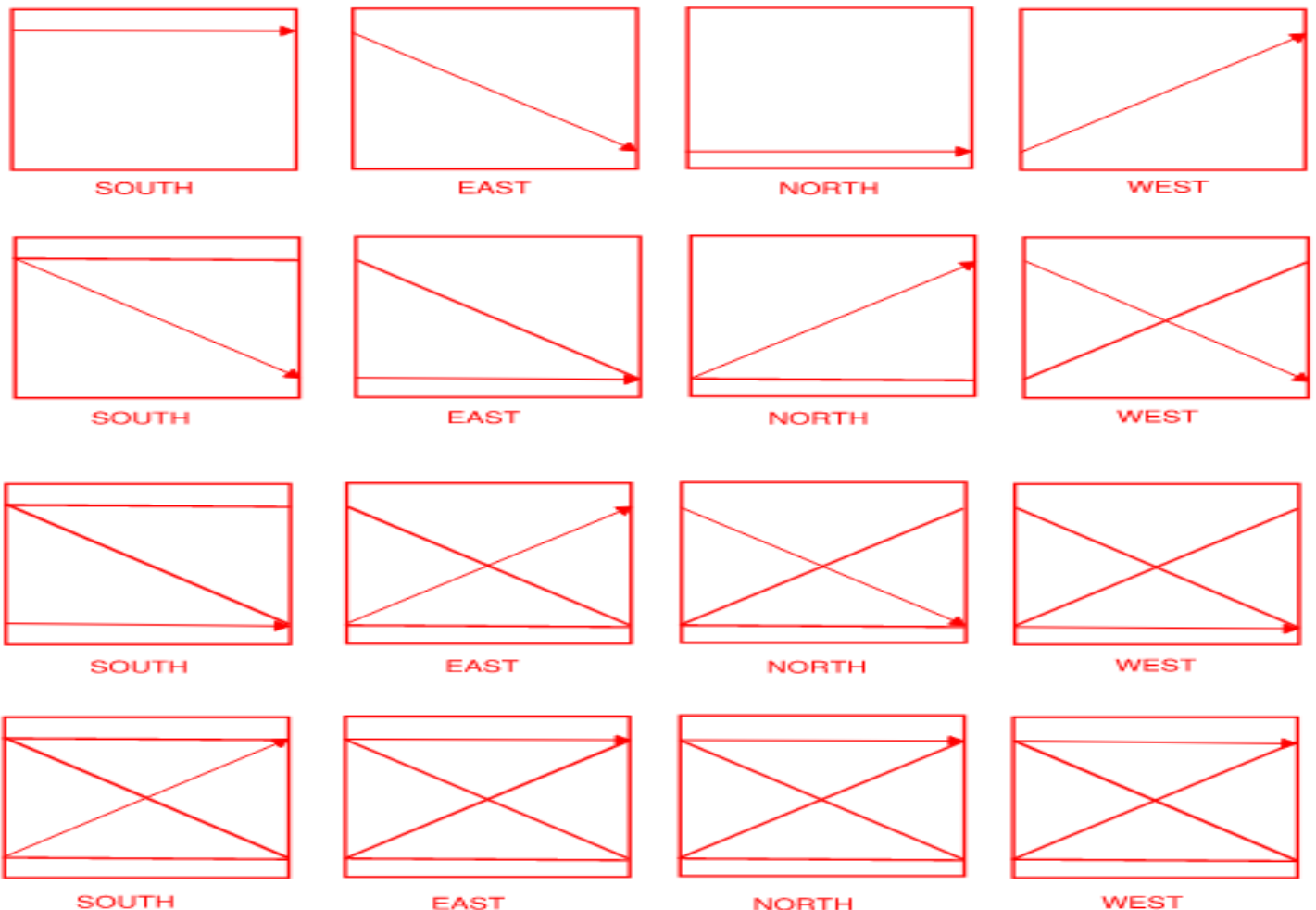
## Vesting the altar table

While Psalm 132 is read, a white linen cloth, representing the Lord's burial shroud, is laid over the altar table. The cloth, called the *katasarkion* (κατασάργιον), is tied on the table with a cord that represents the cord with which our Lord's hands were tied when he stood before the high priests. The *katasarkion* is permanently installed, to remain as long as the church stands. After washing his hands, the bishop now covers the altar table with a more ornate cover, the *endyton*, that symbolizes the glory of God and places the other holy articles, including the *antimins*, Gospel Book, the *artophorion*, and candle sticks, on the altar table, as the reader reads Psalm 93.

