

Synaxis of All Saints Commemorated on [June 23](#)

The Sunday following Pentecost is dedicated to All Saints, both those who are known to us, and those who are known only to God. There have been saints at all times, and they have come from every corner of the earth. They were Apostles, Martyrs, Prophets, Hierarchs, Monastics, and Righteous, yet all were perfected by the same Holy Spirit.

The Descent of the Holy Spirit makes it possible for us to rise above our fallen state and to attain sainthood, thereby fulfilling God's directive to "be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44, 1 Peter 1:16, etc.). Therefore, it is fitting to commemorate All Saints on the first Sunday after Pentecost.

This feast may have originated at an early date, perhaps as a celebration of all martyrs, then it was broadened to include all men and women who had borne witness to Christ by their virtuous lives, even if they did not shed their blood for Him.

Saint Peter of Damascus, in his "Fourth Stage of Contemplation," mentions five categories of saints: Apostles, Martyrs, Prophets, Hierarchs, and Monastic Saints (PHILOKALIA [in English] Vol. 3, p.131). He is actually quoting from the OCTOECHOS, Tone 2 for Saturday Matins, kathisma after the first stichology.

Saint Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (July 14) adds the Righteous to Saint Peter's five categories. The list of Saint Nicodemus is found in his book THE FOURTEEN EPISTLES OF ST PAUL (Venice, 1819, p. 384) in his discussion of I Corinthians 12:28.

The hymnology for the feast of All Saints also lists six categories: "Rejoice, assembly of the Apostles, Prophets of the Lord, loyal choirs of the Martyrs, divine Hierarchs, Monastic Fathers, and the Righteous..."

Some of the saints are described as Confessors, a category which does not appear in the above lists. Since they are similar in spirit to the martyrs, they are regarded as belonging to the category of Martyrs. They were not put to death as the Martyrs were, but they boldly confessed Christ and came close to being executed for their faith. Saint

Maximus the Confessor (January 21) is such a saint. The order of these six types of saints seems to be based on their importance to the Church. The Apostles are listed first, because they were the first to spread the Gospel throughout the world. The Martyrs come next because of their example of courage in professing their faith before the enemies and persecutors of the Church, which encouraged other Christians to remain faithful to Christ even unto death.

Although they come first chronologically, the Prophets are listed after the Apostles and Martyrs. This is because the Old Testament Prophets saw only the shadows of things to come, whereas the Apostles and Martyrs experienced them firsthand. The New Testament also takes precedence over the Old Testament. The holy Hierarchs comprise the fourth category. They are the leaders of their flocks, teaching them by their word and their example.

The Monastic Saints are those who withdrew from this world to live in monasteries, or in seclusion. They did not do this out of hatred for the world, but in order to devote themselves to unceasing prayer, and to do battle against the power of the demons. Although some people erroneously believe that monks and nuns are useless and unproductive, Saint John Climacus had a high regard for them: "Angels are a light for monks, and the monastic life is a light for all men" (LADDER, Step 26:31). The last category, the Righteous, are those who attained holiness of life while living "in the world." Examples include Abraham and his wife Sarah, Job, Saints Joachim and Anna, Saint Joseph the Betrothed, Saint Juliana of Lazarevo, and others.

The feast of All Saints achieved great prominence in the ninth century, in the reign of the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI the Wise (886-911). His wife, the Holy Empress Theophano (December 16) lived in the world, but was not attached to worldly things. She was a great benefactor to the poor, and was generous to the monasteries. She was a true mother to her subjects, caring for widows and orphans, and consoling the sorrowful. Even before the death of Saint Theophano in 893 or 894, her husband started to build a church, intending to dedicate it to Theophano, but she forbade him to do so. It was this emperor who decreed that the Sunday after Pentecost be dedicated to All Saints. Believing that his wife was one of the righteous, he knew that she would also be honored whenever the Feast of All Saints was celebrated.

