

THE PARISH NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2017

The Nativity of the Mother of God Russian Orthodox Church
617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY (518) 869-3932

A parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad www.albanyrocor.org

Rector: Protopriest Alexis Duncan ; Protopriest Michael Fritz

Protodeacon: Fr. Michael Soloviev

PLEASE NOTE: HOURS AND LITURGY BEGIN AT 9:30 AM

CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 8th at 9:00am

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22nd at 9:00am

(Adult classes will be held at the same time)

All parents are requested to have their children present for class BEFORE 9am so the class may promptly start on time. Thank you!

OCTOBER NAMESDAYS

1	Irina Price Irina Kryktin	19	Thomas (Bobby) Henry Thomas Bradley
3	Oleg Popov	22	James Pupillo
4	Dimitri Soloviev	24	Ziniada Borscok
7	Vladislav Kletney	25	Domnika Popov
14	Roman Nedvidek	31	Luke Gonyea Luke Usov
15	Justina Henry Dennis Howard		

Wishing everyone celebrating their Namesday in October Many Years! Mnogaya Leta!

COFFEE HOUR HOSTESSES FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER

1 Oct -- Nina Vepritsky, Melissa Fitzpatrick, and Julia Shamata

8 Oct – Lydia Miller, Marina Miller, Larissa Miller, Erina Jess

15 Oct – Wedding: No coffee hour

22 Oct – Barbara Nikiforov and Shura Sinkevich

29 Oct -- Natasha Schuler and Tania Taylor

PARISH FEASTDAY CELEBRATION

This year we were blessed to have Bishop Nicholas visit our parish for the celebration of our Parish Feast - the Nativity of the Most Holy Mother of God, celebrating with our own Father Alexis, Father Michael, Father Andrei and Deacon Michael. We were joined by Father Philifilact and Father Anatoly from Holy Trinity Monastery and Father Seraphim Wing. Also, Deacon Joseph (Utica), Deacon Alexander (Boston), and Deacon Leonid (New Jersey). On Saturday evening Father Brendan (Springfield Mass) and Deacon Father Peter Markevich (Holy Trinity Monastery) also joined us. Not only did we have many visiting Clergy but many guests as well, which filled the Church to capacity and the hall to overflowing. The choir sang beautifully under the direction of Nikhon Schuler. On Saturday evening a Men's choir sang the Vigil and on Sunday morning our mixed choir sang the Divine Liturgy. Thank you Nikhon and ALL of our choir members for your hard work and dedication - you sounded beautiful. The Church was beautifully decorated by our flower committee - great job. Thank you to everyone who came to help in preparing the Church and grounds for our Feastday - your hard work made the Church shine and the grounds look beautiful - you know who you are. A special thank you to Paul and Paula Markesinis who donated 50 bags of mulch and to their helpers Yuri Tabuntshnikow and Christina DiLello who weeded all of the flower beds and spread the mulch. Thank you to Matushka Cecelia Soloviev for donating the mums. Thank you to Headsister Anastasia (RaeLynn) Gonyea and her assistant Tasia Fedorov and ALL of their kitchen help who helped set-up the hall, cook, clean, set-up tents and tables and clean after the meal. Thank you also to the parishioners who helped wash dishes, clean up after the dinner, break down tables and chairs and wash the floors. Ana Welsh won the 50-50 Lottery - \$400 and graciously donated it all back to the Church Fresco Fund – raising a total of \$800. Thank you Ana. We were truly blessed with a beautiful day, filled with God's grace.

FEAST OF THE PROTECTION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD

The feast of the Protection of the Mother of God will be celebrated on Saturday, October 14th. This was the feastday of our parish when we were serving in Schenectady. After Liturgy on Saturday, October 14th, everyone is invited to join us for Brunch/Lunch - place to be decided on the Feastday. Let's celebrate together.

YOUNG ADULT ORTHODOX DISCUSSION GROUP

The Capital Region Orthodox Christian Fellowship is a pan-Orthodox college group meeting every Tuesday at 6:00 pm at the parish hall of the Nativity of the Mother of God Church, 617 Sand Creek Road, Albany NY. All college-aged students or those slightly older are invited to attend! Free food every week! Please contact student chaplain Fr. Matthew Markewich (518-212-7845) for more information or for a ride.

TASTE OF RUSSIA

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18th

As most of you know, the Taste of Russia is the Sisterhood's biggest fundraiser of the year, and we are asking for EVERYONE'S help. Thanks to all of the volunteers over the summer months, all of the vareniki have been made. We still have a lot to do to prepare for the Taste of Russia, as well as staffing to work all of the different elements on the day of the Festival itself.

GOLUBTSI MAKING: Preparation for Golubtsi will be the week on October 23rd. Specifically on October 24 (our baking day), and October 27 (our packaging night). We will need runners (people with cars actually) to take Golubtsi from the hall to people's homes to be baked. Once they are baked they need to be brought back to the hall and refrigerated until they can be packed on October 27th. If anyone has some extra refrigeration space available, please contact RaeLynn Gonyea.

WE NEED VOLUNTEERS FOR THE FOLLOWING ASPECTS OF THE TASTE OF RUSSIA:

HALL SET-UP COORDINATOR: Tasia Fedorov will coordinate the hall set up on Friday before the Taste of Russia. She would appreciate men to be available to help with the tables and chairs.

