

Synaxis of the Saints of North America

Commemorated on [June 21](#)

On the second Sunday after Pentecost, each local Orthodox Church commemorates all the saints, known and unknown, who have shone forth in its territory. Accordingly, the Orthodox Church in America remembers the saints of North America on this day.

Saints of all times, and in every country are seen as the fulfillment of God's promise to redeem fallen humanity. Their example encourages us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us" and to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). The saints of North America also teach us how we should live, and what we must expect to endure as Christians

Although it is a relatively young church, the Orthodox Church in America has produced saints in nearly all of the six major categories of saints: Apostles (and Equals of the Apostles); Martyrs (and Confessors); Prophets; Hierarchs; Monastic Saints; and the Righteous. Prophets, of course, lived in Old Testament times and predicted the coming of Christ.

The first Divine Liturgy in what is now American territory (northern latitude 58 degrees, 14 minutes, western longitude 141 degrees) was celebrated on July 20, 1741, the Feast of the Prophet Elias, aboard the ship Peter under the command of Vitus Bering. Hieromonk Hilarion Trusov and the priest Ignatius Kozirevsky served together on that occasion. Several years later, the Russian merchant Gregory I. Shelikov visited Valaam monastery, suggesting to the abbot that it would be desirable to send missionaries to Russian America.

On September 24, 1794, after a journey of 7,327 miles (the longest missionary journey in Orthodox history) and 293 days, a group of monks from Valaam arrived on Kodiak Island in Alaska. The mission was headed by Archimandrite Joasaph, and included Hieromonks Juvenal, Macarius, and Athanasius, the Hierodeacons Nectarius and Stephen, and the monks Herman and Joasaph. Saint Herman of Alaska (December 13, August 9), the last surviving member of the mission, fell asleep in the Lord in 1837.

Throughout the Church's history, the seeds of faith have always been watered by the blood of the

martyrs. The Protomartyr Juvenal was killed near Lake Iliamna by natives in 1799, thus becoming the first Orthodox Christian to shed his blood for Christ in the New World. In 1816, Saint Peter the Aleut was put to death by Spanish missionaries in California when he refused to convert to Roman Catholicism.

Missionary efforts continued in the nineteenth century, with outreach to the native peoples of Alaska. Two of the most prominent laborers in Christ's Vineyard were Saint Innocent Veniaminov (March 31 and October 6) and Saint Jacob Netsvetov (July 26), who translated Orthodox services and books into the native languages. Father Jacob Netsvetev died in Sitka in 1864 after a life of devoted service to the Church. Father John Veniaminov, after his wife's death, received monastic tonsure with the name Innocent. He died in 1879 as the Metropolitan of Moscow.

As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, an event of enormous significance for the North American Church took place. On March 25, 1891, Bishop Vladimir went to Minneapolis to receive Saint Alexis Toth (May 7) and 361 of his parishioners into the Orthodox Church. This was the beginning of the return of many Uniates to Orthodoxy.

Saint Tikhon (Belavin), the future Patriarch of Moscow (April 7, October 9), came to America as bishop of the diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska in September 1898. As the only Orthodox bishop on the continent, Saint Tikhon traveled extensively throughout North America in order to minister to his widely scattered and diverse flock. He realized that the local church here could not be a permanent extension of the Russian Church. Therefore, he focused his efforts on giving the American Church a diocesan and parish structure which would help it mature and grow.

Saint Tikhon returned to Russia in 1907, and was elected as Patriarch of Moscow ten years later. He died in 1925, and for many years his exact burial place remained unknown. Saint Tikhon's grave was discovered on February 22, 1992 in the smaller cathedral of Our Lady of the Don in the Don Monastery when a fire made renovation of the church necessary. *Con't Next Page*

Saints of North America Con't

Saint Raphael of Brooklyn (February 27) was the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in North America. Archimandrite Raphael Hawaweeny was consecrated by Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky) at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York on March 13, 1904. As Bishop of Brooklyn, Saint Raphael was a trusted and capable assistant to Saint Tikhon in his archpastoral ministry. Saint Raphael reposed on February 27, 1915.

