

SUNDAY, July 4, 2021
ALL SAINTS OF AMERICA

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 Netsvetov

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 (Bellavin), 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.

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, there is St John of San Francisco, St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, St Nikolai of Zica and South Canann, as well as St Sebastian of Jackson & San Francisco. There are also other who are being considered for glorification as saints such as Metropolitan Leonty (Turkevich), Archbishop Dmitry of Dallas, and Matushka Olga Michael of Alaska. 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.

GREAT VESPERS

LORD I CALL: Four stikhera of the Resurrection in tone 1, followed by six for the American Saints

Resurrection, tone 1:

Accept our evening prayers, O holy Lord!
Grant us remission of sins, //
for You alone have manifested the Resurrection to the world.

Encircle Zion and surround her, O people!
Give glory in her to the One Who rose from the dead! //
For He is our God, Who has delivered us from our transgressions!

Come, O people, let us hymn and fall down before Christ,
glorifying His Resurrection from the dead! //
For He is our God, Who has delivered the world from the Enemy's deceit!

Be glad, O heavens!
Sound trumpets, O foundations of the earth!
Sing in gladness, O mountains!
Behold Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the Cross!
Granting life, He has slain death. //
He has resurrected Adam as the Lover of mankind.

Saints, tone 2:

Come, let us praise the Saints of North America,
Holy hierarchs, venerable monastics and glorious martyrs,
pious men, women and children, both known and unknown.
Through their words and deeds in various walks of life,
by the grace of the Spirit they achieved true holiness.
As they now stand in the presence of Christ who glorified them, //
they pray for us who celebrate their memory in love.

Come, let us assemble today,
and glorify the luminaries of the North American lands,
the glorious martyrs and holy bishops who confirmed our Faith,
the righteous dwellers in the wilderness,
and guides of the spiritual life.
Let us cry out to them in joy: //

O All Saints of North America, known and unknown, pray to God for us.

As the brightest sun, as the brilliance of the morning star,
the precious feast of the Saints of North America has dawned for us,
to illumine us and to set our hearts on fire,
to imitate their godly lives,//
and to follow their example of zeal for God.

Come let us assemble today,
and let us praise the elect of North America.
Having fought the good fight you have persevered in the Faith,
receiving your crowns of victory from God.
Beseech Him to deliver from every calamity and sorrow,//
all who keep your holy memory in faith and love.

tone 6:

The earth rejoices and the heavens are glad,
O venerable Saints of America,
praising your labors and lives,
your spiritual fortitude and purity of heart.
By driving away a multitude of demons
and enlightening many people
with the light of the Orthodox Faith//
you have confirmed our land.

Rejoice, O mountains of Pennsylvania,
Leap for joy, O waters of the Great Lakes,
Rise up, O fertile plains of Canada,
for the elect of Christ who dwelt in you are glorified,
men and women who left their homes for a new land.
With faith, hope and patience as their armor,
they courageously fought the good fight.
Comforted by the beauty of the Orthodox Faith,
they labored in mines and mills, they tilled the land,
they braved the challenges of the great cities,
enduring many hardships and sufferings.
Never failing to worship God in spirit and truth,
and unyielding in devotion to His most pure Mother,
they erected many temples to His glory.
Come, O assembly of the Orthodox,
and with love let us praise the holy women, men and children,
those known to us and those known only to God,
and let us cry out to them:

Rejoice, All Saints of North America, //
and pray to God for us.

GLORY...for the Saints, tone 5:

Rejoice, O continent of North America,
illuminated by the Holy Gospel.

Rejoice, every province, state, city, and town,
which raised up citizens of the heavenly Kingdom.

Rejoice, our venerable Father Herman, first Saint of our land.

Rejoice, O Martyrs Juvenal and Peter,
for your blood has watered the seed of faith planted in Alaska.

Rejoice, O holy Hierarchs: Innocent, Tikhon and Nicholas,

Rejoice, O holy Father Alexis and you righteous priests,

Rejoice, All Saints of North America,

for your light has shone forth to the ends of the earth.//

We beseech you to pray to Christ our God that our souls may be saved.

NOW AND EVER... the Dogmatikon in tone 1:

Let us praise the Virgin Mary!

The gate of heaven, the glory of the world!

The song of the angels, the beauty of the faithful!

She was born of man, yet gave birth to God!

She was revealed as the heaven,

as the temple of the godhead!

She destroyed the wall of enmity!

She commenced the peace; she opened the Kingdom!

Since she is our foundation of faith,

our defender is the Lord Whom she bore!

Courage! Courage! O People of God!

For Christ will destroy our enemies//

since He is all powerful.

Old Testament Readings

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?" (43:9-14)

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)**

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 1:

We have been freed from sufferings by Your suffering, O Christ.
We have been delivered from corruption by Your Resurrection.//
O Lord, glory to You!

Let creation rejoice!
Let the heavens be glad!
Let the nations clap their hands with gladness,
for Christ our Savior has nailed our sins to the Cross.
Slaying death, He has given life.//
He has resurrected fallen Adam as the Lover of mankind.

As King of heaven and earth,
You were voluntarily crucified in Your love for mankind.

Hell was angered when it met You below.
Adam rose seeing You, the Creator, under the earth.
O Wonder! How has the Life of All tasted death?
You enlightened the world which cries://
“O Lord, Who rose from the dead, glory to You!”

The myrrhbearing women came with haste to Your tomb,
bearing myrrh and lamenting.
Not finding Your most pure body,
they learned from the angel of the new and glorious wonder.
They told the Apostles://
“The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.”

GLORY...for the Saints, tone 4:

Today, as we celebrate the memory
of All Saints of North America,
let us praise them as is fitting,
for they lived all of Christ's beatitudes.
Deprived of material wealth, they became rich in spirit.
Meek, they inherited the earth.
Mourning, they were comforted.
Thirsting for righteousness, they were satisfied.
Merciful, they obtained mercy.
Pure in heart, they beheld the image of God.
As peacemakers, they became God's children.
Persecuted and tortured for righteousness' sake,
they now rejoice in heaven;
and they pray fervently to the Lord//
to have mercy on our souls.

NOW AND EVER...for the Saints, tone 5:

Let us sound a hymn on the trumpet
And praise with one accord the protectress of our land,
Our Queen, the Theotokos.
Rejoice, you who have crowned our land with your favor,
Pouring abundant grace upon it.
Therefore, the Church in America joyously celebrates your precious protection
And commemorates the multitude of your miracles.
Deprive us not of your mercies now, O Lady.
Look favorably upon us in our adversities and afflictions,
And raise us up by your powerful intercession.

TROPARIA

Resurrection, tone 1

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews;
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body;
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O giver of Life:
Glory to Thy Resurrection O Christ!
Glory to Thy Kingdom!
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

All Saints of America, tone 8

As the bountiful harvest of Your sowing of salvation,
The lands of North America offer to You, O Lord, all the saints
who have shone in them.

By their prayers keep the Church and our land in abiding peace
Through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One.

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion, tone 8

For our sake You were born of the Virgin
and endured crucifixion, O Good One, destroying death by death.
Revealing the Resurrection as God, do not despise the work of Your hand!
Reveal Your love for man, O Merciful One, and accept the Theotokos praying for us, //
and save the despairing people, O our Savior!