



Holy Assumption Orthodox Church

OCA - Diocese of the Midwest

V. Rev. Archpriest Andrew Bartek, Rector Parish Council President: Ron Royhab



JANUARY Bulletin Sponsor:

Fr. Andrew in memory of my Father George & Uncle Eddie

Liturgical & Events Schedule

Sunday, January 30

9:10 am Hours / Divine Liturgy / Pot Luck Social /
11:30 am Annual Meeting

Tuesday, February 1

6:00 pm: Vespers Divine Liturgy for Feast of
Three Hierarch's

Saturday, February 5

4:00 pm: Great Vespers / Confessions

Sunday, February 6 - Zacchaeus Sunday

9:10 am: Hours / Divine Liturgy Social

SUNDAY JANUARY 23, 2022

Tone: 7

Gospel:

Matthew 15:21-28 & Matthew 5:14-19

Epistle:

1ST Timothy 1:15-17 & Hebrews 13:7-16

32nd Sunday after Pentecost

Synaxis of the three Great Ecumenical Teachers & Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom. Hieromartyr Hippolytus, Pope of Rome, and with him Martyrs Censorinus, Sabinus, Ares, the Virgin Chryse, and with her Martyrs Felix, Maximus, Herculianus, Venerius, Styrcius, Menas, Commodus, Hermes, Maurus, Eusebius, Rusticus, Monagrius, Amandinus, Olympius, Cyrus, Theodore the Tribune, Maximus the Presbyter, Archelaus the Deacon, and Cryriacus the Bishop, all beheaded at Ostia. Ven. Zeno, Hermit, of Antioch, disciple of St Basil the Great. Martyr Theophilus the New in Cyprus. Rt. Blv. Peter, King of Bulgaria. Ven Zeno the Faster, of the Kiev Caves. Bl. Pelagia of Diveyevo. The TINOS Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos.

Save The Date!

- Sunday, January 30- Annual Church Meeting

JANUARY CHURCH CLEANING SCHEDULE

Week of Jan 30: Bobbie



JANUARY BULLETIN CANDLE SPONSORS

Bulletin: (\$50) From Fr. Andrew in memory of his Father George and Uncle Edward

Chandelier: (\$50) From Fr. Andrew for his Godmother Helen

Altar Candles: (\$50) From Fr. Andrew for all his friends & all former priest's & Bishop's

Candles on the Tomb: (\$25) from Basil in memory of his godmother Helen Beadle

Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (\$25) From Fr. Andrew for the Health of his Spiritual Father on the occasion of his 53rd Anniversary to the Holy priesthood

Candles @ the Cross (\$15) From Laura for B-day blessings to Jim & Sarah / Sandy for the Health of Marguerite

Candles @ St Tikhon's Icon (\$15) For the Health of Tim and Cami and safety of Nicholas, Tikhon and Gleice / From Tammy in memory of her dad William and husband Robley

JANUARY LITURGICAL ATTENDANCE

Friday, Dec. 31: 7 attended the Vespers for the Feastday
Saturday, Jan 1. : 11 attended the Feastday Liturgy /No Vespers
Sunday, Jan. 2: 15 attended Liturgy / 10 Communicants
Tuesday, Jan. 4: 9 attended the Royal Hours
Wednesday, Jan. 5: 5 attended the Vespertal Liturgy
 8 attended the Vigil for Theophany
Thursday, Jan. 6: 5 attended the Feastday Liturgy
Saturday, Jan. 8: 10 attended the blessing of the Lake
Sunday, Jan. 9: 18 attended Liturgy (3 of which were guests) / 10 Communicants
Saturday, Jan. 15: 8 attended Vespers
Sunday, Jan. 16: 15 attended Liturgy (1 being a guest / 11 Communicants
Sunday, Jan. 23: Snow 9 attended liturgy (1 being a guest/ 7 communicants) NO Vespers

JANUARY: MONTHLY TITHE ONLY Goal Pledged per month: \$5,667 (average of \$1,307 per week)

Jan. 2: \$ 465
Jan. 9: \$1,535
Jan. 16: \$ 915
Jan. 23: \$ 350
Month Total: \$3,265

JANUARY: OTHER INCOME Goal for the month in this category: \$4,000 (Average \$923 a week)

Jan. 2: \$15 Anonymous Donations; \$5 Vigils; \$350 Holy Day Donations; \$50 Bulletin; \$50 Chandelier; \$50 Altar Candles; \$25 Eternal Light
Jan. 9: \$40 Candles; \$200 Vigils; \$45 donation; \$200 Holy Day donations; \$30 Candles @ the Cross
Jan. 16: \$10 Candles; \$80 Vigils; \$25 Candles on Tomb
Jan. 23: \$10 Candles; \$35 Vigils
Month Total: \$1,220

VIGILS- JANUARY 23

Tamara Blackford (1) In memory of Rob

Laura Kovach(4). For the health and recovery of Sarah and Fin, Joe H., Marguerite B., Stephanie R., David Oberst, and Pat Rentz. For health of Betty K., Ben F., Earl R., Mary P., Andrea J., Wendy R., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Hattie K., Molly K., David M., Kathie J., Joe S., and Pete R.. Safe travels for family. Special intentions for Keri, Addison, and Brady.