## Anointing the church and conclusion

After the altar has been consecrated, sanctified, and adorned, the entire church is censed while Psalm 26 is read. Then, the bishop anoints with holy chrism the four walls of the church and holy icons, making the sign of the cross on each with the chrism. The bishop then offers prayers for the altar, church, and faithful and places a lighted vigil light on the altar table. As the consecration service comes to an end, the bishop removes the *sratchitzza* he is wearing and may offer it to be cut up into small pieces that are given to each person in church. Concluding prayers are then offered and the consecration service is dismissed before the first Divine Liturgy is celebrated in the newly consecrated church.

### GIRDING OF THE HOLY TABLE WITH CORD



St. Xenia of St. Petersburg Orthodox Church is a parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia, under the omophorion of Met. NICHOLAS 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 15<sup>th</sup> of the month prior to publication to Father Michael at [fmichael@stxenia.org](mailto:fmichael@stxenia.org). Thank you.

**Rector:**

V. Rev. Michael Crowley  
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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: Isaac (Shedly) Justinien (646) 639-9273  
Sisterhood: Meghan Nettleton (617) 309-6473  
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Anthony Sarantakis  
Dmitri Nikshych  
Joseph (Kami) Aijaonkar  
Choir Director: Laryssa Doohovskoy (978) 841-5960  
Church School Director: Alexei Doohovskoy



## Trapeza Schedule

\* = strict fast

The coffee hour will be outside, so each week will be **weather dependent**.

Coffee will be made each Sunday morning.

*Please remember, that while hospitality is a beautiful tradition at St. Xenia's, we can only do as much as we can with given capacities. If some weeks, we simply have a light snack following liturgy, that is still above and beyond what many churches are able to provide.*

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

**Please refer to list on refrigerator for all that should be checked.**

### JANUARY

- \*1/05 Judy Engalichev, Sasha Oxnard, Lisa Anderson, Damascene Cummings
- 1/12 YOLKA – Pizza for kids  
Pam Reed, Carolyn Savage, Diane Mendez, Johanna Victoria Tkaczewski, Olga McLellan
- 1/19 THEOPHANY  
Mat. Masha Doohovskoy, Mat. Helen Doohovskoy, Marianne DiMatteo, Sasha Frost, Jessica Coronel, Katia Semyanko
- 1/26 Mat. Kaleria Sarantakis, Juliana Capitanio, Ann Marie Hakim, Vera Sarantakis, Jane Rockwell, Caroline Maria Fox

### FEBRUARY

- 2/2 Olena Fedina, Tanya Nikshych, Liliya Afanasyeva, Mary Doohovskoy, Olga Rapp
- 2/09 Nataliya Orbite,, Alevtina Khusanova, Liudmilla Diakonova, Raisa & Natalia Avram, Tanya Burke, Yeva Klein
- 2/16 Matushka Patricia Klar, Alexandra Gonzalez, Celesta Liceaga, Vira Ajsaonkar, Barbara Semyanko
- 2/23 MEATFARE  
Meghan Nettleton, Kristina Head, Juliana Rost, Elizabeth Victoria Jackson, Brigid Justinien

## PARISH NEWS

~Please join us for a Parish Cleaning Day in preparation for the Nativity – Jan 1, 10-12pm.

~ Fr. Michael's most recent class notes (and many other edifying topics) are posted on our website: [https://stxenia.org/about\\_orthodoxy](https://stxenia.org/about_orthodoxy) scroll down to "New Media Epidemic"

## Congratulations

~To the Murphy Family on the birth of their daughter, Delaney Elizabeth on November 12<sup>th</sup> and Baptism on December 28<sup>th</sup>.

~To the Prokopienko family on the birth of their son, Maxwell Alexander Prokopienko, on November 26<sup>th</sup>.

