HOLY RESURRECTION ORTHODOX CHURCH

A Parish of the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese
Ecumenical Patriarchate
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Protopresbyter Peter Zarynow, Pastor
Protopresbyter John Fedornock
Subdeacons Anastasios Davis & Michael Vaporis Reader Stephen Sudik

Sunday 27 September 2026

FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS

Epistle: 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

Gospel: John 19:6-11, 13-20, 25-28, 30-35

Tone Eight and of the Feast

The Schedule of Divine Services for the Week is as Follows:

27 Sept (SUN) FEAST OF THE ELEVATION OF THE HOLY CROSS (STRICT FAST DAY!)
Chanting of the 3rd Hour 9:15am
Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 9:30am
Coffee Social to follow

30 Sept (Wed) 18th Wednesday after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 9:30am
Coffee Social to follow

04 Oct (SUN) 18th Sunday after Pentecost
Divine Liturgy of St John Chrysostom 9:30am
Coffee Social to follow

Announcements:

Confessions be heard by appointment. Please contact Fr Peter to schedule. All faithful are encouraged to come to the Sacrament every 8-10 weeks, on average, to help maintain spiritual health. If you have not been to Confession since the Great Fast (or longer) consider contacting FrPeter to schedule an appointment.

Congratulations and God's choicest blessings to the newly-chosen warrior of Christ, Daniel Sabriov, who was received into the Holy Orthodox Church through the Sacraments of Baptism, Chrismation and Eucharist on Sunday 13 September. Blessings also to his parents Sergey & Sofia and to his Godparents, Susan Peart & Christopher Dzubak and to big sister Ava and "big" brothers Matthew & Timothy.

To all of them we say: *Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!*

Sign up for the Bake Day on 24 October. We need at minimum 12 committed individuals to come and help. If we get that number by today, order forms (and further instructions) will be sent via email during this week, if we have the bakers.

Soup Sale season is almost upon us! The dates for the first three will be 18 October, 15 November and 13 December. More details beginning the first Sunday in October.

As we enter the last quarter of the year, please take a close look at the parish prayer list. If there are any names that need to be added or removed, please contact FrPeter to make any adjustments. Thank you.

Note to our Coffee Social hosts: please do not reassemble the coffee pots when the components are still wet. Simply leave them on the counter to full dry. Thank you!

Missed on the September Calendar: 29 September: Happy Birthday Barbara Muhlenberg and Blessed Ordination Anniversary Protopresbyter John Fedornock! To both we say *Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!*

Cross Wreath is donated by Olga Vovk in thanks to God for blessings received. *Many Years!*

2026 DIOCESAN ASSESSMENT

Being our parish, and we as its faithful, are a part of the American Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese, each parish member (who is over 18 years of age and not a full-time undergraduate student or in first term of military service) has been assessed **$86.00** this year to support the work of the Diocese (Seminary, Camp Nazareth, etc.) and administration. Please make sure that this commitment is handed in by no later than Sunday 24 October. You may contact Debi Myers if you need to check if you are up to date.

CANDLE OFFERINGS

Eternal Light: in memory of Daria on 10th Anniv of Repose-Lois (*Memory Eternal!)*

