



HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH

THROUGH THE CROSS JOY HAS COME INTO ALL THE WORLD

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NEW MARTYRS & CONFESSORS

By Rebecca Dillingham

In joy the Russian Church forms a choir,

Praising her New Martyrs and Confessors:

*Hierarchs and priests, royal Passion Bearers, right-believing
princes and princesses,*

Venerable men and women and all Orthodox Christians,

*Who during the days of godless persecution laid down
their life for faith in Christ,*

And preserved the truth by the shedding of blood.

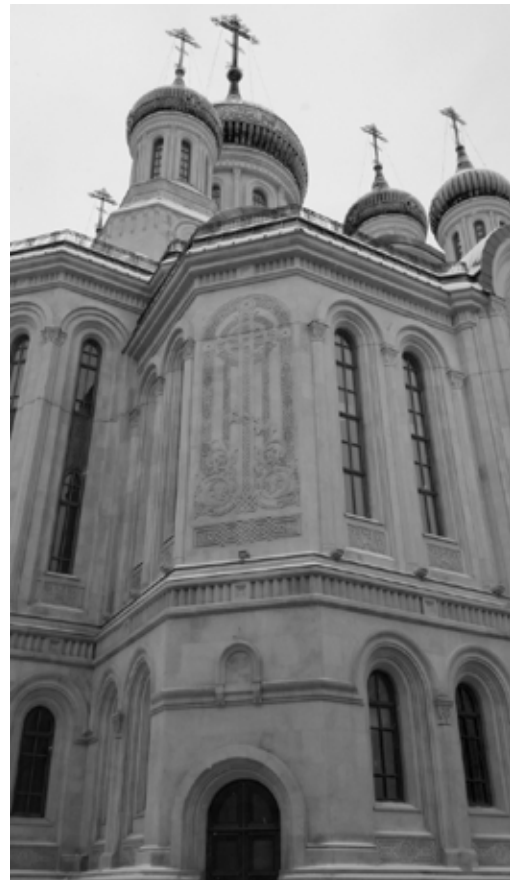
*By their protections, O long-suffering Lord, keep Russia
in Orthodoxy till the end of the age.*

Troparion for the New Martyrs of Russia

Today, the Orthodox Church commemorated the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia. The event celebrates those who were subjected to abuse or murdered for their faith in Christ after the October Revolution in 1917. The date of the feast was chosen to coincide with the death of the first Hieromartyr of the Bolshevik Yoke, Metropolitan Vladimir of Kiev.

In December 2018, my family and I visited Moscow's Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors, which was completed in 2017 to mark 100 years since the Bolshevik Revolution. It's nestled within Sretenksy Monastery – a cloistered Holy place founded in 1397 by Grand Prince Vasili I.

The origin of the monastery's name comes from "Sretnie," which is the Church Slavonic word for "meeting." So, it was built on the spot where on August 26, 1395, the Muscovites and Vasili had "met" the religious icon of Our Lady of Vladimir, as it was moved from Vladimir to Moscow in order to protect the capital from Mongol attack. Soon thereafter, the invading heathen armies re-



Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors in Moscow, one of the many new Orthodox churches built in Russia in the past 20 years.

reated and the grateful monarch founded the monastery to exalt the miracle.

In 1552, the Muscovites "met" again at the monastery walls when greeting the returning Russian army after their retaking of Kazan under Ivan the Terrible. This put an end to 100 years of Mongolian Khan rule in that southwestern Russian city.

Russia knows a thing or two about the tyranny of barbaric religiosity. But it was the atheist Communists who "disas-

sembled” many of the older churches within the Sretensky. Some of the very same 14th-century structures that were present during the Rus’ conquest over the Golden Horde and stood reverently for 600 years were snuffed out in an instant by Soviet despotism.

Interestingly, the monastery is located in Lubyanka, an area of Moscow known for its infamous Soviet prison. It was said that if you were sent to Lubyanka, you’d never come back. The former NKVD headquarters are next door to Sretensky, as well.

Such is the irony that is woven into the fabric of modern-day Russia: a country whose past is filled with both pride and persecution, gloried sagas and shocking suppression, national identity and foreign rule, and whose future is built upon both ancient faith and modern aspirations.

The full body of Hieromartyr Hilarion Troitsky, Archbishop of Vereiya is in repose at the large Sretensky church. Images of New Martyrs and Confessors adorn the walls, columns, and ceilings, such as the icon of the Russian imperial family, the Romanovs.

