
Summer2014

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Monthly Bulletin

Dormition Parish

The Summer Holy Week

Beloved in Christ,
Each year during the span of a few short days we encounter something truly amazing in the commemorations of the Saints. True, each and every day of the year the Church calls us to remember and pray to Saints from all walks of life and from every corner of the globe. What makes this week so special is the enormity of the Saints celebrated. In this short span of a few days, we celebrate some of the most beloved and well-known Saints:

7/22
Holy Myrrh-bearer and Equal-to-the-Apostles Mary Magdalen (1st c.).
Translation of the relics (404) of Hieromartyr Phocas, bishop of Sinope (117).
Venerable Marcella of Chios (1500).

7/23
Hieromartyr Apollinaris, bishop of Ravenna (75).
Icons of the Most Holy Theotokos "The Joy of All Who Sorrow" (with coins) in St. Petersburg (1888).
Righteous Anna (Hannah), mother of the Prophet Samuel.
Repose of St. John Cassian the Roman, abbot, of Marseilles (435).

7/24
Martyr Christina of Tyre (300).
Holy Martyrs and Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb of Russia, in holy baptism Romanus and David (1015).

7/25
The Dormition of the Righteous Anna, mother of the Most Holy Theotokos.
Holy Women Olympias (Olympiada) the Deaconess of Constantinople (409), and the Virgin Eupraxia of Tabenna (413).

Commemoration of the Holy 165 Fathers of the Fifth Ecumenical Council (553).

7/26 Hieromartyrs Hermolaus (305), Hermippus, and Hermocrates at Nicomedia.
New Hieromartyr Sergius priest (1937).
Venerable Moses the Hungarian, of the Kiev Caves (1043).
Martyr Parasceve of Rome (138).

7/27
Holy Great-martyr and Healer Panteleimon (305).
Commemoration of the canonization of Venerable Herman of Alaska (1970).
The blind man who confessed Christ and was martyred with St. Panteleimon (Greek).

The Saints are the glory of the Church, the boast of the faithful, and the wounding of the demons.

HOMILY

About the victorious faith "And the victory that conquers the world is our faith" (1 John 5:4).

Christ the Lord conquered the world. That, brethren, is also our victory. The apostles conquered the world and that is our victory. The saints, virgins and martyrs conquered the world and that is our victory.

Brethren, there is nothing more powerful in the world than the Christian Faith. The swords that struck this Faith became blunt and broken but the Faith remained. The kings who fought against this Faith were smothered under the anathema of crimes. The kingdoms that waged war against this Faith are destroyed. The towns that rejected this Faith lay demolished in their ruins. The heretics who corrupted this Faith perished in soul and body and under anathema departed from this world, and this Faith remained.

Brethren, when the world pursues us with its temptations: the temptation of external beauty, the temptation of riches, the temptation of pleasure, the temptation of transient glory; with what shall we resist and by what shall we be victorious if not by this Faith? In truth, by nothing except by this invincible

Faith which knows about something better than all the wealth of this world.

When all the temptations of this world reveal the opposite side of their faces, when beauty turns into ugliness, health into sickness, riches into poverty, glory into dishonor, authority into humiliation and all blossoming physical life into filth and stench--by what shall we overcome this grief, this decay, this fifth and stench, and to preserve oneself from despair, if not by this Faith? In truth, by nothing except this invincible Faith which teaches us eternal and unchangeable values in the Kingdom of Christ.

When death shows its destructive power over our neighbors, over our relatives and our families, over our flowers, over our crops, over the works of our hands and, when it turns its irresistible teeth even on us, by what shall we conquer the fear of death and by what shall we unlock the doors of life, stronger than death, if not by this Faith? In truth, by nothing except this invincible Faith, which knows about the resurrection and life without death.

O Lord Jesus, the Conqueror of the world, help us also to conquer the world with faith in You.