Vigil Candles Offered For the Living- (*Many Years! Mnohaja L'ita!)*

2-special intention-love Mom & Dad
Jonathan & Lara; Stephanie
1-health of Melanie-love Alex
1-health of Alex-love Melanie
1-health & special intention John & Marie Smith, Georgene & Ray Ammon, Fr Peter & Paňi Bernadette, Alex Zarynow, Marie Skasko, Fr John & Paňi Marge Fedornock, Lois Erhard, Charlie & Debi Myers, Chris Fallon, Barbara Homick, All parishioners of HROC-Carol Miller
2-for health-Sheila
HROC parishioners; Family members
3-special intention-Sheila
Fr. Peter & family; Diocesan Priests & their families; OCMC Missionaries
1-health of children & grandchildren-Tom & Amy
1-health of Chris Fallon-Michael, Kathleen, John & Anna
1-health & sp int Taina Ferguson-love Craig
1-health & sp int. Taina-love Debbie & Greg Yakubik
2-special intention-brother George
Archbishop Michael; Barbara & Harold Harrington
1-special intention Metropolitan Gregory-George Dahulich
13-for health-George Dahulich
Archbishop Michael; Fr. Tom Kadlec; Fr. Jim Dutko; Chris Fallon; Charlie Myers; Barbara Harrington; Paňi Kathy Dutko; Alex Zarynow; Emily Dzubak; Katherine Chow; Psa. Diana Acsente; Fr. John & Paňi Marie Brancho; Georgia Wimberly
8-happy birthday-George Dahulich
Jaron Knighton; Jessica Kadlec-Krchmar; Barbara Muhlenberg; Meaghan Johnson; Robbie Buck; George Acsente, Jr; Vic Fitzwater; Dan Breno
2-happy anniversary-George Dahulich
Alex & Melanie Krynitsky; David & Michele Kormanik
1-Happy Ordination Anniv Fr. John Fedornock-George Dahulich
1-health of Savannah, Chloe, Caroline, Christopher, Natalie, Cole, Parker Ray-love Grandparents
20-health & special intention-John & Marie Smith
Melanie Samson; Carol Miller; Barbara Homick; Marie Skasko; Georgene & Ray Ammon; Fr Tom & Paňi Linda Kadlec; FrJohn & Paňi Marge Fedornock; FrPeter & Paňi Bernadette; FrJohn & Paňi Eleanor Pribish; Eleanor Breno; Charlie Myers; Lois Erhard; FrJohn & Paňi Marie Brancho; Paňi Jean Hutnyan; Chris Fallon, Jeanne Delasko; Andrea Dzubak; Maig & Violette; Blaire & Tatiana; Melissa
1-world peace-John & Marie Smith
1-safe travel and best of luck Helena & Kara-Baba & Dido
6-special intentions-the Breno Family
Breno Family; Fedornock Families; Peart Family; Nakonecznyj Family; Zankey Family; Fabian Family
1-for all who are ill-the Breno Family
1-happy anniv Mom & Dad-the Breno Family
1-for our happy 35th anniversary-Dan & Faith
2-for health-the Breno Family
Nadya & baby; all who are ill
2-specail intention-Mom & Dad
Brian, Angela & Dominic; Stephen
11-for health & special intention-Mark & Marie
Nancy Shields; Mike Czap; Skeets & Beth; Carol Miller; Ray & Georgene Ammon; Eleanor Breno; FrJohn & Paňi Marge; FrPeter & Paňi Bernadette; Chris & Mike Fallon; Susan & Dan Zelensky; Reggie Mervine
1-for health Skeets & Beth, Carol Miller, Michael, Dan-Charlie & Debi Myers
2-specail intention Jacob & Joey-love Mom & Dad
1-health & healing Hayley, Bob, Peggy and Bruce, Carol Miller, Chris Fallon, AnneMarie, Paňi Jean, Ray Ammon, Tom Delare, Jordan; Nancy Hall; Nick & Janet-Lois
1-for health Savannah & Parker, Caroline, Natalie, Karen K, Jeanne Delasko, Barbara Homick, Georgene, Debbie Delare, Julie Williams, Pam, Sharon-Lois
1-happy anniv John & Melissa-Lois
1-happy birthday Dianne-Lois
3-health & wellbeing-Olga Vovk
Artem, Andrey, Lidia, Tatiana, Natalia, Konstantin, Eva and George; Lubov, Michail, Ivan, Mark, Alexandra, Anastasia, Ludmila, Vasili, Maxim; Sofia, Sergei, Eva, Matthew, Timothy, Yulia, Dru, and Alex, Arkadii. Irina and their children and grandchildren
1-health & safety Natalie, Konstantin, Eugenia, George-Olga Vovk
1-helath & wellness Dennis, Irina, Vladislav, Alla, Julia, Julia, Julia, Elena-Irina Panfilov
2-for health-Paňi Jean Hutnyan
Muhlenberg Family; Hutnyan Family

Vigil Candles In Loving Memory: (*Memory Eternal! Vicnaja Pamjat!)*

1+in loving memory of Les-love Carol
1+in memory Mother & Fatherï Carol Miller
1+In loving memory of Chris Hudack, Grandparents, Bettie Searfoss, Myrtle Miller, John Hudack, John Hrapchak, John Homick, Marge Tomasevich-Carol Miller
1+in loving memory of Tom, Ann & Chrysa Thear-Taina & Craig
2+loving memory-the Fallons
Bishop Matthias & Paňi Jeannette; Anna & John Luchok
1+in memory of parents Helen & Larry Rowland-Diane
1+in memory grandparents Helen & Peter Sedlar-Diane
1+Memory Eternal Parents/Grandparents-Koval Family
1+Memory Eternal Uncle George, Aunt Marge & Uncle Tony- Koval Family
2+Memory Eternal-love Alex, Melanie
parents Michael & Elaine; parents John & Katherine
7+in memory-Sheila
John; Dad Kraynok; Mom Kraynok; Charles Hrapchak; Anna Hrapchak; Evelyn Hrapchak; Irene Dzubak
1+In loving memory of Metro-Love, Joan and Family
1+in loving memory of parents Peter & Ann Dahulich-love son George
1+loving memory of Nikolai Mushegian-love Mom & Dad
1+for soul's peace, mercy & entry into paradise-Olga V
Vladimir, Lidia, Pavel, Nina, Vladimir, Anatol, Maria, Rafael, Germina, Maxim, Anna, Irene, Sergei, Irina, Tatiana, Natalia, Olga, Konstantin, Leonid, Anna, Izot, Nina, Natalia, Afanasii, Lidia, Anastasia, Fedor
2+in memory-Mark & Marie Sudik
Mom; Irene Dzubak
1+loving memory Grandpa, Grammy, Irene Dzubak - Charlie & Debi Myers
1+in memory Irene Dzubak-John & Marie Smith
2+in memory-Paňi Jean Hutnyan
Fr Andrew; Mom & Dad

