

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith

110 EAST MAIN STREET,
Marblehead, OH 43440

V. Rev. Archpriest Peter Tomas, Rector

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,
Diocese of the Midwest***

SEPTEMBER 1, 2024

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

EPISTLE: 1 Timothy 2:1-7 & 1 Cor 4:9-16

Timothy, my son: I exhort first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time, for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle – I am speaking the truth in Christ and not lying – a teacher of the Gentiles in faith and truth.

Brethren: I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being



Healing of the epileptic boy

you

you are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being

defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus, I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore, I urge you, imitate me.

EPISTLE: Colossians 3:12-16

Brethren: As the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

GOSPEL: Lk 4:16-22 & Mt 17:14-23

At that time, Jesus came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. And when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." So, all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"

At that time a man came to Jesus, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So, I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" So, Jesus said to them, "Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting." Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up." And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

GOSPEL: Mt 11:27-30

The Lord said, all things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to

reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”



FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Tony Monastra, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Subdeacon Roger Pinta**, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; **Ed & Irene Vangeloff**, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870



SEPTEMBER CANDLE SPONSORS

Altar Candles: Joe & Valerie Schutt, In memory of Violet Bargdill & LaVerne Schutt **(\$50)**; **Chandelier:** Joe & Valerie Schutt, In memory of Dorothy Czuha (August 23) and Rose Haburt (September 13) **(\$50)**; **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Joe & Valerie Schutt, In memory of Gordon Schutt **(\$25)**; **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Fin and Jack **(\$20)**; **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, Sophie & Chloe **(\$20)**



VIGILS FOR AUGUST 25

Angela Bricker 2 For family and Special Intentions

Susan Guzy 2 For the health of Ed, Irene, Basil, Pam Gary & Tony. In memory of Debbie, Vichnaya Pamyat

Jean Hileman 3 For the health of Tom, For the health of MaryJane, In memory of Joseph Gerald, Memory Eternal

Laura Kovach 3 For health and/or healing of Stephanie, Donnie S., Elaine R., Betty K., David M., Patti O., Jim K., Ruth S., James W., Hannah S., Pauline O., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., Karen D., Kathie J., and Jennifer H.

For health and healing to Ron.

Memory eternal to Roddie's sister Debbie.

Sandy Martin 1 Special Intentions

Natalie Twarek 8 Memory Eternal to Lynne O'Neal and Mary Williams, and Roddie's sister Debbie, For the health and recovery of Rodney Clevenger, For health and recovery of Matushka Michelle's brother Walter and for the health of Father Peter, For the health and recovery on Ron, For the health and recovery of Betty, Carol, Kayla, Bill, Ruth, Pam, Debbie, Jim, Michelle, Terrie, Clayton, Father Emilian, For the health of Matushka Melania, Patrick and Marty, Mike Heffernan and Barbara Heffernan, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, For the health of Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Pauline, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat

RECTOR'S ANNUAL VACATION...

PLEASE!
NOTE

Fr. Peter will be visiting his parents in Slovakia from **Tuesday, September 3rd** until **Wednesday, September 18th**. During this time the Parish Office will be closed, and no weekly bulletin will be published. We will welcome in our midst **V. Rev. Fr. John Adamcio**, on **Sundays of September 8/15** and on **Saturday, September 14th** for the Divine Liturgy for the feast of the **Exaltation of the Precious Cross**. In case of funeral, please kindly call **Natalie at (419) 341-2356**.

