

***MARTYRS EUSTRATIUS, AUXENTIUS, EUGENE,
MARDARIUS AND ORESTES, AT SEBASTE***

The Holy Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes (the Five Companions) suffered for Christ under the emperor Diocletian (284-305) at Sebaste, in Armenia.

Among the first Christians imprisoned and undergoing torture at that time was St. Auxentius, a presbyter of the Arabian Church. One of those who witnessed the steadfastness of the Christians was the noble military commander St. Eustratius, the city prefect of Satalios, and archivist of the province. Secretly, he was a Christian, and when he openly confessed his faith, he was subjected to torture. They beat him, and put iron sandals studded with sharp nails on his feet, then forced him to march to the city of Arabrak.

Witnessing the arrival of St. Eustratius in Arabrak, one of the common people, St. Mardarius, confessed that he was also a Christian. He was arrested and cast into prison. Holes were drilled in his ankles, and ropes were passed through them. He was suspended upside down, then heated nails were hammered into his body, and he died.

As for St. Eugene, they ripped out his tongue, they cut off his hands and feet, and then they beheaded him with a sword. St. Auxentius was also arrested and beheaded. The young soldier Orestes confessed himself a Christian and stood trial for this "crime." He was sentenced to be stretched out upon a red-hot iron bed, and became frightened when he approached it. Encouraged by St. Eustratius, he made the Sign of the Cross and got onto the heated bed, where he surrendered his soul to God.

St. Eustratius was sentenced to be burned alive on December 13. As he was being led to his death, he prayed aloud, beginning "I magnify Thee exceedingly, O Lord, for Thou has regarded my lowliness...." This prayer is still read at the Saturday Midnight Office.

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HOLY FOREFATHERS

***HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
6822 BROADVIEW ROAD
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THE TRINITARIAN

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V. REV. ALEXANDER GARKLAVS, PASTOR

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 A.M.
Church School Every Sunday at 10:45 A.M.
(During the Months of September thru May)

Vespers - Every Saturday - 5:00 P.M.
Choir Rehearsals Every Thursday at 7:30 P.M.
Michael N. Pilat, Choir Director

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BULLETIN 7 - VOLUME LVIII

TONE 2

DECEMBER 13, 2020

TWENTY-SEVENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Sunday of the Holy Forefathers

***Rest of Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America;
Martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius, and Orestes, at Sebaste;
Virgin-Martyr Lucia of Syracuse;
Ven. Arsenius of Atros; Ven. Arkady of Novotórgsk;
Ven. Mardarii, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves; Ven. Nicodemus;
St. Dosoftei, Metropolitan of Moldova***

“You justified Your ancestors by their faith, and through them You espoused the Church of the gentiles in advance. The boast of these holy ones is a maiden of their lineage, the virgin who gave birth to You. For their sake, O Christ, our God, be pleased to have mercy on us.”

Troparion, Tone VIII

“O joyful north star of the Church of Christ, guiding us to the kingdom of heaven. O apostle and teacher of the true Faith, faithful advocate and defender of all the oppressed: Now that you rejoice in the presence of the Lord, do not forget this land of ours here below. Beg Christ, our God, to save our souls.”

Troparion, Tone IV

TODAY’S EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 3:4-11
GALATIANS 5:22-6:2

TODAY’S GOSPEL: LUKE 14:16-24
LUKE 6:17-23

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Saturday, December 19 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers; Confessions

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, December 14	II Timothy 2:20-26	Mark 8:11-21
Tuesday, December 15	II Timothy 3:16-4:4	Mark 8:22-26
Wednesday, December 16	II Timothy 4:9-22	Mark 8:30-34
Thursday, December 17	Titus 1:5-2:1	Mark 9:10-16
Friday, December 18	Titus 1:15-2:10	Mark 9:33-41
Saturday, December 19	Galatians 3:8-12	Luke 13:18-29
	Ephesians 1:16-23	Luke 14:1-11

COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER:
13, TODAY

Second Sunday Food Sale

***HOLIDAY FOOD SALE!
TODAY
IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.***

Everyone is welcome to shop holiday favorites
following the Divine Liturgy.

Tables are set up in the Fellowship Hall.

PARISH COUNCIL MEETING:

The Parish Council meeting for this week has been cancelled.

DONATION ENVELOPES:

The boxes of envelopes for 2021 weekly offerings are available in the vestibule.

BOOK CIRCLE:

The St. Elizabeth Book Circle has been cancelled for this month.