GREETERS: We will need older children (7 years and older) - in RUSSIAN COSTUMES, to greet our visitors when they arrive. Hand out our booklets and answer any general questions (such as: where the bathrooms are and where to pick-up pre-paid orders, etc.)

KITCHEN COORDINATOR: Junia Dragon has volunteered to coordinate the kitchen. She will need two helpers to make sure the food is hot and ready to serve.

FOOD LINE COORDINATOR: We need someone to help organize the food line and to ensure that we have enough people to man all of the food stations during the entire event. On average we need 7 people to man the food table at all times.

BAKED GOODS COORDINATOR: Julianne Boutin has volunteered to coordinate the baked goods table. She will need at least two additional volunteers for the entire day.

FROZEN FOODS COORDINATOR: We need someone who will work the frozen foods booth to help with PRE-PAID order pick up.

ARTS & CRAFTS COORDINATOR: Natasha Smelova will coordinate our Arts and Crafts Booth and will need an assistant throughout the entire day.

BOOK STORE: Tania Taylor will coordinate the running of the church Bookstore.

GRILLING COORDINATOR: We are considering changing up the menu a little this year and are going to make Chicken Shish-ka-bobs (SHASHLIK) and we will need people to bring their gas grills to the hall for the day and to cook all of the chicken shish-ka-bobs.

TALLIERS: We need people at the end of the food line to complete a "TALLY SHEET" for all of our customers buying hot food. This makes it much easier for the cashiers to quickly and efficiently cash people out without a long line forming.

GENERAL RUNNERS: We need someone to be a "General Runner" for the day. Clearing all of the tables of trash, returning the trays to the kitchen so they can be washed and returned to the food line. Taking out the trash. Making sure there is Coffee and Milk at the Coffee station, etc.

ENTERTAINMENT: We need our youth to please coordinate entertainment for the Taste of Russia. Be it a singing group, dancing group, piano playing, accordion playing. These are some suggestions. If someone would PLEASE take over the entertainment aspect of the Festival and come up with some type of program - that would be AWESOME.

TOURS OF THE CHURCH: Usually Father Michael Fritz and SubDeacon Eugene take care of the tours. If you are interested in assisting them, please contact Father Michael Fritz.

HALL CLEAN UP COORDINATOR: We need someone to help coordinate the hall clean up. The tables need to be re-arranged for our Coffee Hour the next day. Extra tables and chairs set up. Bathrooms cleaned. Floor swept and mopped as needed (The floor should be completely mopped after the Coffee Hour on Sunday).

REMEMBER - this may be a fundraiser run by the SISTERHOOD, but we need our men involved as well. There are heavy pans to be lifted in the kitchen, trash to be removed, hall to be set-up and cleaned after the event.

BUT MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL: Advertise this event to your family and friends. Post it on Facebook, put fliers up at work, your local libraries, grocery stores, wherever they allow you to advertize. The Taste of Russia is only as successful as we make it. Without advertizing, people will not come, without people - we will make no money. **SO PLEASE SPREAD THE WORD.**

We need EVERYONES help, even for only a few hours on the day of the Taste of Russia, please come, support you Church and Parish and make this event a HUGE success.

There will be a Sisterhood meeting on Sunday, October 1st, if anyone is interested in coordinating one of the aspects of the Taste of Russia, please let Rae Lynn (Anastasia) Gonyea know as soon as possible. THANK YOU!

HARVEST & ST. JOHN OF KRONDSTADT PARTY

Since we do not celebrate Haloween, all children are invited to attend the Harvest - St. John of Krondstadt party on **Tuesday, October 31st at 4:30 pm** at the Church Hall. Hot Dogs, Mac & Cheese, Chicken Fingers, snacks, ice cream, games, crafts and bobbing for apples. We realize this is a school night, so we hope all activities will be concluded by 7:00pm, so the children will be home and in and in their beds at their scheduled school night schedules. There will also be a 50-50 Raffle (\$5.00 a ticket) to raise money for the playground fund. Come share in the fun !

NEW RUSSIA CULTURAL CENTER
1550 BROADWAY, RENSSELAER NY 12144

The following are upcoming events at the New Russia Cultural Center;

Concert "Stranger in Paradise" Sunday, October 1, 5:00pm-6:30pm
Irina Tikhonenko, mezzo-soprano, Michael Clement, piano Admissions: \$10

Concert: Alash Ensemble - Throat Singing Tuesday, October 17, 7:00pm-9pm
An ancient style of overtone singing in which a single vocalist produces 2-4 pitches simultaneously. Admissions: \$25

Russian Documentary Film Festival Saturday, October 21, 4:00pm-6:30pm
10th Jubilee Independent Documentary Russian Film Festival. Admissions: \$25

Classical Music Concert: Cello & Piano Duet Sunday, October 22, 5:00pm-6:30pm
Dazzling World Class Cello and Piano Duo from NYC. Includes XX century Russian Music.
Admissions: \$15, Friends Circle -\$10

A Gala Concert- Three Russian Best Baritones Saturday, October 28, 7pm-9pm
Tribute to Muslim Magomaev, Russian Frank Sinatra. Featuring soloists from the State Academic Bolshoi Theater and the Mariinsky Theater of Russia. Admissions: \$25

Classes for Adults/Beginners Level Wednesdays, October - November 1. Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm Tuition: \$75
Basic Russian is for people who have never studied Russian language or had a few years of Russian many years ago and need a review. Registration online
www.newrussiacycenter.org/programs/language-arts-school

Children's Poetry Theater "Express" Rehearsals: Mondays, October 2, October 16, October 23 - 5:45pm-6:30pm Performance: Saturday, October 28, 2pm
Tuition: \$48 Teacher: Marina Vaysberg
Class for children from 5 to 8 years old. Students will perform poetry plays based on the Russian popular poems for children.