Sandy Martin (1) in loving memory of my dear friend Paula

Royhab (3) for health of Stephanie, Marianne and Marguerite

Rebecca Timko (2) In loving memory of mother Janice and brother Phillip

Twarek (2) In loving memory of cousin Rosie Foster (1/17), For the health of Amber, Marguerite, Dottie, Joe Schutt, Jamie, Jim, Stephanie, Ron, Ezra, David, Helen Lis and Tina's dad, Earl, Matt, Tom, Loren, Joe, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Chuck, Bohdi, Diane, Stella, Jake, Cheryl and Pat Rentz

JANUARY: RESTRICTED FUND DONATIONS

Jan. 2: None
Jan. 9: \$10 Food Pantry; \$10 Catastrophic Fund; \$260 Support Priest (OCMC)
Jan. 16: \$100 Support Priest
Jan. 23: \$100 Food Pantry

For Your Prayers

Diane Tryon
109 Joslyn Street
Arcadia, OH 44804

Marguerite Bird
512 Ottawa Street
Marblehead, OH 43440

READERS

Sunday, Jan 30 Joe
Sunday, Feb. 6 Tim

OCA Department of Liturgical Music to Offer Popular Introductory Courses

The OCA's Department of Liturgical Music will once again offer two introductory online courses for the benefit of church singers and conductors.

"Basic Sight-Singing and Ear Training" (10 weeks) and

"Basic Conducting Techniques" (12 weeks)

Both courses begin on Monday, January 31; the Sight-Singing class will conclude the week of April 4 (5th Week of Great Lent), while the Conducting class will conclude the week of May 9th, after Pascha (with a break for Holy Week and Bright Week).

Registration links and costs are as follows:

Sight Singing and Ear Training \$300

Basic Conducting Techniques \$425

In the Fall of 2021, both classes filled up very quickly, with a number of prospective students placed on a waiting list. A total of 30 students enrolled in the Sight Singing class, while the Conducting Class had a total of 10 students. Students in both classes found that a significant investment of time—at least 3-4 hours per week—was needed in order to keep up with the course work.

Each class consists of pre-recorded lessons that students can watch asynchronously on their own time, one per week. Every lesson has a homework component, and then each student is expected to meet online with a course instructor for 20-30 minutes—to ask questions and to give the instructor an opportunity to monitor each student's progress and offer assistance as necessary.

The positive feedback from students suggests that these courses are meeting the needs of church singers and choir directors in the parishes.

"I can now look at a Tone and pitch it and sing the melody... The tools I learned in the class will help me to continue to grow in my singing abilities."

"Learning the structure of troparia, stichera, and canon [melodies] was very helpful."

"[The sight-singing course] gave a very good

foundation for sight singing. I can pick up a piece of music in any of the keys we learned and know how to sing it. Fabulous!"

"I liked being able to watch the [conducting] videos multiple times. I especially appreciated the Zoom interactive sessions. Thanks!"

"The [conducting] course content was perfect. Always challenging, yet fun! That is what made it so perfect!"

"[The conducting course] actually fulfilled goals I didn't even know I should have—such as score analysis."

"This past semester I was greatly helped by having five assistant instructors, who met one-on-one with the Sight-Singing and Ear Training students," says Dr. Vladimir Morosan, who developed these classes for the OCA Music Department. "We had an outstanding and dedicated team," Morosan continues, "including Deacon Anthony Stokes (Saint Maximus Orthodox Church, Denton, TX), Tabitha Lewis (Saint Tikhon's Seminary, PA), Serge Liberovsky (Holy Virgin Mary Cathedral, Los Angeles), Jacob Mandell (Saint Michael's Orthodox Church in Irvona, PA, and Nativity of the Theotokos Orthodox Church in Madera, PA), and Andrew Ritchey (Saint Symeon Orthodox Church, in Birmingham, AL). It allowed us to offer the course to an expanded number of students, while giving each of them individualized attention. In addition, I worked with Michael Hunner, the new music instructor at Saint Herman's Seminary in Kodiak, AK, who will be passing what we have to offer on to his students at the seminary." This team-teaching model will be continued this coming semester.