From the Prolog of Ochrid by Saint Nikolai Velimirovitch

In the month of August we celebrate three unique Feasts of the Master, the Dormition and Translation of the Theotokos and a host of other beloved Saints.

August

August 1st

† **Procession of the Precious and Life-giving Cross of the Lord (1164)**

This is the first of the three "Feasts of the Saviour" in August. Beginning of the Dormition Fast.

The Procession was established in the time of the Emperor Manuel Paleologos. In Constantinople, the sacred relics of the Cross was brought forth from the Imperial Treasury on July 31 and placed on the altar of the Great Church, where it remained until the Dormition feast,

being carried in procession every day for the people's veneration.

August 6th † **The Holy Transfiguration of Our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ**

This is the Second "Feast of the Saviour" celebrated in August. Read the account of Christ's holy Transfiguration (*Metamorphosis* in Greek) in Matthew ch. 17, Mark ch. 9, and Luke ch. 9. Appearing clothed in Light on Mt Tabor, the Savior fulfilled his promise to His disciples that "there are some standing here who shall not taste death, till they see the Son of man coming in His Kingdom" (Mt 16:28).

Christ's Transfiguration is the image of the future state of the righteous, of which He spoke when He said "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun" (Mt 13:43). According to the Church's tradition, the Transfiguration occurred forty days before His Crucifixion; for this reason the Transfiguration is celebrated forty days before the Exaltation of the Cross.

August 15th

† **The Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.**

On the Cross, the Lord charged his beloved disciple, the Apostle John, to care for His holy Mother. The Apostle settled her in a house in Jerusalem, where she lived for the rest of her days on earth, praying and offering counsel and encouragement to the Apostles.

In her old age, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her forewarning her that in three days' time she would enter into her rest. Giving thanks to God, she hastened to the Mount of Olives where she prayed continually, preparing herself to meet the Lord.

Meanwhile, the Apostles, scattered in various parts of the earth, were caught up in clouds and miraculously brought by the holy Angels to Jerusalem, so that they might all be with the Theotokos at her repose. After she had blessed them, she gave up her soul to God. The Apostles buried her with all honor, solemnity and joy at Gethsemane.

The Apostle Thomas, who was delayed (again!) by God's providence, arrived on the third day and went to her tomb, intending to honor her. But when the Apostles opened her grave, they found her holy body gone and only the winding-sheet remaining.

That evening their sorrow was turned into joy for the Theotokos appeared to them surrounded by angels, and said to them, 'Rejoice: I will be with you always!'. Thus they learned that she had been bodily translated to heaven, anticipating the general resurrection of all.

It is not only her dormition that we celebrate but her transferral to the heavenly realm, which is a foretype of the bodily resurrection that will occur at the end of the ages.

Her age at her repose is not known, but many say that she was about sixty years old.

August 16th

† **Translation of the Image Not-Made-By-Hands of our Lord Jesus Christ from Edessa to Constantinople (944)**

The Third "Feast of the Savior" in August

Is the commemoration of a miracle wrought by our Lord.

While the Lord was preaching in Palestine, his fame reached a king Abgar of Edessa, who suffered from leprosy.

Abgar sent a messenger named Ananias to ask whether the Lord could heal his illness. The king also charged Ananias, if he was unable to bring back Jesus Himself, to bring back a likeness of Him.

When Ananias found Jesus, the Lord told him that he could not come to Edessa since the time of His passion was at hand. But he took a cloth and washed His face, miraculously leaving a perfect image of His face on the cloth.

Ananias brought the holy image back to the king, who reverently kissed it. Immediately his leprosy was healed, save

for a small lesion that remained on his forehead. Later the Apostle Thaddeus came to Edessa, preaching the gospel, and Abgar and his household were baptized, at which time his remaining leprosy vanished. The king had the holy likeness mounted on wood and displayed above the city gate for all to revere. But Abgar's grandson returned to idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa had the image hidden in the city wall to prevent it from being defiled.