Creative Movements Class / 4-6 years old Wednesday, September 27 - November 15.
Time: 4:00pm - 4:45pm Tuition: \$80 Instructor: Beth Jacobs

Beginning Ballet Class / 7 and up Wednesday, September 27 - November 15. Time: 5:00 - 5:45pm Tuition: \$80 Instructor: Beth Jacobs

Beginners Chess Class / 5-8 years old Saturdays, October 7 - November 11. Time: 10am - 11am Tuition: \$60 Instructor: Tatiana Deptola

Intermediate Chess Class / 9 years old and older Saturdays, October 7 - November 11.
Time: 11am - 12pm Tuition: \$60 Instructor: Iscander Abdulaev

Cake Techniques & Design - Advance Level Master Class Мастер Класс Авторские Торты Thursdays, October 19 - November 2. Time: 6:30pm - 8:30pm
Tuition: \$75 Instructor: Anna Heller

ATTENTION PARENTS

When leaving the Church property after Church Services or Coffee Hour, please ensure that all of the riding toys, bikes, balls and any other toys are placed on the grass behind the dumpster and not scattered all over the driveway and parking lot. Also, if your children are playing inside the Church Hall, please make sure all the toys are returned to the toy area. Thank you!

MY DACHA CAFÉ

A new member of our Parish named Nataliya Kamel has opened a new Russian and Eastern European Café located at 189 Lark Street in Albany. She invites everyone to come visit. She is also looking for waitresses, so if you know anyone who may be interested, have them contact Nataliya at nataliya.kamel@yandex.ru.

RAISING YOUR CHILDREN IN THE ORTHODOX FAITH

As many of you have noticed, we are blessed with many, many children in our parish. Glory to God! Now, it is our responsibility to keep these children active in the church. How can you do this? How can I prevent my children from leaving the church? A scary thought, right?

There are certainly no magic pills that will ensure your child grows up with a strong, devout faith in Christ through His Orthodox Church. But that doesn't mean we can abdicate our responsibility to the priest or to the Sunday School teacher, to ensure that our Orthodox Children become Orthodox adults. It is our job to raise them in the faith. In which case... There are a few specific things that you can include in the raising of your children which would help them build a strong foundation of faith and a lasting relationship with God. **MOST IMPORTANT (take notes here): PRAY FOR YOUR CHILDREN!** Every day, all the time. Open an ongoing dialogue with God about your child, what they are facing, what they are going through. Give your child back to God (after all, they do belong to Him!). Ask the Theotokos, or Saints Joachim and Anna to help you as a parent. Ask God that He help you to raise your children to His glory. Ask Him to fill their hearts with His love... You get the idea. Speaking of prayer... You know the old saying: the family that prays together stays together! It doesn't have to be anything fancy. Praying at meals, and spending a few minutes in the morning and before bedtime saying the Lord's Prayer, thanking God for the people in your life and the good things (and don't forget to thank him for the challenges, too!), and asking for what your family needs are good places to start.

Also imperative, of course, is to take your children to Church. And when I say this, I don't mean walk in the door right before communion, walk up, receive communion, and walk out, as though it's a drive thru and head over to Coffee Hour.. This is an unfortunate practice of some parents who are afraid to come for the entire service for fear the kids will misbehave. Go for the whole bit! Arrive at the Hours! Leave after coffee hour! If you need help with how to manage and engage your kids (because engaging is part of your responsibility). Have the young boys serve in the altar and have the young girls tend to the candle stands. Get them involved, bring them to Church School. Go to the Adult classes yourself, to better inform

yourselves as to how to lead a Christian life by teaching your children through example. Otherwise what's the point of coming to Church? They can color and play with dolls or Legos at home).

Talk to your kids about God. Many parents think that this is not their place, that the Church should do the talking. But one priest in a parish of 30-50 families can't possibly talk to your children as much as you can. And the example that they need to learn from is you. If they ask a question you don't know the answer, don't worry. Find the answer together by using the resources the Church offers (like your priest or Church websites). Either way, just engage them in discussion about their experiences in Church, about what they prayed for today, about how God helped them today... Anything having to do with their faith and God. Talking to your kids about God will raise their perception so that they are able to see God in all things. Emphasize the right set of priorities and stick to your guns. There are so many extracurricular activities and distractions that take us away from the life of the Church. For instance, sports activities that may keep you from coming to Saturday or even Sunday services. Which is the priority, sports or Church? I'm not hating on sports or other activities, but, when facing this choice, ask yourself this question: When my child is 35 and struggling with the challenges that life inevitably brings with it (like marital problems), which is going to help them- their relationship with God, or sports or another activity?

We often forget to think long term or to see the big picture. We see the benefits of an extracurricular activity that looks good on a college transcript or might even provide a college scholarship. But we neglect to look BEYOND that and realize that the most important investment in our child is the long term investment we make in their journey through life to salvation. Remember that your child will learn by modeling from your decision. Will they learn to prioritize their relationship with God or with "activities"?