40 DAY REMEMBRANCE

Jan. 30: Archpriest Fr. Michael Macura

Feb. 6: Nicholas Hutnyan

Feb. 13: Archpriest Michael Slovesko / Mitred Archpriest Stavros Rousos / Valerie Boswell / Elinor Williams / Janice Timko

Feb. 27: Police officer killed in NYC

Welcoming Remarks by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon to Guests after the Divine Liturgy, Celebrated Prior to the March for Life 2022

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

By the grace of God, we have assembled this morning to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, the source of all authentic life. We have gathered as hierarchs, clergy, and laity to hear the sacred words of scripture and behold the awe-inspiring liturgical rites. We have come together at our liturgy today as the faithful people of God united in faith in Him. We have also arrived in Washington resolute in the one purpose of proclaiming this same faith in Him, and giving thanks to him for the precious gift of life. And it is exactly this precious gift of life that we march in defense of today. I am grateful to the Almighty God that my beloved brothers, the most-reverend hierarchs from the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops, stand together in the holy precincts of this cathedral dedicated to Saint Nicholas, who himself is known to the present day as the defender of the oppressed, at the outset of our public testimony, our witness to the sanctity of life and the defense of the unborn. May our efforts this day be received by the world around us, so that hearts and minds be changed and the life of the unborn be guarded, protected, and treasured.

I welcome to my cathedral above all, the Chairman of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops, His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros of America, Greek Orthodox Archdiocese. Your Eminence, Dear Brother and Concelebrant in the Lord's Mysteries, welcome to Saint Nicholas Cathedral. I also welcome the representatives and heads of the jurisdictions of the Executive Committee of the Assembly of Bishops. and all other hierarchs present today.

Dear brothers, as I say, welcome to my cathedral, the Cathedral of Saint Nicholas. I welcome you and those traveling with you.

May God bless our labors today, may he also bless our fellowship this morning.

Strong Orthodox Presence at the 2022 March for Life

On Friday, January 21, 2022, many Orthodox Christians led by twelve hierarchs of the Assembly of Orthodox Canonical Bishops, joined the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. on the anniversary of Roe v. Wade, a decision issued in 1973 by the United States Supreme Court legalizing abortion nationwide.

Orthodox Christians gathered together in one voice in defense of life and to condemn the terrible reality of abortion. As His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon affirmed in his annual statement made available early this month, "The Orthodox Church continues to hold fast to its ancient belief that all human life, from conception in the womb to our very last moment, is sacred to God. For the Holy Scripture tells us that 'God did not make death, and He does not delight in the death of the living. For He created all things that they might exist' (Wis 1:13-14)."

This year, Orthodox Christians for Life took the lead in organizing the Orthodox presence at the March - promoting the event through social media/website/mailers to churches; coordinating volunteers for various roles; bringing prayer service books along with many signs and new banners, etc.

On Thursday, January 20, a delegation of twelve members of the Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops of the United States of America represented the Orthodox Church during an evening Mass at the Roman Catholic Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Following the service, the hierarchs were hosted by His Eminence Archbishop Elpidophoros, Chairman of the Assembly, for a fellowship meal.

On Friday, January 21, Metropolitan Tikhon hosted the hierarchs of the Assembly with their delegations at the Saint Nicholas Primatial Cathedral where Archpriest Valery Shemchuk and Deacon Peter Ilchuk served the Divine Liturgy. At the end of the service, His Beatitude warmly welcomed his brother bishops stating that, by the grace of God, they have assembled together to celebrate the Divine Liturgy, gathering as hierarchs, clergy and laity as the faithful people of God united in faith and hymn, and to proclaim the sacred gift of life.

Following the breakfast hosted by His Beatitude and the Cathedral community, *Con't Next Page*

PRAYER LIST- UPDATED JANUARY 25

HIERARCH'S / CLERGY: His Beatitude, Metropolitan Herman; Archbishop Benjamin from San Fransico; John Duranko (Father's home pastor); James Gleason (Father's Spiritual Father); Moses Berry; Gregory Grivna; Emilian Hutnyan; Joseph Von Klarr; Lev Kopestiansky; Michael Kuzara; Phillip Maikkula; John Zabinko Deacon Paul Gansle, Deacon Peter Rentsch, Deacon Michael Wison / Sub-deacon Wylie Meath