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR SEPTEMBER 2nd – SEPTEMBER 22nd

MON. Sep 2	Martyr Mamas of Caesarea in Cappadocia; 2 Cor 2:3-15, Mt 23:13-22
TUE. Sep 3	Hieromartyr Anthimus; 2 Cor 2:14-3:3, Mt 23:23-28
WED. Sep 4	Hieromartyr Babylas; 2 Cor 3:4-11, Mt 23:29-39
THU. Sep 5	Holy Prophet Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth; 2 Cor 4:1-6, Mt 24:13-28
FRI. Sep 6	Miracle of the Archangel Michael at Colossae; 2 Cor 4:13-18, Mt 24:27-33, 42-51
SAT. Sep 7	Forefeast of the Nativity of the Mother of God; 1 Cor 1:3-9, Mt 19:3-12
SUN. Sep 8	11th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos, Tone 2

9:10 AM HOURS

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Social and Parish Council Meeting

MON. Sep 9	Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; 2 Cor 5:10-15, Mk 1:9-15
TUE. Sep 10	Martyrs Menodora, Metrodora, and Nymphodora; 2 Cor 5:15-21, Mk 1:16-22
WED. Sep 11	Venerable Theodora of Alexandria; 2 Cor 6:11-16, Mk 1:23-28
THU. Sep 12	Hieromartyr Autonomus, Bishop in Italy; 2 Cor 7:1-10, Mk 1:29-35
FRI. Sep 13	Founding of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher; 2 Cor 7:10-16, Mk 2:18-22
SAT. Sep 14	Exaltation of the Precious Cross; 1 Cor 1:18-24, Jn 19:6-11,13-20,25-28,30-35

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY

SUN. Sep 15	12th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, After Exaltation, Tone 3
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9:10 AM HOURS

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Social

MON. Sep 16	Great Martyr Euphemia; 2 Cor 8:7-15, Lk 3:19-22
TUE. Sep 17	Martyr Sophia and her three daughters at Rome; 2 Cor 8:16-9:5, Lk 3:23-4:1
WED. Sep 18	Saint Eumenius, Bishop of Gortyna; 2 Cor 9:12-10:7, Lk 4:1-15
THU. Sep 19	Martyrs Trophimus, Sabbatius, and Dorymedon; 2 Cor 10:7-18, Lk 4:16-22
FRI. Sep 20	Greatmartyr Eustáthios Placidus, with his wife; 2 Cor 11:5-21, Lk 4:22-30
SAT. Sep 21	Apostle Quadratus of the Seventy; 1 Cor 2:6-9, Lk 4:31-36

4:00 PM VESPERS

SUN. Sep 22	13th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, Tone 4
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9:10 AM HOURS

9:30 AM DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Social

HAPPY NEW YEAR 7533!



SEPTEMBER REPOSED

George Mazur (1937) No date provided; George Mazurik (1940) No date provided; William Rose (1980) No date provided; **2-** David Douglas (2015); **4-** John Mataleska (1986); **4-** Archpriest John Grandziuk (1947) Former Pastor; **5-** Archpriest Michael Dziama (1944) Former Pastor; **7-** Lisa Monak (2020); **14-** Archpriest George Breyan (2009) Former Pastor; **14-** Mary Kamiotis (2017); **15-** Infant Sloane Swanton (2021); **15-** Eileen Libb (2022); **16-** John George Mazurik (1997); **18-** Bernie Labouda (2018); **19-** Peter Rindfleisch (2006); **20-** Nora Bird (2017); **21-** Joseph Mazur (2002); **26-** Pastor Kevin Brown (2020); **27-** Michael Ittescu (1968); **27-** Alison Pickney (2017); **27-** Karen Milano (2017); **28-** William Felenchak (1977)



ATTENDANCE

08/24 Vespers, 7 attending (1 guest); **08/25** Divine Liturgy, **28** attending (9 guests); **08/28** Vespers, **9** attending (1 guest); **08/29** Divine Liturgy, **10** attending (1 guest);

PRAYER LIST

Parishioners & Family: Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Tom Hileman / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Clifford / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora.