If we all, as Orthodox Christians, did these simple things: pray for our children, pray with our children, talk about God more, and go to Church more, then the world would be a very different place. Lets keep our children interested in church, involved and interested. May our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ give us all the wisdom and discernment to guide our children to a life in Him!

God is Wonderful in His Saints **Orthodox Saints commemorated in October**

Parents are encouraged to read the short life of the Saint of the day to their children each morning before they leave for school. It will encourage your children to learn about the Saints and parents may learn something too.

September 18/Oct. 1

St Eumenes, bishop of Gortyrna (7th c.)

"He gave himself to Christ with his whole heart from his youth, freeing himself from two heavy burdens: the burden of riches and the burden of the flesh. He freed himself from the first by giving away all his goods to the poor and needy, and from the latter by strict fasting. He thus healed himself and was able to heal others. Passionless and filled with the grace of the Holy Spirit, Eumenius shone with a radiance that could not be hidden, as it is written: 'A city set on a hill cannot be hid' (Matt. 5:14), and so holy Eumenius could not be hidden from the world.

Seeing him, the people chose him as their bishop in Gortyna. As a bishop, he governed Christ's flock as a good shepherd. He was a father to the poor, riches to the needy, consolation to the sad, healing to the sick and a marvellous wonder-worker. He worked many miracles by his prayers: he killed a poisonous snake, drove out demons, healed many of the sick, and did this not only in his home city but in Rome and in the Thebaid. In the Thebaid, he brought rain from God in a time of drought, and there finally finished his earthly course and entered into the eternal presence of his Lord. He lived and worked in the seventh century."

September 19/Oct 2

Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius, and Dorymedon of Synnada (278)

Saints Trophimus and Sabbatius came to Antioch during a great festival of Apollo and Daphne. Sorrowing for the blindness of the people they presented themselves to Atticus, the governor, and announced that they were Christians. Sabbatius was tortured so cruelly that he died in his sufferings; Trophimus was sent to Synnada, where he in turn was tortured, then imprisoned barely alive. An official of that city, Dorymedon, was moved to pity and came to the prison to care for Trophimus. (The Great Horologion says that he was still a pagan at the time, the Prologue that he was a secret Christian). When a pagan festival came, Dorymedon refused to worship the idols and proclaimed himself a Christian. He and Trophimus together were tortured, thrown to wild beasts (who would not touch them), and finally beheaded.

September 20/Oct 3

† Great Martyr Eustathius (Eustace) Placidus, with his family (118)

Before baptism he was a renowned military commander under Trajan. While hunting in the woods, he met a great stag with a shining Cross between his antlers. Through the stag, the Lord spoke to Placidus (his pagan name) and told him to find a priest and be baptized into Christ. Returning home, he found that his wife Tatiana had also had a vision in which she was told to become a Christian. They were baptized, Placidus receiving the name Eustathius, and Tatiana the name Theopiste; their two sons were baptized with them. Eustathius and his family were almost immediately subjected to a series of grievous trials, in which all were separated from one another. After years of hardship they were re-united, and returned to Rome with honor when the Emperor sought out Eustathius to command his army once again. But when the Emperor Hadrian (who had succeeded Trajan) commanded them to worship the idols, all of them refused. They were put together into a large bronze ox which was heated white-hot in a fire. When their bodies were removed, they were found to be dead but intact. The Prologue concludes, 'Thus this glorious general gave to Caesar that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's, and entered into the eternal Kingdom of Christ our God.'

September 21/Oct 4

Leavetaking of the Exaltation of the Cross

Holy Prophet Jonas (Jonah) (9th c. BC)

His story is told in the Old Testament book that bears his name. He is counted as one of the twelve 'minor prophets.' According to one tradition recorded in the Synaxaria, he was the son of the widow of Zarephath, resurrected by the holy Elias (July 20).

The song of Jonah, I called to the Lord out of my distress (Jonah 2:2-9) is the Sixth Biblical Ode of the Matins canon, and forms the basis of countless troparia, many of which meditate upon the Jonah's time in the belly of the sea-monster as a type of Christ's sojourn in the tomb.

September 22/Oct 5

Venerable Cosmas, desert-dweller of Zographou, Mt Athos (1323)

"Saint Cosmas came from Bulgaria where his devout parents provided him with a good education in Slavonic and Greek. They wanted him to marry but he was drawn by the love of Christ and, unknown to them, made his way to the Holy Mountain of Athos to become a monk at the Bulgarian monastery of Zographou. On the feast of the Annunciation at the Monastery of Vatopedi, he saw a woman among those serving in the Church and in the refectory, and he was grieved at first to observe this breach of the monastic rule, but overjoyed when he realized that it was the Mother of God who had appeared to him in this way.