~To the Rogers family on the birth of their daughter, Anastasia Maria Rogers on 12/24.

Many years to all!

## Reminders

- ❖ Please remember that **the fast before Holy Communion** begins at midnight the night before. The fast is from both food and drink, including water, for all above 7 years old. Those who have special needs, e.g. prescription medicines, etc., should speak with Fr. Michael or Fr. Alexei directly.
- ❖ Please remember, that particularly during the ***Cherubic Hymn, the Gospel Reading, the Creed, the Lord's Prayer and Communion***, all who are able, should remain standing and all should refrain from walking around the Naïve unless absolutely necessary.
- ❖ Please remember, if you must leave the Naïve during the Liturgy, please pause to listen to what is happening in the service before re-entering. If it is any of the above-mentioned times, please wait to re-enter.

## SISTERHOOD NEWS

### ~ Thank You

On November 17, St. Xenia's hosted a concert fundraiser. The *Women's Ensemble*, a quartet comprised of 4 Orthodox women, delighted us with their beautiful voices and talent. All proceeds were donated to the School of Bethany, which is currently dealing with

water and supply shortages and the many effects of war that we cannot imagine. Pray for the School of Bethany teachers, students, nuns, and of course the director, Mother Maria!

The November fundraiser was a big success! Nearly \$15,000 was raised. Many thanks for your generosity!



~

## SAVE THE DATE

2025 Women's Lenten Retreat  
Holy Trinity Monastery  
Jordanville, NY  
April 4-6th.  
Details to follow!

The next sisterhood meeting is **Feb 5th** - more enrichment sessions to come!

~ The Sisterhood is always eager to have more volunteers. If you would like to be of service, there are many opportunities to help. Please reach out to Meghan Nettleton with any questions [stxeniasisterhood100@gmail.com](mailto:stxeniasisterhood100@gmail.com)

## BROTHERHOOD NEWS

The newly formed Brotherhood of St. Xenia's met in November with great enthusiasm. If you would like to update any information or if you know of other men in our parish who might be interested in joining, please contact Dan Poletti, [dan.poletti@gmail.com](mailto:dan.poletti@gmail.com).

The Brotherhood's vision is to create a brotherhood that:

- Supports the spiritual growth of our parish
- Assists with the physical maintenance and beautification of our church
- Creates opportunities for fellowship and mutual support
- Participates in charitable works for our broader community

### PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Fr. Constantine, Nicholas, Jane, Peter, Dimitri, Laryssa, and Celesta.

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

### CHOIR NEWS

~ Children's Choir Rehearsals take place on Sunday mornings starting at 9:00am. All children ages 8 and older are welcome to attend. The Children's Choir prepares music and readings for upcoming services.

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

### UPCOMING EVENTS

**Parish Yolka**

**Jan 12<sup>th</sup> 2 pm**

**Chelmsford Center for the Arts.**  
<https://www.chelmsfordarts.org/>

*featuring a dramatic rendition of  
 'The Snow Queen'  
 by Hans Christian Anderson*

### LIVES OF SAINTS

**Nobleborn Juliania, Princess of Vyazemsk and Novotorzh,** (*Commemorated Dec 21/Jan 3*) a daughter of the boyar-noble Maksim Danilov, was glorified by a deep marital prudence. Her spouse, the Vyazemsk prince Simeon Mstislavich, and also the Smolemsk prince Yuri Svyatoslavich, were compelled to flee their native lands, which the Lithuanian prince Vitovt had seized. Then the Moscow prince Vasilii Dimitrovich bestowed the exiled princes the Tver city of Torzhok. Prince Yuri Svyatoslavich became capti-

vated by the beauty of Juliania and tried every which way to persuade her to adultery, but Juliania strictly kept her marital fidelity. One time during a feast, prince Yuri killed the husband of Juliania, in the hope of taking her by force. Saint Juliania resisted the ravisher. The enraged prince Yuri gave orders to cut off her hands and feet, and to throw her body into the Tvertsa River. The martyrdom of Saint Juliania was done in the winter of 1406. From pricks of conscience prince Yuri fled to the Tatars, but even there he did not find peace. He then settled in the Ryazan wilderness (where also he died in 1408). In the spring of 1406 they saw the body of the blessed princess floating in the far current. A certain paralytic heard a voice from above, commanding to bury the body of Saint Juliania at the south gate of the cathedral in Torzhok. A tomb with the body was afterwards built at the Saviour-Transfiguration cathedral, where many received healing from her. In connection with the glorification of Saint Juliania on 2 June 1819 was built a chapel at the right-hand side, dedicated to her name. At the cathedral of the Transfiguration of the Lord, where earlier there was a chapel over the grave of the saint, a church was built and also dedicated to the name of Saint Juliania in 1906.