Other Requests: Sharyn Osborne / Christine Zahm / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Michael Heffernan / Susanne / Barbara Heffernan / Rita Mumea / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čížmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

Military: Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



READERS LIST

Sunday Sep 1 – Joe
Sunday Sep 8 – Jake
Sunday Sep 15 – Tim
Sunday Sep 22 – Joe
Sunday Sep 29 – Jake



COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

Sep 1 – Laura
Sep 8 – Roddie
Sep 15 – Mat. Michelle & Fr. Peter
Sep 22 – Jean
Sep 29 – Natalia

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall.



CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“Support our Seminarians” is the charity we donate to for the month of September.



SUNDAY OFFERING

Sunday, August 25, 2024

Tithe	\$1,117.00
Donations	\$ 62.00
Candles	\$ 93.00
Vigils	\$ 95.00
St. Herman's Seminary (Aug)	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
Total:	\$1,467.00

May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!

CHURCH MONTHLY INCOME AND EXPENSES

Month of JULY 2024	
Church Donation income was	\$ 8,709.79
Church Operating Expenses totaled	<u>\$10,204.10</u>
net loss of	- \$ 1,494.31



CLEANING SCHEDULE

Sep 2, Natalie
 Sep 9, Basil & Tim
 Sep 16, Susan
 Sep 23, Jean
 Sep 30, Laura
 Oct 7, Stephanie



MARKET DAY

Our next Market Days will take place next **Saturday, September 7th** and on **Saturday, September 21st** starting with set up at **8:00 AM**. We will have perohi, kielbasa and kraut, spanakopita, and a large variety of baked goods. Your help is greatly appreciated!

UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- Sep 7th** Market Day 8:00 AM (*Saturday*)
- Sep 8th** Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos (*Sunday*)
- Sep 8th** Parish Council Meeting (*Sunday*)
- Sep 14th** Exaltation of the Precious Cross (*Saturday*)
- Sep 21st** Market Day 8:00 AM (*Saturday*)



MARBLEHEAD PENINSULA COFFEE HOUR

You are invited to participate in Marblehead Peninsular Coffee Hour, held the third Friday of each month, from 10-11 a.m.

The idea behind the coffee hour is to give Peninsula residents and organizations and employees a chance to talk with each other in a comfortable and civil setting. This is an open, free-form

conversation. Meet your neighbors! Network with other organizations! They will have someone serve as "Special Guest" each month, but anyone's welcome to bring up a topic for conversation. Along with making this open to the community as a whole, the organizers are going to invite folks from local governmental and other organizations. They hope you'll be able to join them for some of the upcoming coffee hours. Here are the dates:

- September 20 Special guest: John Starcher, Marblehead Mayor**
- October 18 Special guest: Dianne Rozak, Danbury Township Trustee**
- November 15 Special guest: Charles Allen, Lakeside CEO**
- December 20 Special guest: Teri Cassell, Marblehead Peninsula Chamber of Commerce**



PARISH COUNCIL MEETING

Our Parish Council meeting will take place next **Sunday, September 8th**, after the Divine Liturgy and Coffee Hour. Presence of all the members is requested.

THE CRY OF THE FORERUNNER

A retreat for Orthodox men
27-29 September 2024
Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church
Livonia, MI

It is the voice of one crying in the wilderness,
Preparing the way of the Lord. Who is your forerunner?
Whether you are a young man just beginning your journey or an older man who has spent many years in the faith, this retreat is for you. It will focus on the life and preaching of St. John the Baptist as a model for men to deepen their Orthodox faith. The retreat is open to men of all ages. Please see the copy of the flyer on our bulletin board.

Retreat schedule, cost, registration, contact and other information can be found at:
www.orthodoxmen.org



RETREAT FOR ORTHODOX MEN

Holy Transfiguration Orthodox Church in Livonia, MI is pleased to host their second annual men's retreat on **September 27-29, 2024**. Called "The Cry of the Forerunner," it will focus on the life and preaching of St. John the Baptist as a model for men to deepen their Orthodox faith. The retreat is open to men of all ages. Please see the copy of the flyer on our bulletin board.