"He was clothed in the holy angelic Habit and, after some time, was ordained priest. One day, as he was praying before the icon of the Mother of God, asking her with tears how to achieve his salvation, he heard a voice saying, 'Let my servant withdraw to the desert outside the monastery.' He was obedient to the will of God and, with the blessing of his Abbot, lived in silence from then on. Some years later, he was found worthy of the grace of discernment of thoughts and of beholding things happening elsewhere, as well as of other spiritual gifts. In the course of many years, he was the spiritual helper of a great number of monks. At the end of his life, Christ appeared to him saying that he would shortly have a great trial to endure from the Devil. Indeed, the prince of demons made his appearance next day with a host of his servants bewailing and bemoaning their inability to annihilate their great enemy Cosmas, who had held them in check for so long and gained possession, by his virtue, of the throne in Heaven that had once been Lucifer's. Taking a heavy stick, the demon beat the Saint so violently that he left him half-dead. As God allowed, Saint Cosmas died in peace two days later, on 22 September 1323. When the fathers came from the monastery to bury him, the wild animals gathered round. They kept silent until the end of the service, but howled unusually loud as his body was covered with earth. Then having paid their respects, they made off into the wilderness. Forty days later, the monks came to take up the body of Saint Cosmas and translate it to the monastery, but it was no longer in the grave. Where it now is God alone knows." (Synaxarion)

September 23/Oct 6

† The Conception of John the Baptist

"On this day are celebrated God's mercy, His wondrous act and His wisdom: His mercy towards the devout and righteous parents of St John, the aged Zacharias and Elisabeth, who had all their lives begged a child of God; the wonder of the conception of John in Elisabeth's more-than-aged womb; and the wisdom of the dispensation of man's salvation." (Prologue)
The story of the Baptist's conception is told in the first chapter of St Luke's Gospel.

September 24/Oct 7

† Holy Protomartyr Thecla, Equal to the Apostles (1st c.)

She was born in Iconium of prominent pagan parents. At the age of eighteen she was instructed in the Faith of Christ by the Apostle Paul himself. She forsook her family and her betrothed, vowing herself to a life of virginity in the service of Christ. She traveled in the ministry of the Gospel with St Paul. After many travels and sufferings for the sake of Christ, she retired to Seleucia to devote herself to prayer and asceticism. There she healed many of the sick by her prayers, and brought many more to the Faith. Some local doctors envied her and sent some young men to rape her, superstitiously thinking that her healing powers might reside in her virginity. The Prologue says 'Thecla fled from these insolent young men and, when she saw that they would catch her, prayed to God for help in front of a rock, and the rock opened and hid the holy maiden and bride of Christ. This rock was her hiding-place and her tomb.'

September 25/Oct 8**† Our Holy Father Sergius of Radonezh (1392)**

'Our righteous Father Sergius was born in Rostov, north of Moscow, about the year 1314. Named Bartholomew in baptism, he was brought up in Radonezh, and at the death of his parents he withdrew to the wilderness to become a monk. It is notable that without having been trained in a monastery, he was of such a spiritual stature as to be able to take up the perilous eremitical life from the beginning, without falling into delusion or despondency. When he had endured with courage the deprivations of the solitary life, other monks began to come to him, for whom he was made abbot against his will. On the counsel of Philotheus, Patriarch of Constantinople, he organized his monks according to the cenobitic life, appointing duties to each. While Anthony and Theodosius of Kiev, and the other righteous Fathers before Sergius, had established their monasteries near to cities, Sergius was the leader and light of those who went far into the wilderness, and after his example the untrodden forests of northern Russia were settled by monks. When Grand Duke Demetrius Donskoy was about to go to battle against the invading Tartars, he first sought the blessing of Saint Sergius, through whose prayers he was triumphant. Saint Sergius was adorned with the highest virtues of Christ-like humility and burning love for God and neighbor, and received the gift of working wonders, of casting out demons, and of discretion for leading souls to salvation. When he served the Divine Liturgy, an Angel served him visibly; he was also vouchsafed the visitation of the most holy Theotokos with the Apostles Peter and John. He was gathered to his Fathers on September 25, 1392. At the recovery of his holy relics on July 5th, 1422, his body and garments were found fragrant and incorrupt. His life was written by the monk Epiphanius, who knew him.'

September 26/ Oct 9**† Repose of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist St John the Theologian**

The holy Apostle was, by the world's reckoning, the nephew of our Savior, since his mother Salome was the daughter of St Joseph the Betrothed. Called 'the beloved disciple,' St John was the only one of Christ's disciples to follow Him to the Cross. He was entrusted by the Savior with the care of the most holy Theotokos, and became like another son to her, providing for her care until the day of her repose. He preached the Gospel of Christ throughout Asia Minor, especially in Ephesus. During the persecutions of the Emperor Domitian, he was taken in bonds to Rome, where he was subjected to various tortures; but when he emerged from these miraculously unharmed, he was exiled to the island of Patmos, where he wrote the book of Revelation. After the death of Domitian, he returned to Ephesus and there wrote his Gospel and Epistles. He reposed in peace at a great old age. When his disciples later opened his grave, they found that his body was not there. He is called the Theologian because of the sublimity of theological expression in his New Testament

September 27/Oct 10**Holy Apostles Mark, Aristarchus and Zenas of the Seventy**

St Mark was also called John; according to Acts 12:12, the apostles gathered for prayer in Jerusalem at his mother Mary's house, and was later bishop in Byblos. St Aristarchus accompanied St Paul in his travels (Acts 16:29) and was later bishop in Syrian Apamea. St Zenas is mentioned as a lawyer in Titus 3:13, and was bishop in Lydda in Palestine.

September 28/Oct 11**† St Chariton the Confessor of Palestine (350)**

He was born in Iconium during the reign of Aurelian, and knew St Thecla. He was arrested, tortured and condemned to death for his Christian faith. But before his execution was carried out, the cruel Emperor Aurelian died, and Chariton was freed. He travelled to Jerusalem and

took up the ascetical life in the Palestinian wilderness. Monks gathered around him, and in the course of his life he established three monastic communities in the Holy Land. He died in peace at a great age. According to the Prologue, the practice of tonsuring monks originated with St Chariton.

