

SEVEN HOLY MACCABEE MARTYRS

The seven holy Maccabee martyrs Abim, Antonius, Gurias, Eleazar, Eusebonus, Alimus and Marcellus, their mother Solomonia and their teacher Eleazar suffered in the year 166 before Christ under the impious Syrian king Antiochus IV Epiphanes. This foolish ruler loved pagan and Hellenistic customs and held Jewish customs in contempt. He did everything possible to turn people from the Law of Moses and from their covenant with God. He desecrated the Temple of the Lord, placed a statue of the pagan god Zeus there and forced the Jews to worship it. Many people abandoned the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but there were also those who continued to believe that the Savior would come.

A 90-year-old elder, the scribe and teacher Eleazar, was brought to trial for his faithfulness to the Mosaic Law. He suffered tortures and died at Jerusalem.

The disciples of St. Eleazar, the 7 Maccabee brothers and their mother Solomonia, also displayed great courage. They were brought to trial in Antioch by king Antiochus Epiphanes. They fearlessly acknowledged themselves as followers of the True God, and refused to eat pig's flesh, which was forbidden by the Law.

The eldest brother acted a spokesman for the rest, saying that they preferred to die rather than break the Law. He was subjected to fierce tortures in sight of his brothers and their mother. His tongue was cut out, he was scalped, and his hands and feet were cut off. Then a cauldron and a large frying pan were heated, and the first brother was thrown into the frying pan where he died.

The next five brothers were tortured one after the other. The seventh and youngest was the last one left alive. Antiochus suggested to St. Solomonia to persuade the boy to obey him and live. Instead, the brave mother told him to imitate the courage of his brothers.

The child upbraided the king and was tortured even more cruelly than his brothers had been. After all her children had died, St. Solomonia stood over their bodies, raised up her hands in prayer to God and died.

Their martyric deaths inspired Judas Maccabeus, and he led a revolt against Antiochus Epiphanes. With God's help, he gained the victory and then purified the Temple at Jerusalem. He also threw down the altars which the pagans had set up in the streets. All these events are related in the Second Book of Maccabees (Ch. 8-10).

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ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

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COMING EVENTS

AUGUST:

6, 7, 8	Parking for St. Pokrova festival
8, Sunday	Parish Council meeting
22, Sunday	Parish Picnic
23, Monday	Cooking for St. Herman's House
25, Wednesday	Delivering meals to St. Herman's House

APPRECIATION:

The Rummage & Bake Sale held over the past couple of days was a big success! This was the product of several weeks of preparations and work. Much thanks to all who organized, worked on, donated to and participated in the Sale.

PARKING LOT VOLUNTEERS:

St. Pokrova Church will have their annual festival on August 6, 7 and 8; and they will be using our parking lot for their guests. We will need parking lot attendants throughout the weekend. If you are willing to help, please see Fr. Alexander or Mark Karpowicz.

NORTH AMERICAN SAINTS:

There are still some copies available a booklet called, "The Lives of the North American Saints." This is a recent publication of the Cleveland Deanery of our Midwest Diocese, which was prepared for last year's celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Autocephaly of the Orthodox Church in America, which was cancelled due to Covid. Please take one per family; they are located at the back of the church.

CEMETERY LOTS:

Sts. Peter and Paul Church has a parish-owned section (41) in Sunset Memorial Cemetery in North Olmsted. Single and double graves are available; prices vary. Contact Carolyn Carson: cfcarsen@wowway.com or leave a message at 440-734-6260.

YOUNG ADULT COOKING CLASS:

One Friday evening, every other month, a cooking class for ages 21-35(ish) will take place at Sts. Constantine & Helen Church in Cleveland Hts., combining cooking, fellowship, and fun! As dates are subject to change, please RSVP or direct questions to: gorealcleveland@gmail.com OR tcherpas@stsconstantine.com

TRINITARIAN COVERS:

The covers today are offered by Eric and Marjorie Evanoff.

COFFEE HOUR:

The refreshments today are provided by Eric and Marjorie Evanoff.

If you wonder how one whole Christ is given to the faithful equally in many parts, not less to one nor more to the others, wonder also at this, how my one voice is in my mouth and in your ears and at the same time is one voice.

If you wonder how the Body in the Sacrament is not broken when the Lamb is divided, or how in every part is the whole Christ, wonder also at this, when a mirror is broken, yet in each part it appears whole, as in the full mirror.

If you wonder how Christ whom we so often eat does not decrease but remains whole for ever, wonder also at this, when you light from one candle other candles, the light of the candle does not diminish.

Do you wonder how in the little particles of the Sacrament can be the whole Christ? Then wonder how in the pupil of the eye such big cities can be contained. But do not try to probe into this Mystery, but with undoubting faith and love, with heart and deed, give thanks to Almighty God for His unspeakable gifts.

St. Dimitri of Rostov

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THE FEAST OF THE PROCESSION OF THE HOLY CROSS

“Come, all you lovers of the feasts, and as we now keep festival, let us be bright and joyous at the Procession of the Cross, crying with undoubting faith: O Cross of Christ, do you sanctify us by the grace of Him exalted upon you, and rescue us by your power from all forms of evil.”

(From the service of the Procession of the Cross)

Today, August 1, the Orthodox Church celebrates the Feast of the Procession of the Holy Cross. This is the lesser of the three feasts of the Cross of Christ. There are the two “great” feasts of the Cross: the Exaltation of the Holy Cross on September 14, and the Veneration of the Cross on the Third Sunday in Great Lent. The Procession of the Cross on August 1 does not have the high distinction of those days but does have similar liturgical elements. As you can see today, the Cross is honored by placement in the center of the church for our personal veneration.

The origin of this feast of the Cross is connected to customs that took place in Constantinople during the second half of the first millennium. During the month of August, in the waning, hot and humid days of Summer, many people became afflicted with diseases. To provide spiritual relief and comfort, a portion of the relic of the True Cross was taken in liturgical processions throughout the city from August 1 until the Feast of the Dormition. Stopping in certain places, clergy would serve a short service to the Holy Cross and the Theotokos, allowing people to venerate the relic and anoint them with Holy Water. Around the 12th century, the Church designated August 1 as a feast day of the Procession of the Holy Cross.

In Russia the Feast became associated with an important historical event. According to written chronicles, it was on August 1 that the people of Kiev were baptized in the Dnieper River by the order of St. Prince Vladimir. This event was regarded as a providential occurrence, and it conveniently blended with the tradition of the Lesser Blessing of Water on the Feast. Among Russian Orthodox Christians, this holiday is known as the “First Feast of the Savior” in August; the “Second Feast” being Transfiguration (August 6), and the “Third Feast” the Feast of the “Icon of the Image of Christ” (August 16). An additional religious tradition is that honey and apiaries are blessed on this day.

All of the feasts of the Cross are important, each having special qualities. Here is how one Orthodox theologian described their unique spiritual dimensions:

One could say that the feast in September is the “discovery” of the Cross, its encounter with the soul, our first contact with the Cross of Jesus - not only the historical Cross but also our own bearing of the Cross and sharing in the Cross God gives us in our own life. The feast in Lent signifies that the Cross is set up and adored in our hearts: we recognize its supreme authority over ourselves. August’s feast is really a “procession”: it is about “following” the Cross where it leads us, and thus forms the practical outcome of the previous feasts.

The above passage is by a Monk of the Eastern Church