MATUSHKII: Pani Patricia Duranko; Virgina Lecko; Maura McCarnthey; Roberta Spengler; Margaret Zabinko

PARISHIONERS & THEIR FAMILIES: James Bargdill (Schutt); John Beadle (Elchisco); Marguerite Bird; Maryann Cook (Twarek); Michael Glovinsky; Shirley Gresh (Glovinsky); Joseph Habegger (Kovach); Charisse (Hileman); Betty Kovach; David LaValle (Fr); Helen Lis; David Mazurik; Child Stella Miller (Elchisco); Nancy Naiser (Royhab); Earl Rindfleisch; Helen Jean Rofkar (Elchisco); Joe Rose; Sonya Rose; Ron Royhab; Maryann Royhab; Stephanie Royhab; Joe Schutt; Dacia Snider (Hileman); Diane Tryon; Greg Tyron; Tom Twarek; Child Bodhi (Cassell); Kathryn Tryon & her unborn baby

OTHER REQUESTS: Mary Dank (ABL); Marge Dziama; Child Ezra; Baby Finn (Cassell); Zoe Finley (ABL); Ruthe Flewelling; Ben Franklin (Kovach); Dorothy Goldman (Twarek); Donald Gresh (Glovinsky); Andrea Joy (Kovach); Ann Marie Krynock (Timko); Maria (ABL); Jake Lipstraw (Twarek); Mark Ludvik (Guzy); Mark Masica (Kovach); Pauline Meath (Fr); Karen Muzyka (fr); William Roman-chak (Fr); Sandy Scafaria (Hileman); Loren Welch (Fr); Tanya Wolfe (Fr.); Chuck Wiedenhoft (Twarek); Sara (Jake); Chris Quotap (Fr); Zoland Zile (Fr.)

MILITARY: Alex, Nathan Brown, Craig Cassell, Cory Deaton , Jake Ellithorpe, Jordan Fulton, Alena Grabavoy, Nicholas & Tikhon, Cory Deaton, Alex Zarnow

CAPTIVES: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Archdiocese of Aleppo), Archbishop John Syriac Archdiocese of Aleppo, The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers in & around Syria; Those suffering persecution in Iraq, Syria, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and throughout the world



Strong Presence at March con't from previous pg

the hierarchs and clergy joined many other Orthodox Christians from different parts of the country, including delegations from Saint Vladimir's and Saint Tikhon's Seminaries, for the Rally on the Mall.

On behalf of the Orthodox, Archbishop Elpidophoros offered the introductory remarks and prayer for the 2020 March for Life. Following the initial prayer, Metropolitan Tikhon served the Molieben and intoned Memory Eternal! for all the victims of abortion.

A photo gallery of the event can be found on the OCA website and Facebook page.

FEBRUARY BULLETIN CANDLE SPONSORS

- Bulletin:** (\$50) Fr. Andrew in memory of my Grandmother Justina
Chandelier: (\$50) From Laura Kovach in memory of her father Steven
Altar Candles: (\$50) Fr. Andrew for the health of my Spiritual Father on the occasion of his birthday
Candles on the Tomb: (\$25) Fr. Andrew in memory of His Eminence Metropolitan Orestes from the Carpatho-Russian Diocese.
Eternal Light & Icon Screen: (25) Fr. Andrew in memory of all my friends & family
Candles @ the Cross: Laura in memory of her parents Steven & Margaret / Sandy for Health of Marguerite
Candles @ St Tikhon's Icon: For the Health of Tim & Cami & safety of Nicholas, Tikhon & Gleice

JANUARY Celebrations

ANNIVERSARIES	BIRTHDAYS
11- Missy & Andy Schlotterer 1-24-2015: Bishop Daniel of Santa Rosa 1-25-2020: His Grace Bishop Alexis Bishop elect of Alaska 26- Fr. James Gleason Anniversary to the Holy Priesthood <p style="text-align: center;">NAMESDAY</p> 1-2: Retired Bishop Seraphim of Sendai	1-Jim Kovach 3- Samuel Koren 4- John Starcher 7- Susan Guzy 7- Lueleta Dardovski 8- Mat. Melania Adamcio 8- Barbara Mazurik 11- Toussaint Jones 13- Mary Elizabeth Blackford 14- Lauren Jerome 23- Susan Beskid 25- Frank Batura 30- Stephanie Warnke 30- Bob Whitham Jr. 31- Julie Dardovski

Archbishop Paul's Travel Schedule: January 17th to February 21st

- St. George Cathedral, Chicago, IL,**
January 29th to 30th
- St. Nicholas Church, Columbus, OH,**
February 4th to 6th
- St. Thomas, Kokomo, IN,** February 11th to 13th
- Holy Trinity, Chicago, IL,** February 19th to 20th