September 29/Oct 12

St Cyriacus the Solitary (555/557)

He was born in Corinth of pious Christian parents. At the age of eighteen he went to Palestine, where, after studying under several holy fathers, he entered monastic life and became the disciple of St Gerasim of the Jordan. After St Gerasim's death lived in strict solitude, asceticism and silence for many years, finally entering the monastery of St Chariton, where he reposed in peace at the age of 109. Despite his very severe asceticism, he was large and strong, remaining so until the end of his life. According to the rule of St Chariton, he and his fellow-monks ate only once a day, after sunset. In the desert, he lived for years on nothing but the raw plants that he gathered there. He said of himself that, while he was a monk, the sun never saw him eat or be angry with any man.

September 30/Oct 13

† St Gregory the Enlightener, Bishop of Armenia (325/335)

He was a nobleman, related to the imperial houses of Persia and Armenia. When these two houses went to war with one another, Gregory, withdrew to Caesarea in Cappadocia, where he heard the Gospel proclaimed and came to faith in Christ. There he also married and had two sons. After his wife's death he returned to his homeland and served in the court of Tiridates, king of Armenia. When the king discovered that Gregory was a Christian, he subjected the Saint to many tortures, finally having him cast into a pit full of mire and poisonous reptiles. But Gregory was miraculously kept alive in the pit for fourteen years, during which a widow secretly provided for his needs. King Tiridates, still cruelly persecuting the Christians in his land, eventually went mad and became like a wild animal. In a dream, the king's sister was told that her brother would only be restored to sanity when Gregory was freed from the pit. This was done, and Gregory healed and baptised his persecutor. At the king's request, Gregory was made bishop of Armenia. As bishop he brought countless thousands to faith in Christ and is counted as the Enlightener of Armenia. In old age he retired into ascetical life, and reposed in peace.

October 1/14

† The Protection of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

On October 1, 911, during the reign of Emperor Leo the Wise, an all-night vigil was being held at the Blachernae Church of the Mother of God in Constantinople, with many of the faithful crowding the church. St Andrew the Fool for Christ (commemorated tomorrow, October 2) was standing at the back of the church with his disciple Epiphanius. At around four in the morning, the most holy Theotokos appeared above the people, clothed in resplendent garments, surrounded by indescribable radiance, and holding a veil in her outstretched hands, as though to protect all the people. St Andrew said to Epiphanius 'Do you see how the Queen and Lady of all is praying for the whole world?' Epiphanius replied 'Yes, Father, I see it and stand in dread.' This wonderful event is recorded in Epiphanius' life of St Andrew. Because of it, the Church keeps an annual feast on this date.

October 2/15

Hieromartyr Cyprian and Virgin-Martyr Justina (304).

"Saint Justina, who was from Damascus, lived in virginity for the sake of Christ. Saint Cyprian, who was from Antioch, began as an initiate of magic and worshipper of the demons. A certain foolish young man who had been smitten with Justina's beauty hired Cyprian to draw her to love him; when Cyprian had used every demonic device he knew, and had failed, being repulsed by the power of Christ Whom Justina invoked, he understood the weakness of the demons and came to know the truth. Delivered from demonic delusion, he came to Christ and burned all his books of magic, was baptized, and later ascended the episcopal throne in his country. Later, he and Justina were arrested by the Count of Damascus, and having endured many torments at his hands, they were sent finally to Diocletian in Nicomedia, where they were beheaded in the year 304." (Great Horologion)

October 3/16

Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite (96)

He is mentioned in Acts 17:19-34. He was a learned Athenian, a member of the Athenian court on Mars Hill (Areos Pagos in Greek, from which the title 'Areopagite' comes). At the time of Christ's crucifixion, he was studying in Egypt and saw the sky darkened there for three hours when Christ breathed His last. He later married and had several children. When St Paul preached in Athens, Dionysius was among the first to believe, and became either the first (according to some) Bishop of Athens, or the second, succeeding St Hierotheos (commemorated tomorrow, October 4). With St Hierotheos he was present at the Dormition of the Mother of God. He received a martyr's end in his old age, possibly in Athens. He is the author of several famous works of mystical theology, including *On the Divine Names*.

October 4/17

Hieromartyr Hierotheos, Bishop of Athens (1st c.)

He was probably the first Bishop of Athens, ordained by the Holy Apostle Paul himself. St Dionysius (see October 3) describes St Hierotheos as his teacher and friend "after Paul." With St Dionysius, St Hierotheos was miraculously brought by the power of the Holy Spirit to be present with the Apostles at the Dormition of the Theotokos. He reposed in peace.

October 5/18

† Holy Hierarchs of Moscow Peter (1326), Alexis (1378), Jonas (1461), Macarius (1563), Philip (1569), Hermogenes (1612), Philaret (1867), Innocent (1879), and Tikhon (1925)

This Feast of the Hierarchs of Moscow was established during the reign of Tsar Theodore and Patriarch Job in the year 1596. All of them are commemorated individually as well as on this day. Only Sts Peter, Alexis, Jonas and Philip are specifically mentioned in the Menaion service, but other holy hierarchs of Moscow have been added to the commemoration over the years.