Benefit Concert for
St. Theodosius Orthodox Christian Cathedral
Sunday, **SEPTEMBER 15, 2024** at 3 pm
at Holy Trinity Orthodox Church
6822 Broadview Road, Parma, OH 44134

Presented by the
Pan-Orthodox Choir of the
Greater Cleveland Area Churches

There has never been a more important time to support the restoration of the Cathedral than now. Your contribution will help us restore the Cathedral and its services.

It is a privilege to be able to present this concert. Your contribution will help us restore the Cathedral and its services.

BENEFIT CONCERT FOR ST. THEODOSIUS CHRISTIAN CATHEDRAL

You are invited to a special Benefit Concert for St. Theodosius Orthodox Christian Cathedral which will take place on **Sunday, September 15, 2024 at 3pm** at **Holy Trinity Orthodox Church**, 6822 Broadview Road, Parma, Oh 44134. The concert will be presented by Pan-Orthodox Choir of the Great Cleveland Area Churches. There is no admission for the concert but Free Will Donation to go toward RESTORATION FUND of the Cathedral will be accepted. Light refreshments and fellowship at the

conclusion of the concert. Please see the flyer on the bulletin board.

MATUSHKA'S CORNER

Matushka's Macaroni Salad

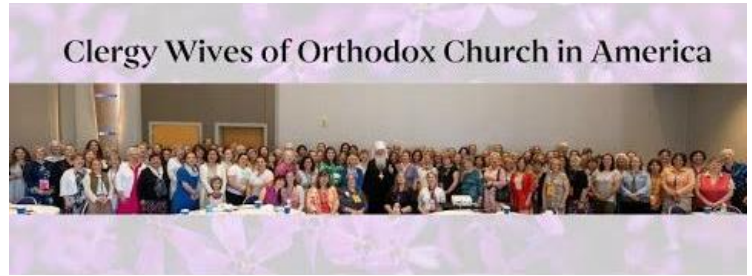
- 1 box macaroni cooked, drained and cooled
- 6 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1/2 - 1 cup mayonnaise
- 2 Tbsp. mustard
- 1-2 Tbsp. white vinegar
- 2 tsp. sugar (or to taste)
- 1 tsp. salt (or to taste)
- 1/2 - 1 tsp. pepper
- Can of peas and carrots, rinsed and drained
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 3 pickles, finely chopped
- Parsley, garnish

Mix everything together and chill before serving! Enjoy!
This is for you Sonya! 😊



The Road to the Canonization of Blessed Matushka Olga of Alaska

In order to donate, please use the OCA link below and replace “stewards of the OCA” with “Clergy Wives - Reliquary for St. Olga”, in the comments or designation section. Thank you!



www.oca.org/donate?c=Stewards%20of%20the%20OCA

Be part of the journey to help raise funds for the reliquary for Saint Olga of Alaska!



“Recollections of Saintly Matushka Olga”

This documentary video gives an important window into the place Matushka Olga continues to hold in the lives of the Alaskan faithful. It also explains the decision of the Holy Synod of Bishops to keep her relics in her home village of Kwethluk, making it a place of pilgrimage for Orthodox peoples around the world.

You can help the efforts of the faithful Orthodox people of Kwethluk and all of Alaska in setting up this pilgrimage center through your generous donations. They will go towards the construction of a new church temple on Kuskokwim that will be the earthly home for Matushka Olga’s holy relics, a Hospitality

Center to accommodate pilgrims, and a Cultural Center to preserve and celebrate the rich Yup’ik heritage. Donations can be made here at the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska website.

His Grace Bishop Alexei of Sitka and Alaska invites all the faithful to watch and share this documentary. Most importantly, he requests all who view this video to ask the intercessions of Matushka Olga in preparation for her coming glorification by the Orthodox Church in America.

The video is now available for streaming on the Diocese of Sitka and Alaska YouTube channel.