Bishop Paul leads pilgrimage to Holy Land

His Grace, Bishop Paul led a pilgrimage to the Holy Land from May 26 through June 5, 2019, visiting the many holy sites and shrines associated with the life of our Lord.

His Eminence, Archbishop Theophanes of the Patriarchate of Jerusalem, accompanied Bishop Paul and those traveling with him for most of their journey. Having lived in the Holy Land for over 55 years, Bishop Theophanes provided a wealth of information based on his vast biblical knowledge and experience.

The pilgrimage began in the region of the Sea of Galilee. They visited the remains of Saint Peter's house, where Jesus healed the apostle's mother-in-law, and the remains of the synagogue in Capernaum, where Jesus taught. They also visited the Greek Orthodox Monastery of the Twelve Apostles in Tiberias, the Mount of Beatitudes, and the site of the feeding of the 5,000 in Tabgha, where Archbishop Theophanes re-enacted the blessing of the five loaves. They also visited Magdala, the village of Saint Mary Magdalene. Relevant selections from the Epistles and Gospels were read at each site.

On their second day, Bishop Paul and the pilgrims visited the Greek Orthodox Church of the Transfiguration at the summit of Mount Tabor, on which Jesus was transfigured before the Apostles Peter, James and John. In Cana, they visited the Church of Saint George, which marks the site where Jesus performed His first miracle at the wedding feast, before visiting the Carmelite Monastery of El-Muhraqa, where Tradition holds that the Prophet Elias defeated the pagan god Baal, and the Greek Orthodox Church of the Annunciation, where the Virgin Mary received the news from the Archangel Gabriel that she with was with child. They also visited the Basilica of the Annunciation in Nazareth, built on the site of the Virgin's home.

En route to Jerusalem, Bishop Paul and the pilgrims made their way through the Jordan Valley to the site of Jesus' Baptism, where they stepped into the river's waters. At the Monastery of Saint Gerasimos they prayed at the cave below the main church, in which the Virgin Mary, Saint Joseph, and the infant Jesus took refuge on their flight into Egypt. At virtually every stop along their journey, bells were

rung to announce their arrival, as is customary in greeting visiting hierarchs.

At the Monastery of Saint Elisha, Bishop Paul and the pilgrims saw what Tradition holds is the sycamore tree Zacchaeus ascended to see our Lord, before visiting the monastery and church dedicated to Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, built on the site of their home. The entrance to Lazarus' tomb was about 500 feet away. In Bethlehem, the group venerated the site of Jesus' birth — the Church of the Nativity — which Archbishop Theophanes noted is the world's oldest active church. There they venerated the site of our Lord's birth, marked by a large brass star, while reading the Nativity Gospel. They also venerated relics of the Holy Innocents.

A highlight of the pilgrimage was the group's visit to the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem's Old City, where they venerated the large rock slab upon which Tradition holds Jesus' body was anointed after He was taken down from the cross. They also venerated many ancient icons and relics and read from the Gospels in numerous chapels, many of which are not readily accessible to the general public.

On the Mount of Olives, site of Jesus' Ascension, Bishop Paul and the clergy pilgrims celebrated the Sunday Divine Liturgy at the Russian Orthodox Monastery and Chapel of the Ascension [Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia], after which they descended the steep slope to the bottom of the Mount of Olives and visited the Russian Orthodox Monastery of Saint Mary Magdalene next to the Garden of Gethsemane with its iconic golden cupolas. There they venerated the relics of the new Martyr Elizabeth. Among the other sites visited were the Basilica of Agony, built on the site of the rock on which Jesus prayed on the eve of His crucifixion; the Upper Room, site of the Mystical Supper and the Descent of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost; the Lower Room, containing the Tomb of King David; and the Wailing Wall.

The pilgrims also visited Masada — an ancient fortress in southern Israel's Judean Desert overlooking the Dead Sea which served as the last bastion of Jewish freedom fighters against the Romans — en route to the Dead Sea.