October 6/19

† Holy Apostle Thomas

One of the Twelve Apostles, he was a Galilean by birth. His name means "twin." The twentieth chapter of St John's Gospel describes how, when he doubted the appearance of the Risen Lord, Christ appeared to him again, saying "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing," at which Thomas cried out "My Lord and my God!" Through this one event the Holy Scriptures attest that Christ is risen bodily, not merely as a spirit, as some heresies claim; and that He is in fact God. After Pentecost, St Thomas proclaimed the Gospel in the East, and established the Christian faith as far as India, where

the small remnant of the ancient Church still traces its foundation to him. According to some accounts he met a martyr's end; according to others, he reposed in peace. St John Chrysostom mentions that his tomb was in Edessa in Syria; his relics may have been translated there from India in the fourth century.

October 7/20

Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus (296/303)

"These holy and wonderful martyrs and heroes of the Christian faith were at first nobles at the court of the Emperor Maximian. The Emperor himself valued them greatly for their courage, wisdom and zeal, but, when he heard that these great nobles of his were Christians, his love for them turned to fury. And once, when there was a great offering of sacrifices to idols, the Emperor summoned Sergius and Bacchus to offer sacrifice together with him, and they openly refused to obey him in this. Beside himself with anger, the Emperor ordered that their robes, rings and marks of eminence be stripped from them and they be dressed in women's clothing. He then put iron yokes on their necks and led them thus through the streets of Rome, to be mocked by each and all. The Emperor then sent them to Asia, to Antiochus the governor, for torture. Antiochus had achieved his distinguished rank with the help of Sergius and Bacchus, who had at one time recommended him to the Emperor. When Antiochus began to urge them to deny Christ and save themselves from dishonourable suffering and death, the two saints replied: 'Both honour and dishonour, both life and death — all are one to him who seeks the heavenly Kingdom.' Antiochus threw Sergius into prison and ordered that Bacchus be tortured first. The servants took turns beating holy Bacchus until his whole body was broken into fragments. His holy spirit went forth from his broken and bloodstained body and was borne to the Lord by angels. St Bacchus suffered in the town of Varvallis. Then holy Sergius was led out. Iron shoes studded with nails were put on his feet, and he was driven out into the Syrian town of Resapha, and there beheaded with the sword. His soul went to Paradise where, together with his friend Bacchus, he received the wreath of immortal glory from Christ his King and Lord. These two glorious knights suffered for the Christian faith in about 303." (Prologue) The Great Horologion gives 296 as the date of their repose. One of the most beautiful churches in Constantinople, still standing, is dedicated to Sts Sergius and Bacchus.

October 8/21

Our Holy Mother Pelagia (461)

"This Saint was a prominent actress of the city of Antioch, and a pagan, who lived a life of unrestrained prodigality and led many to perdition. Instructed and baptized by a certain bishop named Nonnus (November 10), she departed to the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, where she lived as a recluse, feigning to be a eunuch called Pelagius. She lived in such holiness and repentance that within three or four years she was deemed worthy to repose in an odour of sanctity, in the middle of the fifth century. Her tomb on the Mount of Olives has been a place of pilgrimage ever since." (Great Horologion). The Prologue adds that Pelagia had accumulated a large fortune as a courtesan, all of which she gave away to the poor upon her conversion.

October 9/22

Holy Hieromartyr Denis (Dionysius), first Bishop of Paris (ca. 258)

Saint Denis (a westernization of the the Greek Dionysius, was one of seven bishops sent to Gaul by the Bishop of Rome during the reign of the Emperor Decius. Their mission was to extend the spread of the Gospel in that mostly-pagan land. While most of the bishops were sent to major settlements, St Denis was assigned to the small, remote pagan town of Lutetia — which later grew to become the city of Paris. He and his companions settled outside the town in a house given to him by a convert, where the few Christians could meet in secret.

Soon, through the holy bishop's grace-filled preaching and his many miracles, Christianity grew rapidly. Soon a fierce persecution of Christians swept through Gaul, and many of the faithful were abused, tortured or put to death. Saint Denis, fearless of danger and heedless of his own old age, travelled among the Christians, visiting the prisoners and exhorting all to remain firm in their confession of Christ. Soon he himself was arrested along with several companions, and was tortured without pity. When he was publicly hung on a cross, he preached to the onlookers of the mystery of Christ's Passion. Taken back to prison, he celebrated the holy Eucharist for the last time, enveloped in a heavenly light. He and a host of other Martyrs were then beheaded on a hill, now called Montmartre in their memory. There is a tradition that at his beheading he rose up, took his own head in his hands, and walked for several miles to a place that later became the Basilica of St Denis in the town named after him. Before the French Revolution, the Kings and Queens of France were buried in this church.

October 10/23

Holy Martyrs Eulampius and Eulampia (196)

They were brother and sister, from Nicomedia, who suffered for Christ during the reign of Maximian. Eulampius was arrested for his Christian faith; when his sister received the news, she hurried to join him. Both were subjected to various cruel tortures, including being cast into fire and boiling pitch, from which they miraculously emerged unharmed. Finally, Eulampius was beheaded, and Eulampia gave up her spirit before she too could be beheaded.

October 11/24

Holy Apostle Philip, One of the Seven Deacons

He was married and had four daughters, virgins consecrated to Christ, each of whom was granted the gift of prophecy (Acts 21). When the Apostles first appointed deacons, Philip was chosen along with St Stephen and five others (Acts 6). He not only served the poor and widows, but was a powerful preacher of the Gospel: Simon the Magician was baptised after seeing his miracles, and it was St Philip who baptised the eunuch of Queen Candace of Ethiopia. In later life he was made a bishop, and reposed in peace.