ACRY Soup Sale Time

For the ACRY Soup Sales, each ACRY home is asked to make at least on 5-quart batch of soup for the Sale. Containers are in the ACRY closet. Have your soup in the kitchen refrigerator before Divine Services begin. If you are not making soup, you should be at the kitchen window selling the soup! This should be the effort of the entire ACRY chapter, not just a few. If there are any questions, please contact either Cyndi Dzubak or Caryl Strauss.

Please pray for the following: Metropolitan Gregory; Fr. Frank & Paňi Connie Miloro; Fr Stephen & Paňi Daria Loposky, Paňi Betty Jean Baranik; Fr Michael Rustik; Fr. Mark Leasure; Fr. John Fencik; Fr. Paul Stoll; Fr. Robert & Paňi Peggy Teklinski; Dn. Peter Skoog & family; Fr James & Paňi Kathy Dutko; Fr. Gregory Allard; Paňi Linda Barriger; Fr. James Gleason, Fr. Luke Mihaly; Hieromonk Michael; Fr Thomas & Paňi Linda Kadlec; Fr Stephen Krivonak; Fr David Smoley; Paňi Annamarie Slovesko; Paňi Patricia Duranko; Fr John & Paňi Cindy Zboyovski, Paňi MaryMargaret Conjelko; Fr John & Paňi Eleanor Pribish; Fr John Mikitish; Paňi Karen Miklos; Paňi Marie Brancho; Paňi Jean Hutnyan; Fr David & Paňi Paula Kossy; Fr Edward Pehanich; Fr Andrew Fetchina; SGT Joey Myers; SGT Alexander Zarynow; Beth & Ed 'Skeets' Williams; Carol Miller; Dorothy Mastronicola; Tony Zankey; Justin Popek; Florence Gregoric, James & Melody Peyton; Carol Blum, Alexi Williams, Missy Johns, Susan Buckley, Constance Amey, James Lazor, Debbie Dell; Grace Yoon; Michael Dinneen; Joan Detwiler; Joan Kondratick; Barbara Homick; Jim David & Jeanne Delasko; Melanie Samson; Laura Gary; Richard & Wendy Sulich; James Durachko; Randi Ca□alle, Hayley Marshall, Jon Green, MaryJane, Kyle & Rosie Brant, Alicia, Stephen Brancho; Emily; MaryMargaret; Thomas & Deborah Delare; Diana Hannan; Devan Merrill; Bob Fitzurka; Olga Vovk; Lela; Carly; Robert; Vic Fitzwater; Taina Ferguson; Olya Romanova; Luke Gri□ith; Richard Durachko; Jennifer Haire; Simon, Alla; Artem Vovk; Charles Arnhold; Danielle V; Debbie Aumen; David Bulko; Bill Finken; Angelo Taveira-DaSilva, Andrew S.; Natalie Z; Stephen Hutnyan; Dayton Naugle; Cassidy Riselvato; Phillip Trivett; Camila Bonilla; Hilary Soperak; Ray Rushnak; Christine Sakmar; Joel F, Frank, Jordan, Ruth Moore; Hudson Kennedy; Ray Ammon; Stephan B, Jacob C; Michael Myers, Andrea Dzubak, Tony Pená, Lucile, Dan Breno, Sbdn Alex Breno, Blaire Zarynow & Tatiana, Kaitin Alfaro & son, Christine & Abigale, Karen Kaczmarek, Larry Pinckney, Vasilios Moschonas, Nadya Breno & baby, Barbara & James Farnan, Gail Cushing

May Our Lord Jesus Christ Touch Them with His Healing Hand!!