**The Holy 20,000 Martyrs of Nicomedia:** (*Commemorated Dec 28/Jan 10*) At the beginning of the IV Century the emperor Maximian (284-305) gave orders to destroy Christian churches, to burn Divine-service books, and to deprive all Christians of rights and offices of citizenship. At this time the bishop of the city of Nicomedia was Saint Cyril, who by his preaching and life contributed to the spread of the Christian faith, such that many of the dignitaries of the emperor were themselves secretly Christian.

At the Nicomedia court of the emperor lived the pagan-priestess, Domna. In the absence of Maximian she read through the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. Her heart burned with the desire to become acquainted with the Christian teaching. With the help of some young Christian, Domna went secretly to the bishop, Cyril, in the company of a faithful servant, the eunuch Indysos. Saint Cyril catechised them, and afterwards both received holy Baptism. Domna began to help the poor: she distributed her valuables with the assistance of Indysos, and she distributed also food from the imperial kitchen. Having learned about the unusual manner of life of Domna and Indysos, the head of the eunuchs -- who was in charge of the imperial table, locked up both of them to exhaust them with hunger, but they received support from an Angel and did not suffer. In

order to no longer live amidst the pagans, Saint Domna feigned insanity. Then she and Indysos managed to leave the court, and she went to the women's monastery of the hegumeness Agathia. The hegumeness quickly dressed her in men's clothing, cut her hair and sent her off from the monastery.

During this time the emperor happened to return and gave orders to seek out everywhere for the former pagan-priestess Domna. The soldiers dispatched for this purpose found the monastery and destroyed it. The sisters were thrown into prison, subjected to torture and abuse, but not one of them suffered violation. Sent off to an house of iniquity, Saint Theophila with the help of an Angel of the Lord there also preserved her virginity: the Angel removed her from the profligacy.

At this time the emperor set up in the city square an offering of sacrifice to the pagan gods. When they began sprinkling the crowd with the blood of the sacrificial animals, Christians started to leave the square. Seeing this, the emperor became enraged, but he did not give vent to his anger, since suddenly the earth quaked. A certain while later Maximian having located the church entered it and demanded a renunciation of Christ from all; for refusal he promised to burn the church and kill its Christians. The Christian presbyter Glykerios answered him, that Christians never renounce their faith, even under the threat of torture. Hiding his anger, the emperor exited the church, and after a certain while commanded the presbyter Glykerios be arrested for trial. The executioners tortured the martyr, who ceased not to pray and to call on the Name of the Lord. Not being able to wring a renunciation of Christ out of Saint Glykerios, Maximian ordered him to be burned to death.

On the feastday of the Nativity of Christ in the year 302, when about 20,000 Christians had assembled at the Nicomedia cathedral church, the emperor sent into the church an herald -- who proclaimed the emperor's command to exit the church and offer sacrifice to idols; otherwise, he threatened to burn the church together with those praying in it. But all those present refused to worship idols. While the tormentors prepared to set fire to the church, Bishop Anthymos (Comm. 3 September; a related account is under this day), having completed Divine-services, baptised all the catechumens and communed all with the Holy Mysteries. All 20,000 of those praying died in the fire. Among them were the hegumeness Agathia and Saint Theophila who had been saved by a miracle from the den of iniquity. Bishop Anthymos however managed to escape the fire.