The New Martyrs of Russia stand in white robes before the Lamb of God,

And with the angels they sing the hymn of victory to God:

Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and praise, and honor,

And power, and strength be to our God

Unto ages of ages. Amen.

In July 1918, the Romanovs and their four servants (who chose to accompany them into imprisonment in Yekater-

inburg) were shot and bayoneted to death by Bolsheviks – the final blow of the ascendant Soviets’ smashing of the old, traditional order, thus, solidifying the new, totalitarian state system.

There was debate as to whether the tsar and his family were “martyrs,” meaning people who are killed explicitly for their faith. But in 2000, Moscow Patriarchate Alexy II canonized the family as “passion bearers”: pious Christians who face death with resignation, but do so in a Christ-like manner.

It’s estimated that more Christians were martyred under Soviet Communism than were during the first three centuries of Christianity. “The Russian Church lost millions of its sons and daughters, not only at the hands of external enemies, but also those of their own country,” states the Orthodox Church of America. “Among those who were murdered and tortured in the years of persecution were countless Orthodox:

laity, monks, priests, and bishops, whose only ‘crime’ was their unshakable faith in God.”

About 20 miles outside of Moscow in the Leninsky District is the Butovo Firing Range. Some call it the “Russian Golgotha,” as it was the site of industrial-scale executions that took place during Joseph Stalin’s Great Terror.

Between August 1937 and October 1938, an estimated 20,765 people were executed and buried at Butovo. About 1,000 of these victims were Orthodox clergy. These are the New Martyrs of Butovo, who are symbolized as the entombed saints at the bottom of the Butovo Icon.

The purge was at its height during these two years, with an average of 50 “enemies of the people” murdered here daily, although February 28, 1938, ranks first, with 562 people



Cross to the New Martyrs and Confessors near an entrance of Sretensky

shot and killed on that one single date. Butovo remained a functioning “firing range” for dissidents until 1953.

In 2017, the “Garden of Memory” opened and is made of an angular horseshoe-shaped granite wall. At 984-feet long and 6 1/2-feet high, the giant monument features the names of those who perished at Butovo only between 1937-1938 – a shocking testament to the evils of Communism.

During Divine Liturgy today, the Gospel reading was Luke 21:8-19, which advised the weary to be strengthened in Christ and the distracted to stay focused on the Son of Man.

The Lord said, “Take heed that you are not astray; for many shall come in My name, saying ‘I am he!’ and ‘The time is at hand!’ Do not go after them. And when you hear of wars and tumult, do not be terrified; for this must first take place, but the end shall not be at once. ... there shall be great terrors and great signs from heaven.”

“But before all this they shall lay their hands on you and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues and prisons, and you shall be brought before kings and governors for My name’s sake. This shall be a time for you to bear testimony. ... You shall be delivered up even by parents and brothers and kinsmen and friends, and some of you they shall put to death; you shall be hated by all for My name’s sake. But do not a hair of your head shall perish. By your endurance you shall win your souls.”

Russia’s New Martyrs and Confessors are a witness to this. It’s like my priest explains, “Our salvation is much more than ... simply being saved from something. It is rather being saved to something.” Through their tribulation and righteousness, these saints were never separated from the love of God. *That* is salvation. *That* is freedom.

The saints are a lesson in rebirth and redemption. St. John Chrysostom preached that “We have been freed from punishment, we have put off all wickedness, and we have been reborn from above, and we have risen again.”

In 1940, Archpriest Gregory Petroff clung to these truths as he died in a Soviet prison camp. Found on his dead body was the “Akathist of Thanksgiving,” which was written by Metropolitan Tryphon of Turkestan during the height of Communist oppression in the 1930s.

“No one can put together what has crumbled into dust. But You can restore a conscience turned to ashes; You can

restore to its former beauty a soul lost and without hope.” The new martyrs and confessors – preservers of truth through the shedding of blood – are a lived reminder of this. Let us not forget. Beauty for ashes.



PROLOGUE TO THE GREAT LENT

The Holy Church offers us five Sundays that help us enter the frame of mind we need for the “joy-creating sorrow” of the Great Lent:

- ✙ The Sunday of Zaccheus
- ✙ The Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee
- ✙ The Sunday of the Prodigal Son
- ✙ The Sunday of the Last Judgment
- ✙ The Sunday of Forgiveness

In his introduction to the *Lenten Triodion*, Metropolitan Kallistos Ware points out the Gospel reading of the publican Zacchaeus,

... describing how Zacchaeus climbed a tree beside the road where Christ was to pass. In this reading, we note Zacchaeus’ sense of eager expectation, the intensity of his desire to see our Lord, and we apply this to ourselves. If, as we prepare for Lent, there is real eagerness in our hearts, if we have an intense desire for a clearer vision of Christ, then our hopes will be fulfilled during the fast; indeed, we shall, like Zacchaeus, receive far more than we expect. But if there is within us no eager expectation and no sincere desire, we shall see and receive nothing. And so we ask ourselves: What is my state of mind and

will as I prepare to embark upon the Lenten journey?