Prayer For The Priesthood

O Lord Jesus Christ, Good Shepherd of Your sheep, light the fire of ardent love in the hearts of all Your priests, that they may ever and in all things seek only Your glory. Remember especially, Lord, our **Metropolitan Gregory**, and our spiritual fathers who are laboring in Your vineyard for the salvation of all those whom You have entrusted to them. Remember also, O Lord, our priests and deacons, especially **Fr Edward Pehanich, Fr John Pribish & Fr Deacon Art Steinstra and our Diocesan Seminarians Fr. Peter Sodini, Fr. Maximus Cannaverde, Dn. Bradley Shaffer, Reader John Fedornock III, Nicholas Cizin, Spyridon Raburn, Clay Wood, Gabriel Saldana, David Miazga and Ignatius Dixon. Reader Ignatios Leonardo** is in administration

Make their lives as holy as the word they preach. Keep them from being discouraged. Hear their prayers for our salvation. Give them wisdom and courage to proclaim Your truth. Make them priests after Your own heart. For You are a merciful God who loves us, and to You we give glory, together with Your eternal Father and Your all-holy, good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Giving Cross

Commemorated 14/27 September

Saint Helen, the mother of Saint Constantine the Great, when she was already advanced in years, undertook, in her great piety, the hardships of a journey to Jerusalem in search of the cross, about the year 325. A temple to Aphrodite had been raised up by the Emperor Hadrian upon Golgotha, to defile and cover with oblivion the place where the saving Passion had been suffered. The venerable Helen

had the statue of Aphrodite destroyed, and the earth removed, revealing the Tomb of our Lord, and three crosses. Of these, it was believed that one must be that of our Lord, the other two of the thieves crucified with Him; but Saint Helen was at a loss which one might be the Wood of our salvation. At the inspiration of Saint Macarius, Archbishop of Jerusalem, a lady of Jerusalem, who was already at the point of death from a certain disease, was brought to touch the crosses, and as soon as she came near to the Cross of our Lord, she was made perfectly whole. Consequently, the precious Cross was lifted on high by Archbishop Macarius of Jerusalem; as he stood on the ambo, and when the people beheld it, they cried out, "Lord have mercy." It should be noted that after its discovery, a portion of the venerable Cross was taken to Constantinople as a blessing. The rest was left in Jerusalem in the magnificent church built by Saint Helen, until the year 614. At that time, the Persians plundered Palestine and took the Cross to their own country (see Jan. 22, Saint Anastasius the Persian). Late, in the year 628, Emperor Heraclius set out on a military campaign, retrieved the Cross, and after bringing it to Constantinople, himself escorted it back to Jerusalem, where he restored it to its place.

Rest from labor. A Fast is observed today, whatever day of the week it may be.

On The Three Components Of The Life-Giving Cross And Our Own Cross

Metropolitan Philaret

From the website of Transfiguration of Our Lord Russian Orthodox Church, Baltimore

We are now glorifying the Life-giving Cross of our Lord. On this occasion it would be quite fitting, dear brethren, to remember how the Church and the Holy Fathers and spiritual instructors teach us to look upon the Life-giving Cross and the bearing of our own cross.

The great spiritual instructor in faith, Saint Theophan the Recluse, said that the Cross of Christ was threefold. The cross which each Christian must bear in his life is also threefold, similar to the Life-giving Cross which, according to prophecy, was composed of three tree varieties (cypress, pine and cedar). Thus, in bearing our own cross, we see three sides to it, three crosses which merge into one.

The first of these crosses is the cross of fallen mankind. This cross was described briefly but accurately and powerfully by the Apostle Paul, who said of himself: “I know not what I do: the good which I wish to do - I do not; the evil which I do not wish to do - I do.” And man is a captive of his sin - this is the sin of fallen mankind from which no one can escape, and of which the same Saint Theophan said: “Imagine a man who has a rotting and foul-smelling corpse firmly attached to his back: wherever he goes, wherever he runs, he is unable to escape from this horrible foul decay. It follows him persistently, pursues him relentlessly.”

The second cross is the one which we usually understand as being our own cross: this is the combination of all the sorrows, all the misfortunes, all the difficulties of which our lives are composed. This, precisely, is what is meant by bearing one’s cross. But that is not yet all.

The holy fathers say: here is a man surrounded by affliction, illness, misfortune. As soon as he gives himself up completely into the will of God, saying that the Lord does everything well and, therefore, whatever may be sent to him on this path of the cross, he accepts it all as being good - as soon as he says this in his heart (says Saint Theophanus) - everything will disappear as if by magic. Everything around him remains the same: the same afflictions, the same worries, but it is he who has changed and sees everything differently. Thus, must a man have the firm conviction that the Heavenly Father will not give him a stone in place of bread.

If God sends us difficulties, that means they are needed and are to our benefit. The elder Ambrose of Optina said: “Whatever will be, will be, and what will be, will be whatever God gives us, and God gives us everything for our good.”

The last component of our cross is such that Saint Theophan spoke of it with his usual deep humility. He said: “That cross is known only to those who have attained a high spiritual level. Such a person has already overcome all temptations, has easily overcome all difficulties. But there are higher temptations - the temptations of pride, the temptations of vainglory, the temptation to consider oneself, through one’s spiritual labors, as being better and higher than others. This cross is the heaviest to bear and is known only to those who, albeit with great difficulty, have overcome it.”