Many years later, when the Persian king Chosroes besieged Edessa, it was revealed in a dream to the Bishop Eulabius to find the sealed chamber, whose location had been forgotten. The holy icon was found, completely incorrupt, and by its power the Persian army was driven off. In the year 944 the image was brought to Constantinople and enshrined in the Church of the Theotokos called the Pharos. This is the event commemorated on this day.

August 23rd
Hieromartyr Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons (202)

He was born in Asia Minor around the year 120, and was a disciple of Saint Polycarp, who was in turn a disciple of St John the Evangelist. He succeeded the martyred St Pothinus as Bishop of Lyons in Gaul (now France).

Saint Irenaeus produced many writings contesting not only against paganism but against Gnostic heresies that were then troubling the Church.

When Victor, Bishop of Rome, planned to excommunicate the Christians of Asia Minor for celebrating Pascha on a different date than the Church of Rome, Irenaeus persuaded him to stay his hand and maintain unity and peace in the Church. (This was before the date of Pascha had been set by the Ecumenical Councils).

By his efforts Lyons became for centuries a center and bastion of Orthodoxy in the West.

Saint Irenaeus bestowed upon the Church the monumental text "Proof of

the Apostolic Preaching", which is considered by many to be one of the major Christian works of the early Church.

August 24th
New Hieromartyr Kosmas of Aitolia, Equal-to-the-Apostles (1779)

This Holy Father and Equal to the Apostles was born in Mega Dendron in Greece in the region of Aetolia.

He became a monk on Mt Athos, where he lived and prayed for many years. But he was troubled by the ignorance of the Gospel that had fallen on many of the Orthodox people, living under the oppression of the Ottoman Turks.

He travelled to Constantinople, where he studied the rhetorical arts and received the blessing of Patriarch Seraphim II to preach the Gospel. He travelled throughout Greece, Macedonia, Serbia and Albania, preaching at every town he visited, restoring correct belief to the simple villagers he met.

So beloved and respected was this Saint that often not only Greeks but many Muslims would come to hear him, so great was his reputation for holiness.

Though he always sought the blessing of the local bishop and the local Turkish governor before he preached in an area, his strong condemnations of dishonest business practices aroused the enmity of Orthodox Christian and Jewish merchants, who falsely accused him to the authorities. He was strangled by the Turks and thrown into a river in Albania, but his wonderworking relics were preserved. He reposed at the age of sixty-five.

August 28th
Great-martyr Phanurius the Newly Appeared of Rhodes

"Little is known of the holy Martyr Phanurius, except that which is depicted concerning his martyrdom on his holy icon, which was discovered in the year 1500 among the ruins of an ancient church on Rhodes, when the Moslems ruled there. Thus he is called "the Newly-Revealed."

The faithful pray to Saint Phanurius especially to help them recover things that have been lost, and because he has answered their prayers so often, the custom has arisen of baking the Phaneropita ('Phanurius-Cake') as a thankoffering."

There is a tradition that his mother was a great sinner, and that he was unable to convert her in her lifetime. After her death he prayed more for her salvation than for his own. As he was being stoned to death, he prayed: 'For the sake of these my sufferings, Lord, help all those who will pray to Thee for the salvation of Phanurius' sinful mother.'

So, in Egypt, where he is much revered, many Christians pray 'O Lord, save Phanurius' mother and help me, a sinner.'

AUGUST 29
† The Beheading of the Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John

The story is told in the Gospels, and cannot be told better here. To add greater solemnity and reverence of the Martyrdom of Saint John, today is kept as a strict fast day, on whatever day of the week it falls.

The fiery preacher and 'new Elias' is the bridge between the Old and the New Testaments. Saint John is the only Prophet to behold the Messiah in the flesh.

Because the holy Forerunner's head was brought to Herod on a platter, it is a pious custom not to eat anything from a plate or platter today.