



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Bishop Robert, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Charles Mezzomo, Father Anthony Dimitri, Father Cuthbert Jack, Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 7-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 3-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Robert McKivitz, Marjorie Pershing, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Mary Ann, Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Peter Special, Amy Boe, Doris Artman, Maureen Sams, Nancy Barylak, Shirley Tkacik, Carol Kowalcheck, Martin Golofski, Joe Paouncic, Anthony Yerace, Joanne Brodrick, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [2-year-old with cancer], Diane Waryanka, Nathan Forbeck, Joseph Baloga, Andy Torick, Sarah Doyle, Carmella Berardesca, Samuel Peters, Jean Stutchell, Pearl Hanczar, Joe Paouncic, and Daria

Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR AUGUST BABIES: John Brunermer on the 1st, Maxine Kitch on the 7th, Janet Brunermer on the 12th, and Stella Cherepko on the 26th. May God grant them all Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! Mnohaya Lita!

Please remember James John Logue George Senita, & John Kirkowski assigned to Iraq, Matthew Machak, Tonia Dec, Michael Repasky, and ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR "BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION" AND CAMPBELL'S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex's Seventh Grade and Matt's Fifth Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Love, Alex and Matt

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, August 02 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
8TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
HOLY AND GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS
VENERABLE ABRAMIUS OF CALICH/CHUKHLOMA LAKE-DISCIPLE OF SAINT SERGIUS OF RADONEZH,
UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF SAINT ATHANASIU-ABBOT OF BREST-LITVOSK
Tone 7
James 5:10-20
Luke 4:22-30
Litany in Blessed Memory of Samuel Mrvos, M. Denise Lawrence, Rudy Obradovich, Anna Harte, Agnes Rossi,
Mary Milanovich, Millie Kitch, and Michael Cherepko—Fr. Bob

Sunday, August 09 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
9TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
HOLY GREAT-MARTYR & HEALER PANTELEIMON, VENERABLE ANTHUSA-ABESS OF MANTINEA IN ASIA MINOR,
HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES CLEMENT OF OCHRID & SAINTS ANGELAR, GORAZD, NAHUM, & SABBAS-
DISCIPLES OF SAINTS CYRIL & METHODIUS, BLESSED NICHOLAS OF KOCHANOV-FOOL-FOR-CHRIST
Tone 8
I Corinthians 3:9-17

Matthew 14:22-34

Friday, August 14 **DORMITION FAST BEGINS!**

Sunday, August 16 **Divine Liturgy** **10:30 AM**
10TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**VENERABLE ISAAC, DALMATUS, & FAUSTUS-ASCETICS OF THE DALMATIAN MONASTERY AT CONSTANTINOPLE,
VENERABLE COSMAS-EUNUCH AND HERMIT OF PALESTINE, VENERABLE ANTHONY THE ROMAN-ABBOT OF
NOVGOROD & WONDERWORKER, HOLY MYRRH-BEARER SALOME, MARTYR RAZHDEN OF GEORGIA**

Tone 1

I Corinthians 4:9-16

Matthew 17:14-23

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Steve Kuzman—Debbie & John Paouncic

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 02 AUGUST 2009

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HOLY AND GLORIOUS PROPHET ELIAS

**VENERABLE ABRAMIUS OF CALICH/CHUKHLOMA LAKE-DISCIPLE OF
SAINT SERGIUS OF RADONEZH, UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF SAINT
ATHANASIUS-ABBOT OF BREST-LITVOSK**

TROPARION—TONE 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death!
To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise!
For the Myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy.
And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
To proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and
unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 7

The dominion of death can no longer hold men captive,
For Christ descended, shattering and destroying its powers!
Hell is bound, while the prophets rejoice and cry:
The Savior has come to those in faith!
Enter, you faithful, into the Resurrection!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 7

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His
people with peace!

PEOPLE: **The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless
His people with peace!**

READER: Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall give strength to His people! The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

READER: The Lord shall give strength to His people!