October 12/25

St Symeon the New Theologian (1022)

As a young man he became a monk in the Studite Monastery in Constantinople; later he became abbot of the Monastery of St Mamas, also in Constantinople. After a life of great asceticism, including many trials, criticisms and afflictions, he reposed in peace. (He reposed on March 12, but since this day always falls during the Great Fast, his feast is kept today.) His teaching on the soul's ability to enter directly into communion with God in this life aroused some opposition in his own time, and the title 'New Theologian' was not always applied in a positive sense. His experiential, mystical teachings are firmly rooted in his doctrine of the Church: his writings contain many powerful affirmations of the centrality of participation in the Mysteries in our struggle for salvation. He is the author of many sublimely beautiful sermons, writings and hymns, a number of them in metered verse. With St John the Evangelist and St Gregory, Patriarch of Constantinople, he is one of only three whom the Church has officially called "Theologian."

October 13/26**Holy Martyrs Carpus and Papyrus, with Agathodorus and Agathonica (251)**

Saint Carpus was Bishop of Thyatira, and Papyrus was his deacon. In the reign of the Emperor Decius, both were arrested as Christians and put to torture. Agathodorus their servant and Agathonica, Papyrus' sister, willingly followed after them and voluntarily confessed Christ also. After many sufferings, all four were beheaded.

October 14/27**Saint Cosmas the Hymnographer (8th c.)**

He was from Jerusalem. An orphan, he was adopted into the family of St John of Damascus (commemorated December 4). He became Bishop of Maiuma, a city on the coast of Palestine, which was later named Constantia. Like his adoptive brother he became a noted hymnographer: The Canon of the Cross (Sept. 14) and the Canon for Christ's Nativity, "Christ is born, give ye glory..." are his compositions.

October 15/28**Holy Hieromartyr Lucian, Presbyter of the Church of Antioch (312)**

He was born in Samosata in Syria (and is sometimes referred to as "Lucian of Samosata") of noble parents. In his youth he received an excellent education. Though a privileged life was open to him, he gave all his goods away to the poor and embraced a life of asceticism, supporting himself writing and tutoring. He produced an edition of the Old Testament, freeing it from various corruptions introduced by heretics. He was made a priest in Antioch, where he served the Church faithfully. During the persecutions of Maximian, he was arrested while visiting Nicomedia to strengthen the faithful there. He was cast into prison for his faith and allowed to perish of hunger and thirst. Saint John Chrysostom wrote of him: "He scorned hunger; let us also scorn luxury and destroy the lordship of the stomach; that we may, when the time comes for us to meet such torture, be prepared beforehand, by the help of a lesser ascesis, to show ourselves worthy of glory in the hour of battle."

October 16/29**Holy Martyr Longinus the Centurion (1st c.)**

This is the Centurion who stood at the Cross of Christ and, seeing Him breathe his last, cried out "Truly this was the Son of God" (Matthew 27:54). From that day forth he was a believer, and was soon baptized. According to some accounts, he was one of the guard at the Tomb of Christ, and was one of those whom the Judaeen leaders sought to bribe not to tell the news of the Resurrection. But Longinus would not be bribed, so the leaders plotted to kill him. He left the army and went to his homeland of Cappadocia, where he boldly preached Christ. He was beheaded at the instigation of Pontius Pilate.

October 17/30**Holy Martyrs Cosmas and Damian, the Unmercenarys of Cilicia (4th c.)**

The Church commemorates three pairs of brothers named Cosmas and Damian, all counted among the Unmercenary Physicians. The first reposed in peace and are commemorated on November 1; the second were stoned to death in Rome, and are commemorated on July 1; the third pair, commemorated today, were Arab doctors. They embraced the Christian faith together and thereafter cared for the sick in the name of the Lord Jesus, performing many miraculous healings. They were handed over to the governor Lysias by jealous pagans. When the governor accused them of healing by sorcery, they replied 'We have no sort of magic, nor use any, but we have the power of Christ to save us and all who call upon His holy Name.' The governor first attempted to bribe them to deny Christ then, when this was useless, subjected

them to many tortures. Finally they were beheaded. Their holy relics continued to perform many miracles of healing.

October 18/31

† Holy Apostle and Evangelist St Luke

He was a physician from Antioch, a disciple and traveling-companion of the Apostle Paul, who refers to him as the 'beloved physician.' He wrote not only his Gospel but the Acts of the Apostles, dedicating both to Theophilus, who according to one tradition was the Governor of Achaia, a convert. Much of the Acts of the Apostles is written in the first person, describing his own travels with the St Paul. He lived to an old age and died in Achaia, possibly in Patras. Most ancient authors say that he died as a Martyr.

Church traditions about St Luke are somewhat contradictory. According to many, he was one of the Seventy and thus an eye-witness to Christ's ministry on earth. (He is usually considered to be the companion of St Cleopas on the Road to Emmaus). According to others, he never met Christ himself but was converted by the preaching of the Apostle Paul. Church tradition holds that St Luke was the first iconographer, and painted an image of the Most Holy Theotokos from life. He is considered the patron of iconographers. Several icons attributed to St Luke himself are still in existence.