I am grateful and blessed to be your Matushka here at Holy Assumption OCA in Marblehead. It is a great gift from God to be given the chance to pray with you and to know, love and grow with you. We ask our dear Matushka Olga of Alaska to guide us and help us grow closer to Christ by following her example of mercy, love, kindness, gentleness and self-giving.

Holy Mother Olga, pray to God for us!



Church New Year

Commemorated on September 1

The first day of the Church New Year is also called the beginning of the Indiction. The term Indiction comes from a Latin word meaning, “to impose.” It was originally applied to the imposition of taxes in Egypt. The first worldwide Indiction was in 312 when the Emperor Constantine (May 21) saw a miraculous vision of the Cross in the sky. Before the introduction of the Julian calendar, Rome began the New Year on September 1.

According to Holy Tradition, Christ entered the synagogue on September 1 to announce His mission to mankind (Luke 4:16-22). Quoting Isaiah 61:1-2, the Savior proclaimed, “The spirit of the Lord is upon Me; because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to proclaim release to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord...” This scene is depicted in a Vatican manuscript (Vatican, Biblioteca. Cod. Gr. 1613, p.1).

Tradition says that the Hebrews entered the Promised Land in September.



Venerable Martha, mother of Saint Simeon Stylites

Commemorated on September 1

Saint Martha lived in Cilicia of Asia Minor during the fourth and fifth centuries, and came from a poor family. She and her husband Sisotion were the parents of Saint Simeon the Stylite.

At the age of eighteen, Simeon received the monastic tonsure without his parents' knowledge. Many years later, Martha came to the saint's pillar in order to see him. Simeon sent word to her not to come, for if they were worthy, they would see each other in the life to come. Martha insisted on seeing him, and he had someone tell her to wait for a while in silence. Saint Martha agreed to this, and waited at the foot of the hill where her son's pillar stood. There she departed to the Lord.

When he heard that his mother had died, Saint Simeon ordered that her body be brought to the foot of his pillar. He prayed over his mother's body for some time shedding many tears, and witnesses said that a smile appeared on Saint Martha's face.



Saint Simeon Stylites, the Elder

Commemorated on September 1

Saint Simeon the Stylite was born in the Cappadocian village of Sisan of Christian parents, Sisotian and Martha. At thirteen years of age he began to tend his father's flock of sheep. He devoted himself attentively and with love to this, his first obedience.

Once, after he heard the Beatitudes in church, he was struck by their profundity. Not trusting to his own immature judgment, he turned therefore with his questions to an experienced Elder. The Elder readily explained to the boy the meaning of what he had heard. The seed fell on good soil, and it strengthened his resolve to serve God.

When Simeon was eighteen, he received monastic tonsure and devoted himself to feats of the strictest abstinence and unceasing prayer. His zeal, beyond the strength of the other monastic brethren, so alarmed the igumen that he told Simeon that to either moderate his ascetic deeds or leave the monastery.

Saint Simeon then withdrew from the monastery and lived in an empty well in the nearby mountains, where he was able to carry out his austere struggles unhindered. After some time, angels appeared in a dream to the igumen, who commanded him to bring back Simeon to the monastery.

The monk, however, did not long remain at the monastery. After a short while he settled into a stony cave, situated not far from the village of Galanissa, and he dwelt there for three years, all the while perfecting himself in monastic feats. Once, he decided to spend the entire forty days of Great Lent without food or drink. With the help of God, the monk endured this strict fast. From that time he abstained from food completely during the entire period of the Great Lent, even from bread and water. For twenty days he prayed while standing, and for twenty days while sitting, so as not to permit the corporeal powers to relax.

A whole crowd of people began to throng to the place of his efforts, wanting to receive healing from sickness and to hear a word of Christian edification. Shunning worldly glory and striving again to find his lost solitude, the monk chose a previously unknown mode of asceticism. He went up a pillar six to eight feet high, and settled upon it in a little cell, devoting himself to intense prayer and fasting.