OCA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY:

Last Friday, December 4, the Cleveland Deanery of our Diocese had a "virtual" celebration of the OCA's 50th Anniversary of its Autocephaly. A special service for the North American Saints was followed by a presentation about the liturgical life of our Church by Fr. Alexander Garklavs. The program was recorded and is available on the website of St. Nicholas Church, Moagadore, which hosted the event. Click here to watch: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5tfLKISxUQ&feature=youtu.be

SPECIAL COLLECTION FOR OCF:

The Orthodox Christian Fellowship is a Pan-Orthodox ministry that keeps Orthodox college students connected with their faith. It provides fellowship, friendship and comfort to young people during what is often a difficult and confusing time of life. Our parish is proud to acknowledge that one of our parishioners, Andrew Gluntz, is currently the chair of the OCF's Student Leadership Board, and his sister, Alexandra, is a regional Student Leader.

We are currently collecting donations to support the OCF. There is a special basket designated at the rear of the church. If writing a check, please make out to "Holy Trinity Orthodox Church."

FLOWERS:

The flowers today are offered by Pauline Smolarchuk in memory of her husband John.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS:

Please donate for the flowers that adorn our church during the Nativity season. There is a special envelope in your box.

Lord, I seek You with all my heart, with all the strength You have given me.

I long to understand that which I believe.

You are my only hope; please listen to me. Do not let my weariness lessen my desire to find You,
to see Your face.

You created me in order to find You; You gave me strength to seek You.

My strength and my weakness are in Your hands: preserve my strength, and help my weakness.

Where You have already opened the door, let me come in;
where it is shut, open at my knocking.

Let me always remember You, love You, meditate upon You, and pray to You,
until You restore me to Your perfect pattern.

St. Augustine of Hippo

THE TRUE STORY OF THE THREE WISE MEN

The story of the Three Wise Men comes from the Gospel of St. Matthew (Matthew 2:1-12). According to the Gospel, they were from the “East,” that is, somewhere from the regions of what was then called Babylonia but today is Iraq. They arrived in Jerusalem where they met King Herod and ascertained from local scribes that a “ruler who will govern Israel” was prophesied to be born in Bethlehem. The Wise Men were themselves seeking to meet the “King of the Jews.” They found the young Jesus and Mary His mother, and offered Him the gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Warned in a dream not to return to tell Herod where Jesus was, they departed to their own country. The enraged Herod ordered a massacre of all the young boys, aged two and under, fearing a threat to his kingship. Regarding Jesus, the rest of the story is well known, but the Wise Men disappeared from history, until now. Some never-before information about them was found among manuscripts in one of the Middle East cities that was overrun during the recent conflicts there. This manuscript appears to have been written after the Wise Men’s return to Babylon from Bethlehem. Assisting them on their arduous journey were several servants, one of them being a gifted writer. From this account, we learn the fascinating story of their real motives and also of the inspiring encounter the Wise Men had with Jesus’ Mother.

We had been travelling for over three weeks, crossing the arid places of Kedar as we came to the high country near Judea. We were tired after crossing over the hills and set up camp on the Western side. In the distance, we could see the body of water that locals call the “Bare luc” [“Salt sea of Lot”]. As the sun set, we again saw the bright star, now higher in the sky, which Balthazar said indicated that we are nearing our destination.

We set up camp, a fire was made, the servants prepared food, which we hungrily ate, as we had been journeying all day. After dinner the wise men spent some time in lively conversation before going off to sleep. That evening they were especially talkative and excited; because they now felt they were closer to their intended encounter with the King that they hoped to meet. All three were in great anticipation and hope for the coming encounter, and, as best as I can remember, they expressed their hopes for their meeting with the King.

Melchior: “I cannot wait until we reach our goal, as the journey has been difficult. I also have had to carry the heavier load, which you two have been spared doing. I’ve brought a good portion of gold to give to this young boy King, and it’s much more a burden than your frankincense or myrrh, plus, I’ve had to keep a constant eye on it, so that the servants wouldn’t take a coin or two, or thieves steal during the night. But I’m not complaining!

“This gold will be a great gift, because, as any king in the world knows, gold is the key to happiness. With gold you can buy any things you want or need: love, friendship, servants, expensive and exotic foods, tasty and intoxicating spirits that gladden the heart. Oh, just anything that is anything can be bought, and gold is the surest and secure means of buying. So, in giving that King gold, I know that he will know that we speak the same language, that is, of commerce, trade, exchange of riches for services, for security, for comfort. If he likes gold like I like gold, he’ll be coming into a lot more of it when he grows up, and then, he’ll remember with whom to share his riches. Me!”

(To be continued)