Saint Theophanus says that each Christian must be a cross-bearer. The life of each Christian begins with a cross: he is baptized and a cross is placed around his neck at the very moment of his entering the bright sacrament of baptism. When he is buried, the cross remains with him, and a cross is also placed over his grave, indicating that a faithful Christian is buried there.

Let us keep that in mind, my beloved, and let us always wear a cross, which strengthens us and saves us in difficult circumstances. Do not forget, Christian soul, of the strength of the cross, and that with the power of His Cross the Lord will always save you from all possible misfortune. Amen.

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross of the Lord

Commemorated September 14/27

The Elevation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross of the Lord: The pagan Roman emperors tried to completely eradicate from human memory the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and was resurrected for mankind. The Emperor Hadrian (117-138) gave orders to cover over the ground of Golgotha and the Sepulcher of the Lord, and to build a temple of the pagan goddess Venus and a statue of Jupiter.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols there. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the great Christian sacred remains, the Sepulcher of the Lord and the Life-Creating Cross were again discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under the Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory in the year 312 over Maxentius, ruler of the Western part of the Roman empire, and over Licinius, ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 he had issued the Edict of Milan, by which the Christian religion was legalized and the persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the empire were stopped. The ruler Licinius, although he had signed the Edict of Milan to oblige Constantine, still fanatically continued the persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the 313 Edict of toleration extend also to the Eastern part of the empire. The Holy Equal of the Apostles Emperor Constantine, having gained victory over his enemies in three wars with God's assistance, had seen in the heavens the Sign of the Cross, and written beneath: "By this you shall conquer."

Ardently desiring to find the Cross on which our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, St Constantine sent his mother, the pious Empress Helen (May 21), to Jerusalem, providing her with a letter to St Macarius, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Although the holy empress Helen was already in her declining years, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. The empress gave orders to destroy the pagan temple and the statues in Jerusalem. Searching for the Life-Creating Cross, she made inquiry of Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful.

Finally, they directed her to a certain elderly Hebrew by the name of Jude who stated that the Cross was buried where the temple of Venus stood. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Tomb of the Lord was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body.

In order to discern on which of the three crosses the Savior was crucified, Patriarch Macarius alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead one, he came to life. Having beheld the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-Creating Cross was found.

Christians came in a huge throng to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching St Macarius to elevate the Cross, so that even those far off might reverently contemplate it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders raised up the Holy Cross, and the people, saying "Lord have mercy," reverently prostrated before the Venerable Wood. This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-Creating Cross another miracle took place: a grievously sick woman, beneath the shadow of the Holy Cross, was healed instantly. The elder Jude and other Jews there believed in Christ and accepted Holy Baptism. Jude received the name Cyriacus and afterwards was consecrated Bishop of Jerusalem.

During the reign of Julian the Apostate (361-363) he accepted a martyr's death for Christ (see October 28). The holy empress Helen journeyed to the holy places connected with the earthly life of the Savior, building more than 80 churches, at Bethlehem the birthplace of Christ, and on the Mount of Olives where the Lord ascended to Heaven, and at Gethsemane where the Savior prayed before His sufferings and where the Mother of God was buried after her death.

St Helen took part of the Life-Creating Wood and nails with her to Constantinople. The holy emperor Constantine gave orders to build at Jerusalem a majestic and spacious church in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, also including under its roof the Life-Giving Tomb of the Lord and Golgotha. The temple was constructed in about ten years. St Helen did not survive until the dedication of the temple, she died in the year 327. The church was consecrated on September 13, 335. On the following day, September 14, the festal celebration of the Exaltation of the Venerable and Life-Creating Cross was established.

Another event connected to the Cross of the Lord is remembered also on this day: its return to Jerusalem from Persia after a fourteen-year captivity. During the reign of the Byzantine emperor Phocas (602-610) the Persian emperor Khozroes II in a war against the Greeks defeated the Greek army, plundered Jerusalem and captured both the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord and the Holy Patriarch Zachariah (609-633).

The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years and only under the emperor Heraclius (610-641), who with the help of God defeated Khozroes and concluded peace with his successor and son Syroes, was the Cross of the Lord returned to the Christians.

With great solemnity the Life-creating Cross was transferred to Jerusalem. Emperor Heraclius in imperial crown and royal purple carried the Cross of Christ into the temple of the Resurrection. With the emperor went Patriarch Zacharios. At the gates by which they ascended Golgotha, the emperor suddenly stopped and was not able to proceed farther. The holy Patriarch explained to the emperor that an angel of the Lord was blocking his way. The emperor was told to remove his royal trappings and to walk barefoot, since He Who bore the Cross for the salvation of the world from sin had made His way to Golgotha in all humility. Then Heraclius donned plain garb, and without further hindrance, carried the Cross of Christ into the church.