The first All American Council took place March 5-7, 1907 at Mayfield, PA, and the main topic was "How to expand the mission." Guidelines and directions for missionary activity, and statutes for the administrative structure of parishes were also set forth.

In the twentieth century, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, countless men, women, and children received the crown of martyrdom rather than renounce Christ. Saints John Kochurov (October 31) and Alexander Hotovitzky (December 4 and August 7) both served the Church in North America before going back to Russia. Saint John became the first clergyman to be martyred in Russia on October 31, 1917 in Saint Petersburg. Saint Alexander Hotovitzky, who served in America until 1914, was killed in 1937.

In addition to the saints listed above, we also honor those saints who are known only to God, and have not been recognized officially by the Church. As we contemplate the lives of these saints, let us remember that we are also called by God to a life of holiness.

A little kid said, "Daddy, if the
Stork brings all the babies,
Santa brings all the Christmas
stuff and the Lord provides our
daily bread, just what do you
do around here?"

"A wise son makes a
glad father." -- Proverbs 10:1

Matthew 4:18-23 (Gospel)

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him. Going on from there, He saw two other brothers, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets. He called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed Him. And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.

Romans 2:10-16 (Epistle)

but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

Children need a Daddy

Children need a Daddy For many, many things:
Like holding them high off the ground Where
the sunlight sings! Like being the deep music
That tells them all is right When they awaken
frantic with The terrors of the night. Like
being the great mountain That rises in their
hearts And shows them how they might get
home When all else falls apart. Like giving
them the love That is their sea and air, So
diving deep or soaring high they'll always find
him there.

Are Kids the Ones Who need to be Taught?

Last week I wrote, “So for those parents today who are going about the challenge of forming the life of Christ in their children, what can we do to overcome the subtle forms of racism that impact our lives?”

Well, Jen Haynes responded to that note providing some wonderful information for you to consider. I will take her up on that I know for sure. I was prepared to do something focusing on children in this note, but I realize children are not the issue.

I saw a brief 5-second video on Facebook earlier in the week that showed two children—one black, the other white—and they appeared to be three years old. They joyfully ran to each other and embraced each other. It reminded me of our Lord’s teaching from Luke:

Now they were bringing even infants to him that he might touch them; and when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to him, saying, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” (Luke 18:5-17)

It seems like we grown-ups are the problem, not the children. Young children have an amazing ability to accept things as they are with no prejudgments. In fact, my bias is revealed when I described this interaction as being between a white child and black child. I highly doubt those two kids would have thought in those terms. To see the image of Christ in another is what young kids do without being aware of it, until some begin to learn differently, and that purity becomes compromised.

The other image I saw this week was a You Tube video of my home parish that used to be in Detroit, Michigan. I grew up in that temple. Seeing the video of the temple and what has happened to it brought tears to my eyes. It was like seeing a video of the Titanic (maybe not the best analogy but it was all I could think of). As with many urban churches, my home parish left the city and moved to the suburbs and built a new temple. The old temple was sold and used by two

different churches between 1986 and 2011. Since then it has been vacant. But a Detroit Ministry called “The Good News Gang” entered into the picture in 2015. They are using the school building for ministry to youth, and consideration is being given to restoring the church somehow. Good work is being done through this ministry.

If you want to see the You Tube video, click on [this link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yv9VkJQA81pw&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3VnZx3f6upfc9Y0xQ6ZBVYkEnWYOpqD3CVtDzvI4FGI2s5ic6BxWCpVjc): <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yv9VkJQA81pw&feature=share&fbclid=IwAR3VnZx3f6upfc9Y0xQ6ZBVYkEnWYOpqD3CVtDzvI4FGI2s5ic6BxWCpVjc> (Go to Diocesan website)

I ended up writing FOCUS Detroit yesterday asking the director to look into whether FOCUS can look into supporting the work of the Good News Gang.