PEOPLE: The Lord shall bless His people with peace!

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 7

It is good to give thanks to the Lord, to sing praises to Thy name, O Most High! To declare Thy mercy in the morning, and Thy truth by night!

God bless our troops. This is but one reason we should be thankful, celebrate our independence, and salute the many that make it so!

Michael Jackson dies and it's 24/7 news coverage. A real American hero dies and not a mention of it in the news. The media has no honor and God is watching...

Ed Freeman

You're a 19-year-old kid. You're critically wounded and dying in the jungle in the Ia Drang Valley , 11-14-1965, LZ X-ray, Vietnam. Your infantry unit is outnumbered 8-1 and the enemy fire is so intense, from 100 or 200 yards away, that your own Infantry Commander has ordered the Medi-Vac helicopters to stop coming in.

You're lying there, listening to the enemy machine guns, and you know you're not getting out. Your family is half way around the world, 12,000 miles away and you'll never see them again. As the world starts to fade in and out, you know this is the day.

Then, over the machine gun noise, you faintly hear that sound of a helicopter and you look up to see an unarmed Huey, but it doesn't seem real because no Medi-Vac markings are on it.

Ed Freeman is coming for you. He's not Medi-Vac, so it's not his job, but he's flying his Huey down into the machine gun fire, after the Medi-Vacs were ordered not to come.

He's coming anyway.

And he drops it in and sits there in the machine gun fire as they load 2 or 3 of you on board.

Then he flies you up and out, through the gunfire to the doctors and nurses.

And he kept coming back, 13 more times, and took about 30 of you and your buddies out, who would never have gotten out.

Medal of Honor Recipient Ed Freeman died on Wednesday, June 25th, 2009, at the age of 80, in Boise, ID. May God rest his soul.

THANKS AGAIN, ED, FOR WHAT YOU DID FOR OUR COUNTRY.
RIP

The old men used to say, When we do not experience warfare, we ought much the more to humble ourselves. For God, seeing our weakness, protects us; when we glorify ourselves, He withdraws his protection and we are lost.

EXERCISE FOR PEOPLE OVER 50

(and some of you considerably younger who are out of shape)

1. Begin by standing on a comfortable surface, where you have plenty of room at each side.
2. With a 5-lb potato bag in each hand, extend your arms straight out from your sides and hold them there as long as you can. Try to reach a full minute, and then relax.
3. Each day you'll find that you can hold this position for just a bit longer. After a couple of weeks, move up to 10-lb potato bags.
4. Then try 50-lb potato bags and then eventually try to get to where you can lift a 100-lb potato bag in each hand and hold your arms straight for more than a full minute. (I'm currently at this level).
5. After you feel confident at that level, put a potato in each bag.

Once some brothers from the monastery of Chenoboskion came and told Apa Pachomius, "A brother is sick and he wants to see you and to be blessed before he dies." When the man of God heard this, he rose up and followed them. When he was about two miles from the monastery, the holy man heard a holy voice in the air. He lifted up his eyes and saw the soul of the sick brother with the holly angels, singing psalms and being taken to the blessed life of God. Now the brothers who were following him neither heard nor saw anything. As he stood and gazed a long time to the east, they said to him, "Why are you standing, O Father? Let us go quickly, that we may find him alive." He answered them, "We shall not find him, for I am right now seeing him being taken up to eternal life. Return, then, to your monastery, children."

As the brothers entreated him to tell them how he saw the soul of the dead brother, he told them the manner. After they had heard it, they departed to their monastery. They verified very exactly from the brothers in the monastery the hour which the Great Man had told them, and then they knew that what the holy man had told about the dead brother was true.