In a sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross, St Andrew of Crete says: "The Cross is exalted, and everything true gathers together, the Cross is exalted, and the city makes solemn, and the people celebrate the feast".

MARTYR SOPHIA AND HER THREE DAUGHTERS AT ROME

Commemorated 17/30 September

The Holy Martyrs Saint Sophia and her Daughters Faith, Hope and Love were born in Italy. Their mother was a pious Christian widow who named her daughters for the three Christian virtues. Faith was twelve, Hope was ten, and Love was nine. Saint Sophia raised them in the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. Saint Sophia and her daughters did not hide their faith in Christ, but openly confessed it before everyone.

An official named Antiochus denounced them to the emperor Hadrian (117-138), who ordered that they be brought to Rome. Realizing that they would be taken before the emperor, the holy virgins prayed fervently to the Lord Jesus Christ, asking that He give them the strength not to fear torture and death. When the holy virgins and their mother came before the emperor, everyone present was amazed at their composure. They looked as though they had been brought to some happy festival, rather than to torture. Summoning each of the sisters in turn, Hadrian urged them to offer sacrifice to the goddess Artemis. The young girls remained unyielding.

Then the emperor ordered them to be tortured. They burned the holy virgins over an iron grating, then threw them into a red-hot oven, and finally into a cauldron with boiling tar, but the Lord preserved them.

The youngest child, Love, was tied to a wheel and they beat her with rods until her body was covered all over with bloody welts. After undergoing unspeakable torments, the holy virgins glorified their Heavenly Bridegroom and remained steadfast in the Faith.

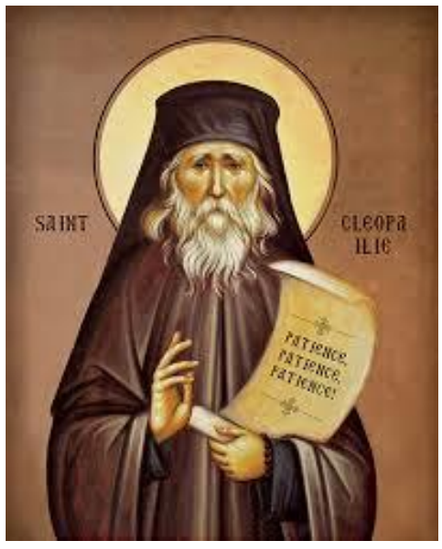
They subjected Saint Sophia to another grievous torture: the mother was forced to watch the suffering of her daughters. She displayed adamant courage, and urged her daughters to endure their torments for the sake of the Heavenly Bridegroom. All three maidens were beheaded, and joyfully bent their necks beneath the sword.

In order to intensify Saint Sophiaôs inner suffering, the emperor permitted her to take the bodies of her daughters. She placed their remains in coffins and loaded them on a wagon. She drove beyond the city limits and reverently buried them on a high hill. Saint Sophia sat there by the graves of her daughters for three days, and finally she gave up her soul to the Lord. Even though she did not suffer for Christ in the flesh, she was not deprived of a martyrôs crown. Instead, she suffered in her heart. Believers buried her body there beside her daughters.

The relics of the holy martyrs have rested at Elôzasa, in the church of Esho since the year 777.

[Note: this is the Patronal Feast Day of our Diocesan Clergy Wives.
Please keep them all in your prayers on this day]

"Do not do anything without signing yourself with the sign of the Cross! When you depart on a journey, when you begin your work, when you go to study, when you are alone, and when you are with other people, seal yourself with the Holy Cross on your forehead, your body, your chest, your heart, your lips, your eyes, your ears. All of you should be sealed with the sign of Christ's victory over hell. Then you will no longer be afraid of charms, evil spirits, or sorcery, because these are dissolved by the power of the Cross like wax before fire and like dust before the wind." Elder St. Cleopa