Maximian reckoned that he had finished off all the Christians of Nicomedia. But he soon learned that there were many more, and that they all as before would confess their faith and were prepared to die for Christ. The emperor pondered over how to deal with them. By his command they arrested the regimental-commander Zinon, who openly before the people was criticising the emperor for impiety and cruelty. Zinon was fiercely beaten and finally beheaded. They locked up in prison the eunuch Indysos, formerly a priest to idols, for his refusal to participate in a pagan feastday.

Amidst all this, Saint Domna concealed herself within a cave and nourished herself eating plants. The persecution against Christians continued. In the locale elsewhere, in Italy, there were thrown into prison Dorotheus, Mardonius, Migdonius the Deacon and some dignitaries. Bishop Anthymos encouraged them, sending epistles to them. One of the messengers, the deacon Theophilos, was captured. Interrogating him about the bishop, they subjected him to torture, but the holy martyr endured all the tortures, revealing nothing. Then together with him they executed those, whom the bishop had addressed in his letter.

When Saint Domna returned to the city, she cried for a long time at the burnt-out ruins, regretting that she was not found worthy to die with her sisters. Then she went along the sea shore. At that moment fishermen pulled out of the water with their nets the bodies of the martyrs Indysos, Gorgonios and Peter. Saint Domna was still dressed in men's clothing, and she helped the fishermen to draw in their nets. They left her the bodies of the martyrs. With reverence she looked after the holy remains; in particular, she was gladdened that she saw the body of her spiritual friend -- the Martyr Indysos. After the burial, she did not depart these graves so dear to her heart, but daily made incensing before them. When the emperor was told about an unknown youth who paid respects at the graves of executed Christians, he gave orders to behead the youth. Together with Domna was executed also the Martyr Euthymios.

**The Nun Melania**, (*Commemorated Dec 31/Jan 13*) the first of a series of Roman girls who "yearned from their youthful years for Christ, thirsting for bodily chastity and stung by Divine love", -- was born into a Christian family. Her parents, people of property and wealth, looked on their daughter as an heiress and continuant of their line. At fourteen years of age Melania was given, against her will, in marriage to the illustrious youth Apinian. From the very beginning of

their married life, Saint Melania besought her spouse to live with her in chastity or else release her from the marriage, chaste in both body and soul. Apinian answered: "When through the will of the Lord we come to have two children as heirs to the property, then together we shall renounce the world". Soon Melania gave birth to a daughter, whom the young parents dedicated to God. Continuing to live together in marriage, Melania in secret wore an hairshirt and spent her nights at prayer. The second time Melania gave birth, it was premature and with severe complications. A boy was born, they baptised him, and at once he expired to the Lord. Seeing the suffering of his spouse, Blessed Apinian besought the Lord to preserve Saint Melania alive, and he gave a vow to spend the rest of their life together in chastity. Recovering, Saint Melania did away once for all with her silken-like clothing. Soon also their daughter died. Amongst themselves, the parents of the Saints were against the desire of the young couple to devote themselves to God. It was only when the father of Saint Melania became deathly sick, that he asked forgiveness of them and gave his permission for them to follow their chosen path, meanwhile asking them to pray for him. The saints then quit the city of Rome, and a new life began for them, completely dedicated to the service of God. Apinian at this time was 24 years of age, and Melania -- age 20. They began to visit the sick, to take in wanderers, and generously to help the indigent. They made the rounds of the prisons, places of those exiled and mine-convicts and the destitute, held there in debtor's prison. Having sold off estates in Italy and Spain, they generously rendered help to elders and monasteries by purchasing for the monasteries -- lands in Mesopotamia, Syria, Egypt, Phoenicia and Palestine. By their assist was built many a church and sick-house. Churches of both West and East benefited from them. When in forsaking their native land, they set sail for Africa, a strong storm broke loose as they sailed. The sailors said, that this was from the wrath of God, but Blessed Melania said, that they had been given over in the ship to His unfathomable will. The waves carried the ship to an island, on which stood a city, besieged by barbarians. The besiegers demanded a ransom payment from the inhabitants, elsewise they threatened to lay waste the city. The saints supplied the necessary money, and thus saved the city and its people from destruction. Arriving then in Africa, they rendered help to all the needy there, and with the blessing of the local bishops they made offerings to churches and monasteries. During this while Saint Melania continued to humble her flesh by strict fasting, and she fortified her soul by constant

reading of the Word of God, making copies of the sacred books and distributing them to those that lacked them. She herself sewed an hairshirt, and having donned it continued to wear it.