There is much more information available on our website:
<http://www.holycrossoca.org/orthodoxy/orthodoxy.html>

Open unto me, O Giver of Life, the gates of repentance: for early in the morning my spirit seeks Thy holy temple, bearing a temple of the body all defiled. But in Thy compassion cleanse it by Thy loving-kindness and Thy mercy.

As I ponder in my wretchedness the many evil things that I have done, I tremble for the fearful day of judgment. But trusting in Thy merciful compassion, like David do I cry to Thee: Have mercy upon me, O God, in Thy great mercy.

*From Matins, Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee,
Lenten Triodion*



THE PUBLICAN AND THE PHARISEE

The Word who humbled Himself even to the form of a servant, showed that humility is the best path to exaltation. Every man, then, who hum-

bles himself according to the Lord's example, is exalted on high.

The Pharisee was exalted in his righteousness, and so he fell. The Publican was abased, defiled by many sins; yet he was exalted and, against all expectation, he was justified.

Though he was rich in virtues, foolish pride brought the Pharisee to poverty; but in the extremity of his need the Publican was justified through his humility. Let us also gain humility.

*From Matins, Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee,
Lenten Triodion.*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Moleben on our property: We will continue serving a weekly short prayer service on our property in Kernersville. This is a service of supplication (Molieben) that Archbishop Dimitri of blessed memory blessed for the use of parishes in the diocese. Fr. Christopher will be serving it on Friday mornings at 10 AM except where noted in the calendar. Our property is located at 1320 Masten Drive in Kernersville.

Sisterhood of the Holy Myrrhbearers: The Sisterhood will meet from 11:00AM-1:00PM on Saturday February 15 for a brunch Baby Shower for Amelia Weesner, hosted by Becki King in Jamestown.

Order Gift Cards Through Holy Cross! Scrip cards are available from hundreds of retailers and don't cost any

more than the face value of the gift card. It's a "free" fundraiser to benefit the Holy Cross building fund! Contact Karen Brudnak-Slate.



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

January	Actual	Budgeted
Income	\$9,577	\$13,317
Expense	\$11,079	\$11,019



HUMILITY FREES US NOT ONLY FROM VAINGLORY, BUT ALSO FROM DESPAIR

Our culture teaches us to stand up for our rights, our self-determination, our autonomy, to be strong, to be proud of who we are. Jesus never championed oppression or tyranny, but He turns the way of this world upside down, and calls us to deny ourselves, to be humble and lowly of heart. True humility not only frees us from destructive pride, but also liberates us from equally destructive despair.

The crafty enemy lies in wait for the righteous and despoils them through vainglory, while he binds sinners fast in the noose of despair. But let us emulate the Publican and hasten to escape from both these evils.

In our prayer let us fall down before God, with tears and fervent cries of sorrow, emulating the Publican in the humility which lifted him on high; and let us sing in faith: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

From Matins, Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee, Lenten Triodion.



HOLY CROSS ORTHODOX CHURCH



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 6 PM Great Vespers
2 MEETING of Christ with Symeon Sunday of Zacchaeus 9AM Baptism 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	3	4	5 6:30PM Compline & Catechism Class	6	7 10AM Prayers at the Property	8 6 PM Great Vespers
9 Publican & Pharisee 9AM Church School 9AM Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy 6:30PM OCAT Home Meeting	10 Fast-free week	11 Fast-free week	12 Fast-free week	13 Fast-free week	14 Fast-free week 10AM Prayers at the Property	15 Fast-free week 11AM Sisterhood 6 PM Great Vespers
16 Prodigal Son 9AM Church School 9AM Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	17	18	19 6:30PM Compline & Catechism Class	20 6PM Parish Council	21 10AM Prayers at the Property	22 6 PM Great Vespers
23 Last Judgment 9AM Church School 9AM Adult Class 9:40AM Hours 10AM Divine Liturgy	24 Cheesefare	25 Cheesefare	26 Cheesefare	27 Cheesefare	28 Cheesefare NO Prayers at the Property 5PM Open Door	29 Cheesefare

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