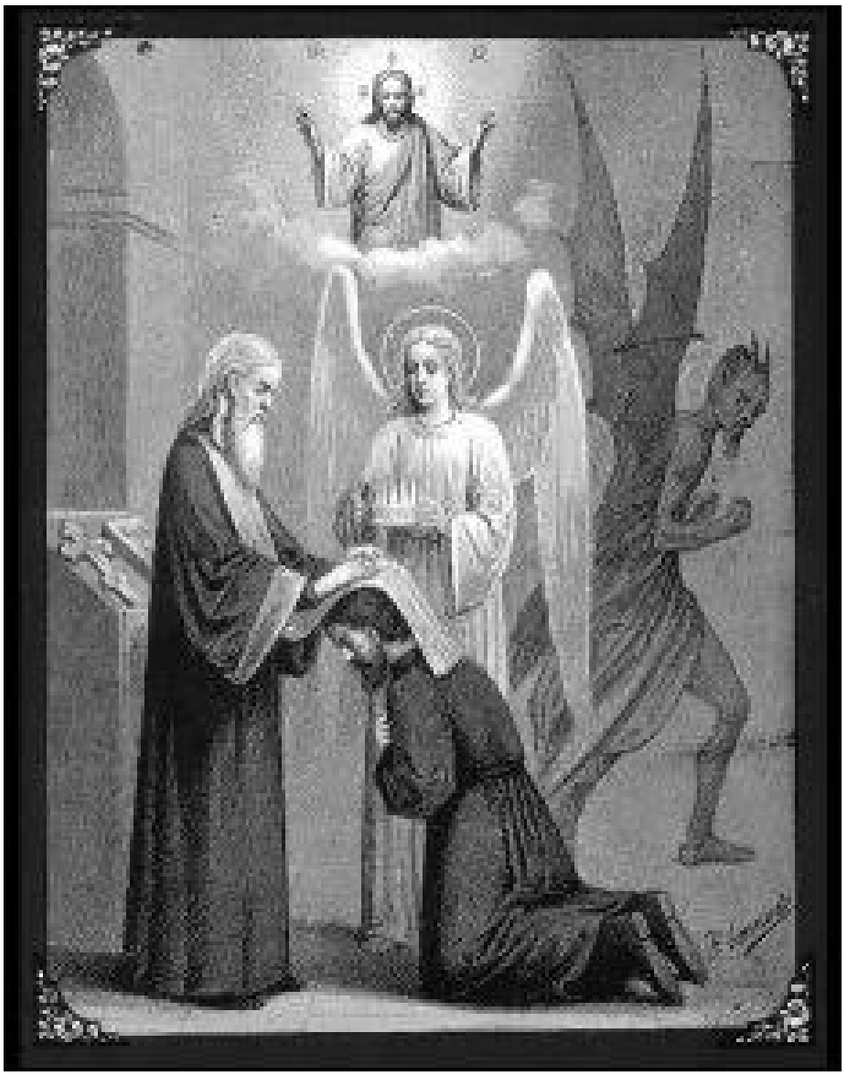


What Makes a Priest Rejoice at Confession

Hieromonk Nektary (from 2014)

What gives you joy when one person after another lines up to take confession? Not when you hear the confession that many call, “on duty”, but when you become a witness to change that’s happened (perhaps even before your very eyes) in a person; when you have become the witness of his struggle, the result of his work on himself and the action of God’s grace that goes with it. This is always experienced as a marvelous miracle-the most important and most necessary off all miracles, the most unbelievable and most saving.

However, it’s not only the miracle that makes you rejoice, but even the more for the person standing before you. He just now stood far from God, was veritably shrouded in a twilight shadow, and in an amazing way happened this turnaround, this conversion and return to the Father; and he is no longer in that deathly shadow, but in the light that illumines him and you together.



A person can repent of the most terrible sins, the most barbaric evil-doing; his tale may be bitter and worthy of tears. But if an inner change occurs, that very “metanoia”, that is, a change of mind, or more precisely, of the entire human personality, there is no feeling of weariness. To the contrary: the soul becomes so light, like after a thunderstorm when the thunder claps and the lightning strikes, and the water pours down to cleanse and refresh the poor, sinful earth.

Usually when you hear another’s confession or when you yourself confess, you think, “For what does the Lord love us so much?! No, of course He doesn’t love us for something, but in spite of everything…” And here something reveals itself to you… It’s the beauty of the human soul that words cannot express-wondrous, primordial, hidden usually by the deformity of the passions, the wounds of vice, the scabs of sins. It reveals itself-and you understand at last why the Creator loves His creation: As St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov) says, in a drop of dew, in the human soul is reflected the light of the Sun, the light of the Divinity, and you admire it in a moment, giving thanks for this mercy and gift.

And more… you rejoice because you feel that you are not standing there in vain in your priest’s stole before the analogion with the Gospels and Cross; nor is your tiny labor in vain or futile, and there is some benefit from your service, your prayer, your words, or at least from your attention and inner sympathy. You are only a witness, and not the performer (there is only one true Performer!), but how good it is that this witness is not fruitless!

And, of course in order to feel and experience all this it is not necessary to see another Mary of Egypt turning from a harlot into a great saint, or Abba Moses the Ethiopian, a murdering thief who once brought fear to all but later became the humblest of monks. You don’t necessarily have to hear a confession filled with dramatic details, “unusual” or “out of the ordinary”. There may not be anything particular to its content. The main thing is that very feeling of change spoken of above. The main thing is the feeling that the person is truly laboring, and the Lord accepts and blesses that labor. And that painful, by no means swift, modest and yet infinitely glorious-ascent to the heights.