In Africa the saints spent 7 years and then, freed of all their wealth, on the command of Christ, they set off to Jerusalem. Along the way, at Alexandria, they were welcomed by the bishop, Saint Cyril, and they met in church with the holy elder Nestorios, who was possessed of the gift of prophecy and healing. The elder turned to them, comforting and calling them to courage and patience in expectation of the Glory of Heaven. At Jerusalem the saints distributed to the destitute their remaining gold and then spent their days in poverty and prayer. After a short visit to Egypt, where the saints visited many of the desert fathers, Saint Melania secluded herself into a solitary cell on the Mount of Olives, and only occasionally saw Saint Apinian. Gradually around her cell there arose a monastery, where gathered eventually nine women. Saint Melania, out of humility, would not consent to be hegumeness, and as before lived and prayed in solitude. In her instructions Saint Melania urged the sisters to be vigilant and to pray, to disdain their own opinions and cultivate first of all love for God and for one another, to keep the holy Orthodox faith and purity both of soul and of body. In particular she exhorted them to be obedient to the will of God. Calling to mind the words of the Apostle Paul, she counselled them to keep the fasts "not with wailing nor from compunction: but in virtuous disposition bestown with love for God". By her efforts in the monastery was built an oratory and altar, where they buried relics of saints: of the Prophet of God Zachariah, of the holy FirstMartyr Stephen, and of the Forty Martyrs of Sebasteia. At about this time Saint Apinian expired to the Lord. Saint Melania buried his relics and there spent another four years in fasting and unceasing prayer.

Saint Melania wanted to build a men's monastery on the Mount of the Ascension of the Lord. The Lord blessed her intent, by sending a benefactor who provided the means for the monastery. Joyfully accepting it, Saint Melania finished the great work in a single year. In this monastery, saintly men began to lift up unceasing prayer in the church of the Ascension of Christ. Having finished her tasks, the saint left Jerusalem for Constantinople, to go to her pagan uncle in hope of saving his soul. Along the way she prayed at the relics of Saint Lawrence, at the place of his martyrdom, and received auspicious signs. Arriving in Constantinople, the saint found her uncle suffering in sickness, and she conversed with him.



Under her influence the sick man gave up paganism and died a Christian. During this period many inhabitants of the capital were worked up over the heretical teaching of Nestorius. Saint Melania accepted anyone who turned to her for proper explanation. Many miracles were worked through the prayer of the saint. Returning then to her own monastery, the saint sensed the nearness of death, and declared this to the presbyter and the sisters. They listened to her final instructions in deep sorrow and with tears. Having asked their prayers and commanding them to preserve themselves in purity, and having communed the Holy Mysteries with joy and psalmody, Saint Melania calmly and in peace gave up her soul to the Lord. This occurred in the year 439.

**The MonkMartyr Elias of Ardenysia** (*Commemorated Jan 31/Feb 14*) was a native of Moreia. He was noted for his prudence and goodness of heart. The people of the village loved and esteemed him and often got his advice. Through the temptation of the devil he once renounced faith in Christ, but soon he repented, and wanting to atone his sin, he withdrew to Athos, where for eight years he asceticised as a monk. Constantly torn by awareness of his sin, Saint Elias made a firm resolve to wash away his transgression by his own blood. With the blessing of his spiritual father, he set off to his native land, and in front of a throng of Turks he declared himself a Christian. They fiercely beat him and gave him a trial, which sentenced him to burning. The Lord glorified the holy martyr. He was put upon a bonfire, but the body of the martyr remained unharmed. The fire did not touch even his robe nor his hair, when his soul expired to the Lord (+ 1686). Christians buried his body in the Burkanos monastery.

**The Monk Arsenios of Ikaltoi** (*Commemorated Feb 6/Feb 19*) was descended from the Gruzian/Georgian princely line of the Vachnadze. He was born in Kakhetia (Eastern Gruzia), -- according to certain sources, in the village of Ikaltoi. Raised by pious parents, the Monk Arsenios distinguished himself from childhood by his love for church services and prayer. He received religious education at the Constantinople academy, where he studied not only the theological, but also the natural sciences.