As the holy man Pachomius was journeying to his own monastery, and had come near the desert called Amnon, legions of demons rose both on his right hand and on his left, some following him and others running in front of him, saying, "Behold the blessed man of God." They were doing this, wishing to sow vainglory in him. But he knew their cunning, and the more they shouted, the more he cried out to God, confessing his sins. And undoing the demons' cunning, he spoke out to them saying, "O wicked ones! You cannot carry me away into vainglory, for I know my failures, for which I ought to weep constantly over eternal punishment. I have therefore no need of your false speech and guileful deceit, for your word is the destruction of the soul. And I am not carried away by your praises, for I know the cunning of your unholy minds." And although holy Pachomius said these things to them, they did not stop their shamelessness. They followed alongside the blessed man until he drew near to his monastery. *Paralipomena From the Life of Holy Pachomius, 13-14 St. Pachomius, commemorated 15 May*

Orthodox Christian Education

Presents

Madre Ivonne

Hogar Rafael Ayau
Guatemala

Saturday, September 26, 2009

A Spiritual Retreat with Madre Ivonne

“Healing in Christ: From Orphans to Children of God”

9 AM – 3 PM

T.H.E.O.S. School Auditorium
1819 Ellsworth Avenue, Heidelberg, PA 15106

Cost: \$20.00 includes lunch

Sunday, September 27, 2009

Madre Ivonne will give the sermon

Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church
123 Gilkeson Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15228

Orthros 8:30 AM

Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM

Luncheon to follow prepared by
T.H.E.O.S. Parent Auxiliary (T.P.A.) and Holy Cross Philoptochos

****Donations accepted****

Proceeds to benefit Hogar Rafael Ayau and T.H.E.O.S.

The Three Hierarchs Eastern Orthodox School provides a unique educational experience for children. T.H.E.O.S. is committed to strong spiritual formation and high educational ideals while providing a strong Orthodox Christian family community to support and protect the innocence of childhood.

For more information, call the T.H.E.O.S. office at 412-278-3333

Or Holy Cross Greek Orthodox Church at 412-833-3355

**EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES GREAT PRINCE VLADIMIR, IN HOLY BAPTISM
VASILII (BASIL) (+ 1015) July 15th/28th**

Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir: Few names in the annals of history can compare in significance with the name of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, the Baptiser of Rus', who stands forever at the onset of the foreordained spiritual destiny of the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people. Vladimir was the grandson of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Olga, and he was the son of Svyatoslav (+ 972). His mother, Malusha (+ 1001) -- was the daughter of Malk Liubechanin, whom historians identify with Mal, prince of the Drevlyani. Having subdued an uprising of the Drevlyani and conquered their cities, Princess Olga gave orders to execute prince Mal, for his attempt to marry her after his murder of her husband Igor, and she took to herself the children of Mal, Dobrynya and Malusha. Dobrynya grew up to be a valiant brave warrior, endowed with a mind for state affairs, and he was later on an excellent help to his nephew Vladimir in matters of military and state administration.

The "capable girl" Malusha became a Christian (together with GreatPrincess Olga at Tsar'grad), but she preserved in herself a bit of the mysterious darkness of the pagan Drevlyani forests. And thus she fell in love with the austere warrior Svyatoslav, who against the will of his mother Olga made her his wife. The enraged Olga, reckoning as unseemly the marriage of her "housekeeper" and captive servant with her son Svyatoslav, heir to the Great Kiev principality, sent Malusha away to her own native region not far off from Vybut'. And there in about the year 960 was born the boy, called with the Russian pagan name -- Volodimir, meaning peaceful ruler, ruling with a special talent for peace.

In the year 970 Svyatoslav set out on a campaign from which he was fated not to return. He had divided the Russian Land amongst his three sons. At Kiev Yaropolk was prince; at Ovrucha, the centre of the Drevlyani lands, there was Oleg; at Novgorod there was Vladimir. His first years as prince we see Vladimir as a fierce

pagan. He heads a campaign, in which the whole of pagan Rus' is sympathetic to him, against Yaropolk the Christian, or in any case, according to the chronicles, "having given great freedom to the Christians", on 11 July 978 he enters into Kiev, having become the "sole ruler" of the Kiev realm, "having subdued the surrounding lands, some -- by peaceful means, and the unsubmitive ones -- by the sword".