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The highlight of the pilgrimage was the groups audience with His Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilus III of Jerusalem, where they visited the Patriarch's chapel, and beautiful gardens. His Beatitude and Bishop Paul, who greeted the Patriarch on behalf of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, exchanged gifts, and each pilgrim was given a commemorative coin and icon as mementos of their visit.

"I am most grateful to His Beatitude, Patriarch Theophilus, for blessing our visits to these sites and for giving us Archbishop Theophanes as a guide," said Bishop Paul. "His Eminence opened many doorways for us. Because of him, we as a group, were able to venerate such sites as the Nativity of our Lord and the Holy Sepulcher without having to wait long. At all of these sites, I read the Gospel relative to the sites we were visiting. Our entire group was grateful for the assistance of Archbishop Theophanes to make our pilgrimage a prayerful one."

From the Patriarchal residence, Archbishop Theophanes led Bishop Paul and the pilgrims on the Via Dolorosa — the Way of the Cross — pointing out the most significant sites associated with our Lord's ascent to Golgotha, including the Praetorium, where Jesus was sentenced by Pontius Pilate; the prison in which Jesus was held; the spot on which Jesus fell under the heavy weight of the cross before being assisted by Simon of Cyrene carried the cross; and associated events. They then made their way to the Greek Orthodox Church at the base of the Mount of Olives, which marks the site of the tomb of the Virgin Mary. They also visited Jacob's well, located beneath the altar of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Samaritan Woman.

"We encourage everyone to consider making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as it has been an amazing experience on so many levels - spiritual, humbling, life-changing are just a few descriptors," said one of the pilgrims at the conclusion of the pilgrimage. "And the rewards of traveling with his Grace, Bishop Paul can't be overstated."



Pilgrims on the trip



Bishop & Clergy w/ Patriarch of Jerusalem



The Tomb of the Virgin Mary. Note the small door to the right of the Last Supper where you entered to view the tomb. (Photo courtesy of Natalie Twarek.

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sung on Pentecost for the first time since Holy Pascha—we invoke the Holy Spirit to “come and abide in us” while proclaiming that “we have received the heavenly Spirit.”

On the evening of Pentecost Sunday, at Vespers, three lengthy prayers are recited, during which we kneel for the first time since Pascha. The Monday after Pentecost is the Feast of the Holy Spirit, while the Sunday after Pentecost is the Feast of All Saints. This is the logical liturgical sequence, since the coming of the Holy Spirit is fulfilled in us as we pursue holiness and sanctity in our own lives—that holiness and sanctity which constitute the very purpose of the creation and salvation of the world: “Thus says the Lord: ‘Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I your God am holy’” (Leviticus 11:44-45, 1 Peter 1:15-16).

Thus, Pentecost ushers in a new era, in which we are called to pursue sainthood by acquiring the Holy Spirit, by opening ourselves to the fullness of Christ’s revelation to mankind, and by anticipating the Kingdom of God, yet to be fully revealed, but already fully present in our midst as we entreat the Holy Spirit to “come and abide in us” now and in the life of the world to come.

Bishop Paul's Travel Schedule

St. Mary Church, Cornucopia, WI, June 22nd to 24th

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Chicago, IL, July 25th to 26th, Tikhvin Icon feast

Ss. Peter & Paul, Burr Ridge, IL, June 28th to 29th, patronal feast day

St. John the Forerunner, Indianapolis, IN June 29th to 30th

- *Ordination of Sub Deacon Darrell Rentsch to the Diaconate*

Chicago Deanery Camp, East Troy, WI, July 1st to July 3rd

St. Nicholas Church, Pella, IA, July 5th to 7th

Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30 (Gospel)

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Then Peter answered and said to Him, “See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?” So Jesus said to them, “Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Hebrews 11:33-12:2 (Epistle)

who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.