What allowed many churches (not just Orthodox) to become alienated from the communities they were established in? Why could they not adapt and respond to the changing community instead of becoming an island disconnected from that community? The answers to it are not simple, but I have to think that some form of racism was behind it. So what do we need to do about this?

I think each of us, starting with myself, need to come clean and admit to that fact we have prejudged people on the basis of the color of their skin. But this process of coming clean has to happen in an atmosphere where understanding, love, and forgiveness can be experienced. We need to be allowed to acknowledge our biases without immediately being condemned for them. We need to work through those biases by being educated through dialogue, so that we can repent of them and have a true change of mind and heart. There is a spirit today of immediate condemnation of anything that doesn’t go along with the program. The sin of racism is condemned in the secular world with such severe judgment that repentance, forgiveness, reconciliation and love are not possible. We end up exposing the speck in someone else’s eye without looking at the plank in our own eye, as Jesus teaches. This is where the Church needs to witness to, and be an image of understanding, love, repentance and forgiveness. The secular world knows nothing of repentance. We as the Church need to take the lead in this area and be this very icon we are called to be.

I have some more thoughts to share next week. There are some good things happening in our diocese among some churches regarding *Con’t Next Page*

Kids Con't

urban ministry. Perhaps we can utilize and learn from their experiences, and thus, by God's grace, change our own attitudes.

Forgive me a sinner,
The Unworthy Archbishop Paul

About the Most Serious Damage of a Person Metropolitan Anthony (Pakanich), on *Pravmir.com*

Why do believers have different levels of trust in God?

The reasons lie in our thoughts. There are good and damaged thoughts. They are key to our salvation or downfall.

Damaged thoughts – distortion of reality – lead to serious mistakes in knowledge of God, relationships between people, to wrong guidelines and any further bad deeds.

Good thought without selfishness, vanity, selfish motivations bears good fruit, gives people only joy, light, and warmth. It inspires.

If there is at least something evil, treacherous or selfish in our thoughts, they will definitely not bring us anything good or useful. They will only sow discord and enmity.

A person, who has not abandoned pride, ambitions, selfishness, interprets everything by their standards, taste, manipulating any events and facts for personal gain in such away so that it would be convenient for them.

Thus, false interpretations become common for these people, make them see everything around them distorted like in a funhouse mirror. Beautiful becomes ugly, good becomes evil, sublime becomes dead.

It is impossible to interact with such people: you say a kind word to them, praise them, and they become so full of themselves, imagine things that are not true; you do not pay attention to them due to the lack of time and energy, they take offense, get angry and are ready to go to extremes and stupidity.

They may interpret any little thing in the wrong way. They get worked up and assure that everything would have been as it seemed to them. These are all demonic tricks.

These metamorphoses occur with those, who do not watch over the purity of their thoughts. And this applies to relationships not only with other people, but also with God.

If we do not love Him infinitely, selflessly, exaltedly, and joyfully, and we try to get something from Him all the time, then such “business” relationship with God may result in a big trouble.

Our resentment and irritation will extend to Him. Due to egoism, arrogance, and conviction that we know better than God, we will start fighting Him, not even noticing that we are on the warpath.

And God Himself will not be able to help such a person.

While our relationships with people and the Creator have not reached a deadlock yet, we need to look for a way out. And there is a way out: ask yourself when working yourself up, maybe I am wrong, maybe, I just thought it up, and everything is not as I see it? After all, time always arranges everything back to order, the main thing is not to draw hasty conclusions built on personal guesses mixed with fantasy, and not on real facts.

It is necessary to restore order in the relationship with God. The order lies in the complete trust in Him. Even if we find ourselves in a difficult situation, one should not grumble and lament, but think, since it is given to us, maybe, this is His will and Divine Disposal, and therefore a benefit for us. “If God did not beat us hollow from time to time, we would have no time to look up at the sky”, writes Blaise Pascal.

When we sincerely wish to understand this or that situation, will control our thoughts, purify them, try to listen to others and understand what has really happened, then God will certainly support us and lead us to the right train of thought.

