

**SUNDAY, JUNE 27, 2021**  
**ALL SAINTS**  
**FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

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 Nikodemos of the Holy Mountain (July 14) adds the Righteous to Saint Peter's five categories. The list of Saint Nikodemos is found in his book *The Fourteen Epistles of Saint 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

## GREAT VESPERS

***LORD I CALL: Six stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 8, followed by four stikhera for the Saints***

***Resurrection, tone 8:***

We offer to You, O Christ,  
our evening song and reasonable service,  
for You willed to have mercy on us//  
by Your Resurrection.

Lord, Lord, do not cast us away from Your face!  
For You willed to have mercy on us//  
by the Resurrection.

Rejoice, holy Zion!  
Mother of the churches, the abode of God!  
For you were the first to receive remission of sins//  
by the Resurrection.

The Word of God the Father,  
begotten before the ages,  
in the latter times willed to be incarnate of the Virgin

and endured crucifixion unto death.  
He has saved mortal man//  
by His Resurrection.

We glorify You, O Lord  
for You voluntarily endured the Cross for our sake.  
We fall down in worship before You, almighty Savior.  
Do not cast us away from Your face  
but hear us and save us, Lover of mankind//  
by Your Resurrection!

Glory to You, O Savior Christ,  
only begotten Son of God, nailed to the Cross//  
and resurrected from the tomb on the third day!

***Saints, tone 6:***

The Savior's inspired Disciples  
became instruments of the Spirit through faith.  
They were scattered to the ends of the earth,  
sowing the glad tidings of the True Faith.  
From their divine garden the army of martyrs blossomed in grace.  
They became images of Christ's saving Passion,  
enduring every kind of torture, scourging, and fire.//  
Now they boldly pray for our souls.

The noble martyrs, burning with love of the Lord,  
laughed at the fires and were consumed as burning coals.  
Through Christ, they burned the withered arrogance of error.  
They stilled the roaring of beasts with the voice of their prayers.  
Beheaded, they decapitated the demonic hosts.//  
By the shedding of their own blood they watered the Church with faith.

The heroic martyrs wrestled with beasts and were torn by their claws.  
They were dismembered, slashed with swords, and shot with arrows;  
they were consumed in the flames and pierced with lances.  
All this they willingly endured,  
for already they saw their unfading crowns, and the glory of Christ,//  
before Whom they boldly pray for our souls.

Come, let us praise the heroes of our faith:  
Apostles, martyrs, holy priests, and noble women!  
They fought for the faith in every part of the earth.  
Though born of earth, they were united with the heavenly hosts.

Through their sufferings, they triumphed over evil by the grace of Christ.  
As unfading lights, they illumine our hearts,//  
and with boldness they pray for our souls.

***GLORY... for the Saints, tone 6:***

O divine choir of martyrs,  
you are the pillars of the Church and the fulfillment of the Gospel.  
By your deeds you have fulfilled the Savior's words.  
You have closed the gates of hell and defended the Church.  
The shedding of your blood has dried up the libations poured out to idols.  
Your sacrifice has nourished the body of the faithful.  
Standing crowned before God, you amazed the Angels://  
Pray unceasingly to Him that our souls may be saved!

***NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 8:***

The King of heaven,  
because of His love for man,  
appeared on earth and dwelt with men.  
He took flesh from the pure Virgin  
and after assuming it, He came forth from her.  
The Son is one: in two natures, yet one Person.  
Proclaiming Him as perfect God and perfect Man,  
we confess Christ our God!//  
Entreat him, O unwedded Mother, to have mercy on our souls!

***Old Testament Readings***

***1. The reading from Isaiah.***

Thus says the Lord: All the nations gather together and the peoples assemble. Which of them foretold this and proclaimed to us the former things? Let them bring in their witnesses to prove they were right, so that others may hear and say, "It is true." "You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor will there be one after me. I, even I, am the LORD, and apart from me there is no savior. I have revealed and saved and proclaimed — I, and not some foreign god among you. You are my witnesses," declares the LORD, "that I am God. Yes, and from ancient days I am he. No one can deliver out of my hand. When I act, who can reverse it?" (Isaiah 43:9-14)

***2. The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon.***

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment can ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish, they seem to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction — but they are at peace. For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having

been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of Himself; like gold in a furnace He tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering He accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them for ever. Those who trust in Him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with Him in love, because grace and mercy are upon His elect, and He watches over His holy ones. (3:1-9)

### ***3. The reading from the Wisdom of Solomon.***

But the righteous live for ever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because He will cover them with His right hand, and with His arm He will shield them. The Lord will take His zeal as His whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel His enemies; He will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; He will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with Him to fight against the madmen. Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim, and will leap to the target as from a well-drawn bow of clouds, and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult; the water of the sea will rage against them, and rivers will relentlessly overwhelm them; a mighty wind will rise against them, and like a tempest it will winnow them away. Lawlessness will lay waste the whole earth, and evil-doing will overturn the thrones of rulers. Listen, therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given to you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High, who will search out your works and inquire into your plans. (5:15-6:3)

### ***APOSTIKHA: All stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 8:***

Descending from heaven to ascend the Cross,  
the Eternal Life has come for death  
to raise those who are fallen;  
to enlighten those in darkness.//  
Jesus, our Savior and illuminator, glory to You!

We glorify Christ, who rose from the dead.  
He accepted the human body and soul,  
and freed both from suffering.  
His most pure soul descended to hell, which He spoiled.  
His holy body did not see corruption in the tomb.//  
He is the Redeemer of our souls.

In psalms and songs we glorify Your Resurrection from the dead, O Christ.  
By it, You have freed us from the tortures of hell//  
and as God have granted eternal life and great mercy.

Master of all, incomprehensible Creator of heaven and earth,  
by Your suffering on the Cross You have gained passionlessness for me.  
Accepting burial and arising in glory,  
You resurrected Adam with Yourself by Your almighty hand.  
Glory to Your rising on the third day!  
By it You have granted us eternal life and cleansing of sins//  
as the only compassionate One.

***GLORY...for the Saints, tone 6:***

Come, O faithful,  
let us celebrate in song today,  
glorifying the memory of all the Saints!  
Rejoice, glorious Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs and Hierarchs!  
Rejoice, company of all the Just!  
Rejoice, ranks of holy Women!//  
Pray that Christ will grant our souls great mercy!

***NOW AND EVER... the Theotokion of the Resurrection in tone 6:***

My Maker and Redeemer, Christ the Lord,  
was born of you, O most pure Virgin.  
By accepting my nature, He freed Adam from his ancient curse.  
Unceasingly we magnify you as the Mother of God!  
Rejoice, O celestial Joy!  
Rejoice, O Lady://  
the Protection, Intercession and Salvation of our souls!

***TROPARIA***

**Resurrection, tone 6**

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!  
Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!  
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection: glory to You.

**Saints, tone 4**

As with fine porphyry and royal purple,  
Your Church has been adorned with Your martyrs' blood shed throughout all the world.  
She cries to You, O Christ God:  
Send down Your bounties on Your people,  
Grant peace to Your habitation, and great mercy to our souls.

**Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 4:**

The mystery of all eternity,  
unknown even by Angels,  
through you, Theotokos, is revealed to those on earth:

God incarnate by union without confusion.  
He voluntarily accepted the Cross for us,  
by which He resurrected the first-created man, //  
saving our souls from death.