At the completion of academy he accepted monasticism and bore obedience in one of the Gruzian monasteries of the Black Hill (near Antioch) under the guidance of Saint Ephrem Mtsira (+ 1101, Comm. 18 January). Here the Monk Arsenios zealously occupied himself with theological and translating activity, investigating in particular the causes of the breaking away of the non-Chalcedonian Churches from Orthodoxy.

To Saint Arsenios belongs the translation into the Gruzian language of the "Great Nomocanon" of Saint Photios, Patriarch of Constantinople (857-867, 887-886), the "Golden Nectar" of Saint John Damascene, and also the compiled collection of translated works in the "Dogmatikon" with commentaries, directed against various heretical teachings. After the death of his teacher, the Monk Arsenios returned to Constantinople and continued his teaching activities.

Defending the purity of Orthodoxy, the Monk Arsenios while still during his lifetime gained fame for his instructive encyclopedia (theology, philosophy, philology, logic, physics, anatomy, poetics). Upon the invitation of the Gruzian emperor David III the Restorer (1089-1125), he returned to Gruzia in the year 1114 and for a certain while taught at the Gerat academy (Western Gruzia). Then the Monk Arsenios headed the founding, under his active participation, of the Ikaltoi academy (where he was born in Kakhetia, in the village of Ikaltoi, at the monastery of the Saviour Image-not-Wrought-by-Hand, during the years 1114-1120). At this academy, by tradition, he taught the great Gruzian poet Shota Rustaveli.

The Monk Arsenios was one of the initiators and an active participant of a Church Council in the Armenian city of Anio; under his influence part of the Armenian Monophysite bishops inclined towards an acceptance of Orthodoxy. Over the course of many years the Monk Arsenios was priest for the holy emperor David III the Restorer and by his good counsels contributed immensely to the enlightenment of the Gruzian Church. His astute intelligence and spiritual wisdom, the purity and righteousness of his life, are esteemed holy by the Gruzian Orthodox Church. The memory of the Monk Arsenios of Ikaltoi is celebrated on 6 February, the day of his blessed death.

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JANUARY 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Dec 29</b> (Dec 16) <b>Holy Forefathers</b>  9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy  Fast: fish, wine & oil	<b>Dec 30</b> (Dec 17)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>Dec 31</b> (Dec 18)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>1</b> (Dec 19)  10:00 AM, Moleben for the New Year Cleaning Day for the Nativity Feast  Fast	<b>2</b> (Dec 20)  Fast	<b>3</b> (Dec 21)  Fast	<b>4</b> (Dec 22)  5:30 All-Night Vigil  Fast: wine & oil
<b>5</b> (Dec 23) <b>Holy Fathers</b>  9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy  Fast: wine & oil	<b>6</b> (Dec 24) <b>Forefeast of  Nativity</b> 8:00 AM, Royal Hours of the Nativity 9:30 AM, Vesperal Divine Liturgy of the Forefeast of Nativity 5:30 PM, Great Compline, Matins & First Hour Fast: wine & oil	<b>7</b> (Dec 25) <b>NATIVITY OF THE  LORD</b> 9:30 AM, Hours & Divine Liturgy	<b>8</b> (Dec 26)  Fast free	<b>9</b> (Dec 27)  Fast free	<b>10</b> (Dec 28)  Fast free	<b>11</b> (Dec 29)  5:30 All-Night Vigil  Fast free
<b>12</b> (Dec 30) <b>Sunday Before  Theophany</b>  9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy 1:00 PM Parish Yolka  Fast free	<b>13</b> (Dec 31)  Fast free	<b>14</b> (Jan 1) <b>Circumcision of the  Lord</b>  Fast free	<b>15</b> (Jan 2)  Fast free	<b>16</b> (Jan 3)  Fast free	<b>17</b> (Jan 4)  8:00 AM, Royal Hours of Theophany  Fast free	<b>18</b> (Jan 5) <b>Forefeast of  Theophany</b> 9:30, Vesperal Divine Liturgy of the Forefeast Blessing of Waters 5:30 Great Compline, Matins & First Hour Fast: wine & oil
<b>19</b> (Jan 6) <b>THEOPHANY OF  THE LORD</b>  9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy Blessing of Waters	<b>20</b> (Jan 7) <b>Synaxis of the  Baptist</b>  Fast: wine & oil	<b>21</b> (Jan 8)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>22</b> (Jan 9)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>23</b> (Jan 10)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>24</b> (Jan 11)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>25</b> (Jan 12)  5:30 All-Night Vigil
<b>26</b> (Jan 13) <b>Sunday After  Theophany</b>  9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy	<b>27</b> (Jan 14)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>28</b> (Jan 15)  Fast: wine & oil	<b>29</b> (Jan 16)  Fast	<b>30</b> (Jan 17) <b>St. Anthony the  Great</b>  Fast	<b>31</b> (Jan 18)  Fast	<b>Feb 1</b> (Jan 19)  5:30 All-Night Vigil