Young Vladimir indulged himself in a wild sensuous life, though far from being the libertine that they sometimes portray him. He "shepherded his land with truth, valor and reason", as a good and diligent master, of necessity he extended and defended its boundaries by force of arms, and in returning from military campaign, he made for his companions and for all Kiev liberal and merry feasting.

But the Lord prepared him for another task. Where sin increases, there -- in the words of the Apostle, -- grace abounds. "And upon him did come visitation of the Most High, and the All-Merciful eye of the Good God didst gaze upon him, and shine forth the thought in his heart, of understanding the vanity of idolous delusion, and of appealing to the One God, Creator of all things both visible and invisible". The matter of the acceptance of Baptism was facilitated through external circumstances. The Byzantine empire was in upheaval under the blows of the mutinous regiments of Bardas Skliros and Bardas Phokas, each of which sought to gain the imperial throne. In these difficult circumstances the emperors -- the co-regent brothers Basil the Bulgar-Slayer and Constantine, turned for help to Vladimir.

Events unfolded quickly. In August 987 Bardas Phokas proclaimed himself emperor and moved against Constantinople, and in Autumn of that same year the emissaries of emperor Basil were at Kiev. "And having exhausted his (Basil's) wealth, it compelled him to enter into an alliance with the emperor of the Russes. They were his enemies, but he besought their help, -- writes one of the Arab chronicles of events in the 980's. -- And the emperor of the Russes did consent to this, and did make common cause with him".

In reward for his military help, Vladimir besought the hand of the emperors' sister Anna, which for the Byzantines was an unheard of audacity. Princesses of the imperial lineage did not go off to marry "barbarian" rulers, even though they be Christian. At this same time the emperor Otto the Great was seeking the hand of this Anna for his son, and he was refused, but herein regarding Vladimir Constantinople was obliged to consent.

An agreement was concluded, according to which Vladimir had to send in aid to the emperors six thousand Varangians, to accept holy Baptism, and under these conditions he would receive the hand of the imperial daughter Anna. Thus in the strife of human events the will of God directed the entering of Rus' into the graced bosom of the OEcumenical Church. GreatPrince Vladimir accepted Baptism and dispatched the military assistance to Byzantium. With the aid of the Russians, the mutineers were destroyed and Bardas Phokas killed. But the Greeks, gladdened by their unexpected deliverance, were in no hurry to fulfill their part of the agreement.

Vexed at the Greek duplicity, Prince Vladimir "hastened to collect his forces" and he moved "against Korsun, the Greek city", the ancient Chersonesus. The "impenetrable" rampart of the Byzantine realm on the Black Sea fell, and it was one of the vitally important hubs of the economic and mercantile links of the empire. This blow was so much felt, that its echo resounded throughout all the regions of Byzantium.

Vladimir again had the upper hand. His emissaries, the voevoda-commanders Oleg and Sjbern soon arrived in Tsar'grad for the imperial daughter. Eight days passed in Anna's preparation, during which time her brothers consoled her, stressing the significance of the opportunity before her: to enable the enlightening of the Russian realm and its lands, and to make them forever friends of the Romano-Byzantine realm. At Taurida Saint Vladimir awaited her, and to his titles there was added a new one -- Caesar (tsar', emperor). It required the haughty rulers of Constantinople to accede also in this -- to bestow upon their new brother-in-law the Caesar (i.e. imperial) insignia. In certain of the Greek historians, Saint Vladimir is termed from these times as a "mighty basileios-king", he coins money in the Byzantine style and is depicted on it with the symbols of imperial might: in imperial attire, and on his head -- the imperial crown, and in his right hand -- the scepter with cross.