1 Timothy 1:15-17 (Epistle)

This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, to God who alone is wise, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

JANUARY Reposed

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| 3- Mat. Marilyn Federoff (2019)
3- Larry Naiser (2019)
4- Margaret Reavley (1965)
4- George Bartek (1983)
4- Baby Clyde Madison (2020)
5- Russell (2019) Heidi's relative
5- Donald (2019) Waynes Relative
5- Maria Semionow (1981)
6- Helen Pender (2016)
8- Bishop Mark of Boston (2018)
11- Anna Tomko (1960)
15- Archpriest Pavel Soucek (2009) Former Pastor
20- Joshua Zdinak (2016)
21- Daniel Kowal (2006)
21- Philip Kobb (2018)
21- Fr. Michael Shuster (2020)
22- Fr. John Stefanik (2000) | 23- Helen Beadle (1988)
23- Fr. Michael Sopoliga (2009)
23- Deborah Pribanic (2020)
25- Jane (2019) Ron's Aunt
25- William "Bill" Alber (2021)
28- Michael Tarasavage (2021)
29- Anna Kravetz (1973)
29- Marjorie Kowal (2003)
29- Ernest Gresh (2020)
29- Rick Schlotterer (2020)
30- Archpriest John Mason (2019)
30- Anna Schofield (2021)
31- Edward Bartek (1983)
Sara Rose (2005)
Andrew Matway (1906)
William Gratson (1908)
Eva Hritsko (1908) |
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Synaxis of the Ecumenical Teachers and Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom Commemorated on January 30

Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs: Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom: During the eleventh century, disputes raged in Constantinople about which of the three hierarchs was the greatest. Some preferred Saint Basil (January 1), others honored Saint Gregory the Theologian (January 25), while a third group exalted Saint John Chrysostom (November 13).

Dissension among Christians increased. Some called themselves Basilians, others referred to themselves as Gregorians, and others as Johnites.

By the will of God, the three hierarchs appeared to Saint John the Bishop of Euchaita (June 14) in the year 1084, and said that they were equal before God. "There are no divisions among us, and no opposition to one another."

They ordered that the disputes should stop, and that their common commemoration should be celebrated on a single day. Bishop John chose January 30 for their joint Feast, thus ending the controversy and restoring peace.

Matthew 5:14-19 (Gospel, Hierarchs)

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Hebrews 13:7-16 (Epistle, Hierarchs)

Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For it is good that the heart be established by grace, not with foods which have not profited those who have been occupied with them. We have an altar from which those who serve the tabernacle have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned outside the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered outside the gate. Therefore let us go forth to Him, outside the camp, bearing His reproach. For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come. Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name. But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

Matthew 15:21-28 (Gospel)

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed." But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, "Send her away, for she cries out after us." But He answered and said, "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" But He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs." And she said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

The Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple

Commemorated on February 2

The Meeting of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is described in the third Gospel *Con't Next Pg*

Meeting of the Lord Con't previous Pg

(Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the Divine Child was brought to the Temple at Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple for forty days. At the end of the time of her purification, the mother went to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb, two turtledoves, or pigeons to the Lord as a sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity. Out of humility, however, she fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he beheld the promised Messiah. By divine inspiration, Saint Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Joseph had brought the Child Jesus to fulfill the Law.

Saint Simeon received the divine Child in his arms, and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). Saint Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was an 84-year-old widow, Saint Anna the Prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day." She arrived just when Saint Simeon met the Divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth."

Before Christ was born, the righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and

awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous persons of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet Him in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons by the holy bishops Methodios of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokhios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the VI century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. Giving thanks to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: Saint Andrew of Crete in the VII century; Saint Cosmas Bishop of Maium, Saint John of Damascus, and Saint Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the VIII century; and Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessaloniki in the IX century.

Today we also commemorate the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Simeon's Prophecy." The Mother of God is depicted without her Child, and seven swords piercing her breast: three from the left side, three from the right, and one from below.

A similar Icon, "Of the Seven Swords" (August 13) shows three swords on the left side and four from the right. The "Softening of Evil Hearts" is also commemorated on August 13.

The Icon "Simeon's Prophecy" symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of the righteous Elder Simeon: "a sword shall pierce through your own soul" (Luke 2:35).

In Constantinople, the Emperors would celebrate the Feast Day at the Blakhernae church during the All-Night Vigil. This custom continued until the Fall of the Byzantine Empire.