An Explanation of the Orthodox Three-Bar Cross

Through the Cross came our Salvation. We are constantly reminded that Christ died for us, and that He rose from the dead. The Image of the crucified Lord reminds us of this. This page allows you to navigate through an explanation of the Orthodox Cross. Each step shows a close up of that part of the Cross, as well as its explanation and any words on it. The main source for this is a document written by Fr. Theodore Jurewicz.

The Top Bar, The Explanation:

The top bar is the title-board, which Pilate ordered to be hung in mockery over Christ's head on the Cross. On this board was inscribed: "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews" in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin (abbreviated to the Greek initials "INBI" or the Latin initials "INRI" in the Western tradition). This is replaced with the
Christian inscription: "King of Glory" ï below the knees of the angels. On the title-board is inscribed the initials 'IC XC', being the first and last letters of Christ's name in Greek. In addition, just above Christ's arms we see the inscription: "NIKA", which in
Greek means: "He conquers" or "He is victorious." Frequently, we see these last two inscriptions together: 'IC XC NIKA', meaning: "Jesus Christ is victorious" (over death and sin).

The Middle Bar, The Explanation:

The middle bar is that on which the Lord's hands were nailed. On either top corner we see the depiction of the sun (left) and the moon (right), for "The sun hid its light, and the moon turned to blood." (Joel 2:31) The inscription: "Son of God" is placed on both sides of Christ's head, and below His arms we read the inscription: "Before Thy Cross we bow down, O Master, and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify". The halo of Christ is inscribed with three Greek letters meaning "The Being" or "He Who Is", to remind us that Christ is the same God Who identified Himself with those words to Moses in the Old Law.

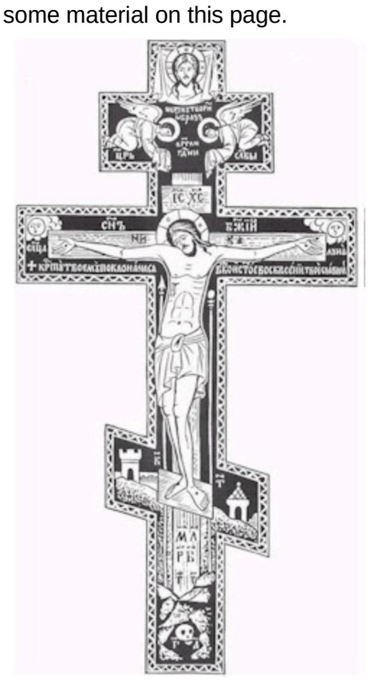
The Bottom Bar, The Explanation:

The slanted bottom bar is the footrest. There is some question of whether it was actually on the Cross of Christ, but it is acknowledged to be a necessary attribute of the Cross, worthy of veneration and prophetically alluded to in the words [Let us] worship the footstool of His feet... (Ps. 98:5).

In prayers for the Ninth Hour, the Church likens the Cross to a type of balance of righteousness: "Between two thieves Thy Cross did prove to be a balance of righteousness: wherefore one of them was dragged down to Hades by the weight of his blasphemy whereas the other was lightened of his transgressions unto the comprehension of theology. O Christ God, glory to Thee."

The meaning of this prayer is as follows: the Cross of Christ stood for a scale of justice between the two thieves: for one of them sank in to hell, dragged down by his blasphemous words; and the other, the wise thief, ascended into heaven, because of his repentance. The church fathers attempted to render tangible the thought of the unfaithful thief going to hell for his blasphemy through the just judgment of God (the lower end of the bar), and of the wise thief going to heaven for his repentance and his praise of God (the upper end).

Volume IV, No. 3; May-June 1982 Living Orthodoxy was also used as a source for some material on this page.

The Other Images The Explanation:

On the Cross is our Savior, Jesus Christ. Note that He does not wear a crown of thorns, and that His feet are nailed with two nails. Behind the body of Christ, on either side, are a lance (which pierced Him) and a sponge (which was soaked with gall and offered to Christ to drink) on a pole made of reed or cane. On the body of Christ is depicted blood and water flowing forth from His side. Below the feet of Christ is four Slavonic letters meaning: "The place of the skull became Paradise". Hidden in a cave under the earth is 'the skull of Adam'. We are thus reminded that Adam our forefather lost Paradise through the tree from which he wrongly partook; Christ is the new Adam, bringing us Salvation and Paradise through the tree of the Cross. The city of Jerusalem is depicted in the background, for He was crucified outside the city walls.