Together with the empress Anna, there arrived for the Russian cathedra-seat metropolitan Michael -- ordained by holy Patriarch Nicholas II Chrysobergos, and he came with his retinue and clergy, and many holy relics and other holy things. In ancient Chersonesus, where each stone brings to mind Saint Andrew the First-Called, there took place the marriage-crowning of Saint Vladimir and Blessed Anna, both reminiscent and likewise affirming the oneness of the Gospel good-news of Christ in Rus' and in Byzantium. Korsun, the "empress dowry", was returned to Byzantium. In the Spring of 988 the greatprince with his spouse set out through the Crimea, Taman' and the Azov lands, which had come into the complexion of his vast realm, on the trip of return to Kiev. Leading the greatprincely cortege with frequent moliebens and incessant priestly singing they carried crosses, icons and holy relics. It seemed, that the OEcumenical Holy Church was moving into the spacious Russian land, and renewed in the font of Baptism, Holy Rus' came forth to meet Christ and His Church.

There ensued the unforgettable and quite singular event in Russian history: the morning of the Baptism of the Kievans in the waters of the River Dneipr. On the evening beforehand, Saint Vladimir declared throughout the city: "If anyone on the morrow goeth not into the river -- be they rich or poor, beggar or slave -- that one be mine enemy". The sacred wish of the holy prince was fulfilled without a murmur: "all our land all at the same time did glorify Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit".

It is difficult to overestimate the deep spiritual transformation -- effected by the prayers of Saint Vladimir, effected within the Russian people, in all the entirety of its life and world-outlook. In the pure Kievan waters, as in a "bath of regeneration", there was realised a mystiered transfiguration of the Russian spiritual element, the

spiritual birth of the nation, called by God to yet unforeseen deeds of Christian service to mankind. -- "Then did the darkness of the idols begin to lift from us, and the dawn of Orthodoxy appear, and the Sun of the Gospel didst illumine our land". In memory of this sacred event, the renewal of Rus' by water and the Spirit, there was established within the Russian Church the custom of an annual church procession "to the water" on 1 August, combined afterwards with the feastday of the Bring-Forth of the Venerable Wood of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord, in common with the Greek Church, and likewise the Russian Church feastday of the All-Merciful Saviour and the MostHoly Mother of God (established by Saint Andrei Bogoliubsky in the year 1164). In this combination of feasts there is found a precise expression of the Russian theological consciousness, for which both Baptism and the Cross are inseparable.

Everywhere throughout Holy Rus', from the ancient cities to the far outposts, Saint Vladimir gave orders to tumble down the pagan sanctuaries, to flog the idols, and in their place to chop along the hilly woods for churches, in which to consecrate altars for the Bloodless Sacrifice. Churches of God grew up along the face of the earth, at high elevated places, and at the bends of the rivers, along the ancient trail "from the Variangians to the Greeks" -- figuratively as road signs, and lamps of national holiness. As regards the famed church-building activity of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, the Kiev Metropolitan Saint Ilarion (author of the "Word about the Law and Grace") exclaimed: "They demolished the pagan temples, and built up churches, they destroyed the idols and produced holy icons, the demons are fled, and the Cross hath sanctified the cities". From the early centuries of Christianity it was the custom to raise up churches upon the ruins of pagan sanctuaries or upon the blood of the holy martyrs. Following this practice, Saint Vladimir built the church of Saint Basil the Great upon an hill, where a sanctuary of Perun had been located, and he situated the stone church of the Uspenie-Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God (Desyatinnaya) on the place of the martyrdom of the holy Varangian-Martyrs (Comm. 12 July). The magnificent temple intended to become the place of serving for the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus' -- and hence the primal-altar of the Russian Church, was built in five years: it was richly adorned with wall-fresco painting, crosses, icons and sacred vessels, brought from Korsun. The day of the consecration of the church of the Most Holy Mother of God, 12 May (in some manuscripts 11 May), was ordered by Saint Vladimir to be inserted as an annual celebration in the Church-kalendar lists. This event was tied in with other previous happenings for the celebration of 11 May, and it provided the new Church a twofold sense of succession. Under this day in the Saints is noted the churchly "renewal of Tsar'grad" -- dedicated by the holy emperor Saint Constantine as the new capital of the Roman Empire, the Constantine-city Constantinople, dedicated to the MostHoly Mother of God (330). And on this same day of 11 May, under holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Olga, there had been consecrated at Kiev the church of Sophia -- the Wisdom of God (in the year 960). Saint Vladimir, having had the cathedral church consecrated to the MostHoly Mother of God, followed the example of Saint Constantine in dedicating the capital city of the Russian Land, Kiev, to the Queen of Heaven.