The main point is to bring oneself down a peg in time, to stop, to doubt one's rightness and purity of one's thoughts.

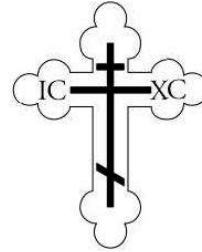
And only God is always right.

First EVER

"No Halupki Festival!" Festival Campaign

Holy Assumption Orthodox Church
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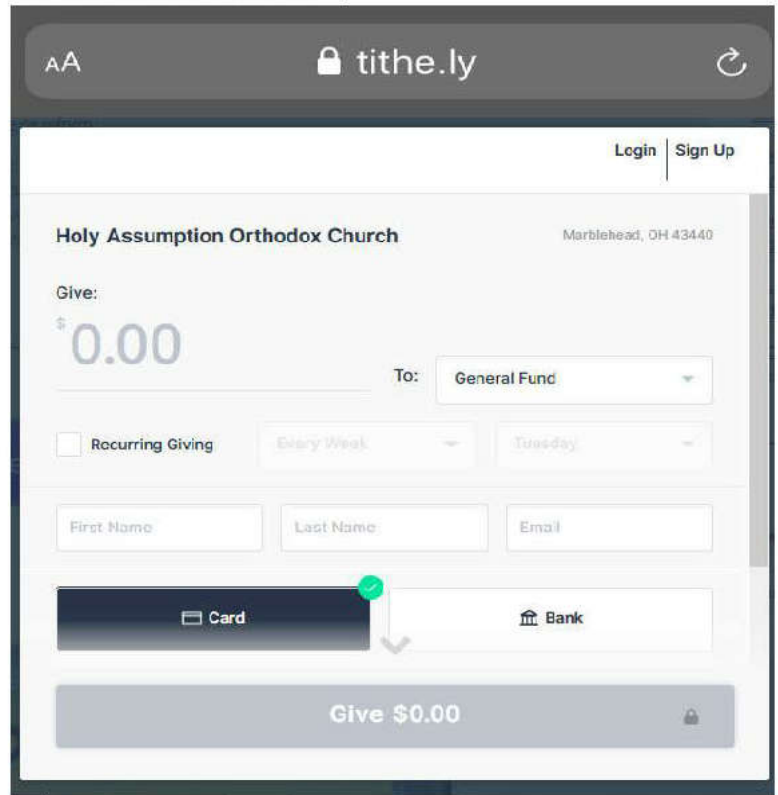
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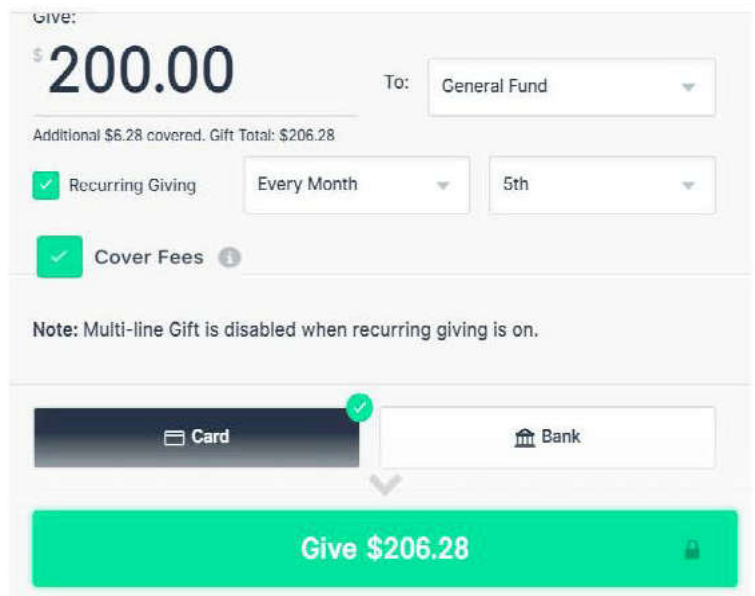
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Please contact Fr. Andrew Bartek (padrebartek@gmail.com) with any questions.