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

FEBRUARY 2025						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>Jan 26 (Jan 13)</b> <b>Sunday After Theophany</b>  <b>9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>Jan 27 (Jan 14)</b>	<b>Jan 28 (Jan 15)</b>	<b>Jan 29 (Jan 16)</b>  <b>Fast</b>	<b>Jan 30 (Jan 17)</b> <b>St. Anthony the Great</b>	<b>Jan 31 (Jan 18)</b>  <b>Fast</b>	<b>1 (Jan 19)</b>  <b>5:30 All-Night Vigil</b>
<b>2 (Jan 20)</b> <b>Zaccheus Sunday</b>  <b>9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>3 (Jan 21)</b>	<b>4 (Jan 22)</b>	<b>5 (Jan 23)</b>  <b>5:30 PM Vigil "St. Xenia"</b>  <b>Fast</b>	<b>6 (Jan 24)</b> <b>St. Xenia of Petersburg</b>  <b>8:00 AM Hours &amp; Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>7 (Jan 25)</b>  <b>Fast: fish, wine &amp; oil</b>	<b>8 (Jan 26)</b>  <b>5:30 All-Night Vigil</b>
<b>9 (Jan 27)</b> <b>Publican &amp; Pharisee</b>  <b>9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>10 (Jan 28)</b>  <b>Fast free</b>	<b>11 (Jan 29)</b>  <b>Fast free</b>	<b>12 (Jan 30)</b> <b>Three Holy Hierarchs</b>  <b>Fast free</b>	<b>13 (Jan 31)</b>  <b>Fast free</b>	<b>14 (Feb 1)</b>  <b>5:30 PM Vigil</b>  <b>Fast free</b>	<b>15 (Feb 2)</b> <b>MEETING OF THE LORD</b>  <b>9:00 AM Hours &amp; Divine Liturgy</b>  <b>5:30 All-Night Vigil</b>  <b>Fast free</b>
<b>16 (Feb 3)</b> <b>Prodigal Son</b>  <b>9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>17 (Feb 4)</b>	<b>18 (Feb 5)</b>	<b>19 (Feb 6)</b>  <b>Fast</b>	<b>20 (Feb 7)</b>	<b>21 (Feb 8)</b>  <b>Fast: wine &amp; oil</b>	<b>22 (Feb 9)</b>  <b>5:30 All-Night Vigil</b>
<b>23 (Feb 10)</b> <b>Meatfare Sunday</b>  <b>9:30 Hours and Divine Liturgy</b>	<b>24 (Feb 11)</b>  <b>Fast: dairy, fish, wine, &amp; oil</b>	<b>25 (Feb 12)</b>  <b>Fast: dairy, fish, wine, &amp; oil</b>	<b>26 (Feb 13)</b>  <b>Fast: dairy, fish, wine, &amp; oil</b>	<b>27 (Feb 14)</b>  <b>Fast: dairy, fish, wine, &amp; oil</b>	<b>28 (Feb 15)</b>  <b>Fast: dairy, fish, wine, &amp; oil</b>	<b>Mar 1 (Feb 16)</b>  <b>5:30 All-Night Vigil</b>  <b>Fast: dairy, fish, wine, &amp; oil</b>