And then there was bestowed on the Church a tithe or tenth; and since this church had become the centre of the All-Russian gathering of churchly tithes, they called it the Desyatinnaya (Tithe) church. The most ancient text of the deed-grant document, or churchly ustav-rule by holy Prince Vladimir spoke thusly: "For I do bestow this church of the Holy Mother of God a tenth of all mine principality, and likewise throughout all the Russian Land from all the princely jurisdiction a tithe of squirrel-pelts, and from the merchant -- a tithe of the week, and from households each year -- a tenth of every herd and every livelihood, to the wondrous Mother of God and the wondrous Saviour". The ustav likewise specified "church people" as being free from the jurisdictional power of the prince and his "tiuni"-officials, and placed them under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan.

The chronicle has preserved a prayer of Saint Vladimir, with which he turned to the Almighty at the consecration of the Uspensky Desyatin-Tithe church: "O Lord God, look Thou down from Heaven and behold, and visit Thine vineyard, which Thy right-hand hath planted. And make this new people, whom Thou hast converted in heart and mind -- to know Thee, the True God. And look down upon this Thine church, which Thy unworthy servant hath built in the name of the Mother Who hath given birth to Thee, She the Ever-Virgin Mother of God. And whosoever doth pray in this church, let his prayer then be heard, on account of the prayers to the All-Pure Mother of God."

With the Desyatin-Tithe church and bishop Anastasii, certain historians have made a connection with the beginnings of Russian chronicle writing. At it were compiled the Vita-Life of Saint Ol'ga and the account of the Varangian-Martyrs in their original form, and likewise the "Account, How in the Taking of Korsun, Vladimir came to be Baptised". Here also there originated the early Greek redaction of the Vitae-Lives of the holy Martyrs Boris and Gleb.

The Kiev Metropolitan cathedra-seat during the time of Saint Vladimir was occupied successively by the Metropolitan Saint Michael (+ 15 June 991, Comm. 30 September), Metropolitan Theophylakt -- transferred to Kiev from the see of Armenian Sebasteia (991-997), Metropolitan Leontii (997-1008), and Metropolitan John I (1008-1037). Through their efforts the first dioceses of the Russian Church were opened: at Novgorod (its first representative was Sainted Joakim the Korsunite -- + 1030, compiler of the Joakimov Chronicle), Vladimir-Volyn (opened 11 May 992), Chernigov, Pereslavl', Belgorod, and Rostov. "And thus throughout all the cities and villages there were set up churches and monasteries, and the clergy did increase, and the Orthodox Faith did blossom forth and shine like the sun". To advance the faith amongst the newly enlightened people, learned people and schools were needed for their preparation. Saint Vladimir therefore with holy Metropolitan Michael "did command fathers and mothers to take their young children and send them to schools to learn reading and writing". Saint Joakim the Korsunite (+ 1030) set up such a school at Novgorod, and they did likewise in other cities. "And there were a multitude of schools of scholars, and of these were there a multitude of wisdom-loving philosophers."