Reports of Saint Simeon reached the highest church hierarchy and the imperial court. Patriarch Domninos II (441-448) of Antioch visited the monk, celebrated Divine Liturgy on the pillar and communed the ascetic with the Holy Mysteries.

Elders living in the desert heard about Saint Simeon, who had chosen a new and strange form of ascetic striving. Wanting to test the new ascetic and determine whether his extreme ascetic feats were pleasing to God, they sent messengers to him, who in the name of these desert fathers were to bid Saint Simeon to come down from the pillar.

In the case of disobedience they were to forcibly drag him to the ground. But if he was willing to submit, they were to leave him on his pillar. Saint Simeon displayed complete obedience and deep Christian humility. The monks told him to stay where he was, asking God to be his helper.

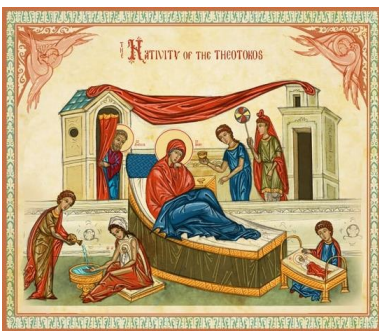
Saint Simeon endured many temptations, and he invariably gained the victory over them. He relied not on his own weak powers, but on the Lord Himself, Who always came to help him. The monk gradually increased the height of the pillar on which he stood. His final pillar was 80 feet in height. Around him a double wall was raised, which hindered the unruly crowd of people from coming too close and disturbing his prayerful concentration.

Women, in general, were not permitted beyond the wall. The saint did not make an exception even for his own mother, who after long and unsuccessful searches finally succeeded in finding her lost son. He would not see her, saying, "If we are worthy, we shall see one another in the life to come." Saint Martha submitted to this, remaining at the foot of the pillar in silence and prayer, where she finally died. Saint Simeon asked that her coffin be brought to him. He reverently bid farewell to his dead mother, and a joyful smile appeared on her face.

Saint Simeon spent 80 years in arduous monastic feats, 47 years of which he stood upon the pillar. Many pagans accepted Baptism, struck by the moral staunchness and bodily strength which the Lord bestowed upon His servant.

The first one to learn of the death of the saint was his close disciple Anthony. Concerned that his teacher had not appeared to the people for three days, he went up on the pillar and found the dead body stooped over at prayer. Patriarch Martyrius of Antioch performed the funeral before a huge throng of clergy and people. They buried him near his pillar. At the place of his ascetic deeds, Anthony established a monastery, upon which rested the special blessing of Saint Simeon.

We pray to Saint Simeon for the return to the Church of those who have forsaken Her, or have been separated from Her.



The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary

Commemorated on September 8

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary: The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring

about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since Saint Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcome the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Saints Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Saints Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feastdays at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

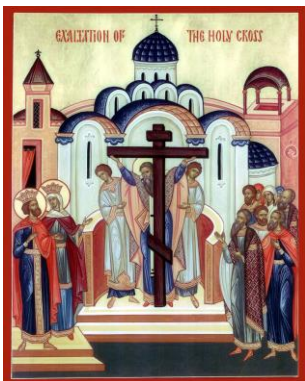
Saint Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. Saint Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.



The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross

Commemorated on September 14

The pagan Roman Emperors tried to obliterate the holy places where our Lord Jesus Christ suffered and rose from the dead, so that they would be forgotten. Emperor Hadrian (117-138) ordered that Golgotha and the Lord's Sepulchre be buried, and that a temple in honor of the pagan "goddess" Venus and a statue of Jupiter be placed there.

Pagans gathered at this place and offered sacrifice to idols. Eventually after 300 years, by Divine Providence, the Christian holy places, the Sepulchre of the Lord, and the Life-giving Cross, were discovered and opened for veneration. This took place under Emperor Constantine the Great (306-337) after his victory over Maxentius (in 312), who ruled the

Western part of the Roman Empire, and over Licinius, the ruler of its Eastern part. In the year 323 Constantine became the sole ruler of the vast Roman Empire.