With a firm hand Saint Vladimir held in check enemies at the frontiers, and he built cities with fortifications. He was the first in Russian history to set up a "notched boundary" -- a line of defensive points against nomadic peoples. "Volodimir did begin to set up cities along the Desna, along the Vystra, along the Trubezha, along the Sula and along the Stugna. And he did settle them with the Novgorodians, the Smol'yani, the Chuds and the Vyatichi. And he did war against the Pechenegs and defeated them." But the actual means was often the peaceful Christian preaching amongst the steppe pagans. In the Nikol'sk Chronicles under the year 990 was written: "And in that same year there came to Volodimir at Kiev four princes from the Bulgars and they were illumined with Divine Baptism." In the following year "there came the Pecheneg prince Kuchug and accepted the Greek faith, and he was baptised in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and did service to Vladimir with a pure heart". Under the influence of the holy prince there were baptised also several apparent foreigners, as for example, the Norwegian "koenig" (king) Olaf Trueggvason (+ 1000) who lived several years at Kiev, and also the reknown Torval'd the Wanderer -- founder of a monastery of Saint John the Precursor along the Dneipr near Polotsk, among others. In faraway Iceland the poet-skalds called God the "Protector of the Greeks and Russians."

Amidst the Christian preaching was also the reknown feasting of Saint Vladimir: after Liturgy on Sundays and Church Great-Feasts there were put out abundant feasting tables for the Kievans, they rang the bells, choirs sang praise, the "transported infirm" sang bylini-ballads and spiritual verses. On 12 May 996, for example, on the occasion of the consecration of the Desyatin-Tithe church, the prince "made a bright feast", "distributing goods to many of the poor, and destitute and wanderers, and through the churches and the monasteries. To the sick and the needy he delivered through the streets casks and barrels of mead, and bread, and meat, and fish, and cheese, desiring that all might come and eat, glorifying God". Feasts were likewise arrayed in honor of the victories of Kievan bogatyr-warriors, and the regiments of Vladimir's retinue -- of Dobrynya, Aleksandr Popovich, Rogda the Bold.

In the year 1007 Saint Vladimir transferred the relics of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Ol'ga to the Desyatin-Tithe church. And four years later, in 1011, there was also buried there his spouse and companion in many of his undertakings, the Blessed Empress Anna. After her death the prince entered into a new marriage -- with the young daughter of the German Graf Kuno von Enningen, grand-daughter of the emperor Otto the Great.

The era of Saint Vladimir was a crucial initial period for the state formation of Orthodox Rus'. The unification of the Slavic lands and the formation of state boundaries under the domain of the Riurikovichi resulted from a strenuous spiritual and political struggle with neighboring tribes and states. The Baptism of Rus' by Orthodox Byzantium was a most important step in its state self-definition. The chief enemy of Vladimir became Boleslav the Brave, whose plans included the extensive unification of the West-Slavic and East-Slavic tribes under the aegis of Catholic Poland. This rivalry arose still back in the times, when Vladimir was still a pagan: "In

the year 6489 (981). Volodimir went against the Lakhs and took their cities, Peremyshl', Cherven', and other cities, which be under Rus". The final years of the X Century are likewise filled with the wars of Vladimir and Boleslav.

After a short lull (the first decade of the XI Century), the "great stand-off" enters into a new phase: in the year 1013 at Kiev a conspiracy against Saint Vladimir is discovered: Svyatopolk the Accursed, who is married to a daughter of Boleslav, yearns for power. The instigator of the conspiracy is the clergyman of Boleslav -- the Kolobzheg Catholic bishop Reibern.

The conspiracy of Svyatopolk and Reibern was an all-out threat to the historical existence of the Russian state and the Russian Church. Saint Vladimir took decisive measures. All the three involved were arrested, and Reibern soon died in prison.

Saint Vladimir did not take revenge on those that "opposed and hated" him. Under the pretense of feigned repentance, Svyatopolk was set free.

A new misfortune erupted in the North, at Novgorod. Yaroslav, still not so very much "the Wise" -- as he was later to go down in Russian history, in the year 1010 having become ruler of Novgorod, decided to defect from his father the greatprince of Kiev, and he formed his own separate army, moving on Kiev to demand the customary tribute and tithe. The unity of the Russian land, for which Saint Vladimir had struggled all his life, was threatened with ruin. In both anger and in sorrow Saint Vladimir gave orders to "secure the dams and set the bridges", and to prepare for a campaign against Novgorod. His powers were on the decline. In the preparations for his final campaign, happily not undertaken, the Baptizer of Rus' fell grievously ill and gave up his spirit to the Lord in the village of Spas-Berestov, on 15 July 1015. He had ruled the Russian realm for thirty-seven years (978-1015), and twenty-eight of these years had been spent since holy Baptism.