In 313 Saint Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, by which Christianity was legalized and persecutions against Christians in the Western half of the Empire were stopped. Although Licinius had signed the Edict of Milan in order to oblige Constantine, he continued his cruel persecutions against Christians. Only after his conclusive defeat did the Edict of Milan extend also to the Eastern part of the Empire. The Holy Equal of the Apostles Emperor Constantine, triumphing over his enemies in three wars, with God's assistance, had seen the Sign of the Cross in the heavens. Written beneath were the words: "By this you shall conquer."

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

Although the holy Empress Helen was no longer young, she set about completing the task with enthusiasm. In her search for the Life-giving Cross, she questioned both Christians and Jews, but for a long time her search remained unsuccessful. Finally, she was directed to a certain elderly Jew named Jude who stated that the Cross was buried beneath the temple of Venus. They demolished the pagan temple and, after praying, they began to excavate the ground. Soon the Lord's Tomb was uncovered. Not far from it were three crosses, and a board with the inscription ordered by Pilate, and four nails which had pierced the Lord's Body (March 6).

In order to discover on which of the three crosses the Savior had been crucified, Patriarch Makarios alternately touched the crosses to a corpse. When the Cross of the Lord touched the dead man, he was restored to life. After witnessing the raising of the dead man, everyone was convinced that the Life-giving Cross had been found.

Christians came in a huge crowds to venerate the Holy Cross, beseeching Saint Makarios to lift the Cross, so that those far off could see it. Then the Patriarch and other spiritual leaders lifted the Holy Cross, and the people prostrated themselves before the Honorable Wood, saying "Lord have mercy." This solemn event occurred in the year 326.

During the discovery of the Life-giving Cross another miracle took place: a woman who was close to death was healed by the shadow of the Holy Cross. The elderly Jude (October 28) and other Jews believed in Christ and were baptized. Jude was given the name Kyriakos, and later he was consecrated as the Bishop of Jerusalem. He suffered a martyr's death for Christ during the reign of Emperor Julian the Apostate (361-363).

Saint Helen took part of the Life-giving Wood and nails with her to Constantinople. Saint Constantine ordered a majestic and spacious church to be built at Jerusalem in honor of the Resurrection of Christ, also including under its roof the Life-giving Tomb of the Lord and Golgotha. The church was built in ten years. Saint Helen did not survive until the dedication of the church, she reposed 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 Honorable and Life-giving 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 Phokas (602-610) the Persian king Khosrōēs II attacked Constantinople, defeated the Greek army, plundered Jerusalem, capturing both the Life-giving Cross of the Lord and the Holy Patriarch Zachariah (609-633).

The Cross remained in Persia for fourteen years, and only under Emperor Herakleios (610-641), who defeated Khozróēs and concluded peace with his successor and son Syroes, was the Lord's Cross returned to the Christians.

With great solemnity the Life-giving Cross was transferred to Jerusalem. Emperor Herakleios, wearing a crown and his royal purple garments carried the Cross of Christ. The Emperor was accompanied by Patriarch Zachariah. At the gates by which they ascended Golgotha, the Emperor stopped suddenly and was unable to proceed. The holy Patriarch explained to the Emperor that an Angel of the Lord was blocking his way. Herakleios was told to remove his royal trappings and to walk barefoot, since He Who bore the Cross for the salvation of the world had made His way to Golgotha in all humility. Then Herakleios donned plain clothes, and without further hindrance, carried the Cross of Christ into the church.

In a sermon on the Exaltation of the Cross, Saint Andrew of Crete (July 4) says: "The Cross is exalted, and everything true is gathered together, the Cross is exalted, and the city makes solemn, and the people celebrate the feast."