Preparing for a new struggle for power and hoping for Polish help in it, and to play for time, Svyatopolk attempted to conceal the death of his father. But patriotically inclined Kievan boyar-nobles, secretly by night, removed the body of the deceased sovereign from the Berestov court, where Svyatopolk's people were guarding it, and they conveyed the body to Kiev. At the Desyatin-Tithe church the coffin with the relics of Saint Vladimir was met by Kievan clergy with Metropolitan John at the head. The holy relics were placed in a marble crypt, set within the Clement chapel of the Desyatin Uszenie church alongside the marble crypt of Empress Anna...

The name and deeds of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, whom the people called the Splendid Sun, is interwoven with all the successive history of the Russian Church. "Through him we too have come to worship and to know Christ, the True Life, -- testified Saint Ilarion. His deeds were continued by his sons, and grandsons and descendants -- rulers of the Russian land over the course of almost six centuries: from Yaroslav the Wise with the taking of the first steps towards the independent existence of the Russian Church -- down to the last of the Riurikovichi, tsar Feodor Ioannovich, under whom (in 1589) the Russian Orthodox Church became

the fifth independent Patriarchate in the dyptich-lists of Orthodox Autocephalous Churches.

The feastday celebration to holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir was established under Saint Alexander Nevsky, in memory of the intercession of Saint Vladimir on 15 May 1240, for his help in gaining the reknown victory by Nevsky over Swedish crusaders.

But the first reverencing of the holy prince began in Rus' rather earlier. The Metropolitan of Kiev Saint Ilarion (+ 1053), in his "Word on Law and Grace", spoken on the day of memory of Saint Vladimir at the saint's crypt in the Desyatin-Tithe church, calls him "an apostolic sovereign", "like" Saint Constantine, and he compares his apostolic evangelization of the Russian Land to that of the evangelization by the holy Apostles.

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The Porch Prayer

There was a little old lady, who every morning stepped onto her front porch, raised her arms to the sky, and shouted: 'PRAISE THE LORD!'

One day an atheist moved into the house next door. He became irritated at the little old lady. Every morning he'd step onto his front porch after her and yell: 'THERE IS NO LORD!'

Time passed with the two of them carrying on this way every day.

One morning, in the middle of winter, the little old lady stepped onto her front porch and shouted: 'PRAISE THE LORD! Please Lord, I have no food and I am starving, provide for me, oh Lord!'

The next morning she stepped out onto her porch and there were two huge bags of groceries sitting there.

'PRAISE THE LORD!' she cried out. 'HE HAS PROVIDED GROCERIES FOR ME!'

The atheist neighbor jumped out of the hedges and shouted: 'THERE IS NO LORD; I BOUGHT THOSE GROCERIES!!'

The little old lady threw her arms into the air and shouted: 'PRAISE THE LORD! HE HAS PROVIDED ME WITH GROCERIES AND MADE THE DEVIL PAY FOR THEM!'

a word from the desert

Concerning a great old man, some of the Fathers used to relate that if one came to him to ask for a word, he would say, "Look, I am going to play the part of God and seat myself on the throne of judgment. What do you want me to do for you, then? If you say, 'Have mercy on me,' God says to you, 'If you want me to have mercy on you, do you also have mercy on your brother; if you want me to forgive you, do you also forgive your neighbor.' Can there be injustice in God? Certainly not; but it depends on us whether we wish to be saved."

archived at: <http://wordfromthedesert.squarespace.com/>

a word from the desert

There is an electric generator and in the room there is a lamp. If, however, we don't flip the switch, we will remain in darkness. Similarly, there is Christ and there is our soul. If, however, we don't flip the switch of prayer, our soul will not see the light of Christ and will remain in the darkness of the devil. *Elder Porphyrios, +1991*