



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 104 July 2017



The Legacy of St Sergei

Remembered on the Day of the Uncovering of his Holy Relics

The relics of Saint Sergius were uncovered on 5 July, 1422. In the year 1408, when Moscow and its environs were invaded by the Tatar horde of Edigei, the Trinity monastery was devastated and burned, and the monks, led by Saint Nikon, the igumen, hid themselves in the forests. They saved the ikons, sacred vessels, books and other holy things connected with the memory of Saint Sergius. In a vision on the eve of the Tatar incursion, Saint Sergius informed his disciple and successor about the coming tribulations. He also said that the vexation would not be prolonged but that the monastery, arising from the ashes, would flourish and grow even more. His words came true, and before the beginning of the construction of the new temple of the Life-Creating Trinity on the site of the former wooden one, Saint Sergius appeared again, to a certain pious layman, and bid him inform the igumen and the brethren: “Why do you leave me so long in the grave, covered by earth and in the water, constraining my body?” During the construction of the cathedral, when they dug the ditches for the foundations, the incorrupt relics of Saint Sergius were uncovered and brought up. All were astonished that not only his body, but also his clothing was undamaged, although there was water around the grave. Amidst a large throng of the devout and the clergy, the holy relics were removed from the ground and placed temporarily in the wooden Trinity church (at this spot now stands the church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit). With the consecration of the stone Trinity cathedral in 1426, the relics were transferred into it, where they remain.

All the threads of the spiritual life of the Russian Church converge towards the great saint and wonderworker of Radonezh, and through all of Orthodox Rus the grace-filled, life-creating currents radiate outwards from the Trinity monastery he founded. The spiritual contribution of Saint Sergius in teaching the theology of the Holy Trinity is very significant. The monk had profound insight into the secret mysteries of theology, with the "spiritual eyes" of the ascetic in prayerful ascent to the Tri-Hypostatic God.

"If a man loves Me," says the Lord, "he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). Abba Sergius, in everything observing the commands of Christ, belongs to the rank of holy saints in the souls of whom the Holy Trinity "has made abode." He fashioned himself into "an abode of the Holy Trinity," and everyone with whom Saint Sergius associated, he elevated and brought into communion with the Holy Trinity.

The Radonezh ascetic, with his disciples, enriched the Russian and the universal Church with a new knowledge and vision of the Life-Creating Trinity, the Beginning and Source of life, manifesting Itself to the world and to mankind in the "Sobornost'" ["Communality"] of the Church, in brotherly unity and the sacrificial redemptive love of its pastors and children. In the spiritually symbolic gathering together of Rus in unity and love, the historical effort of the nation became a temple of the Life-Creating Trinity, built by Saint Sergius, "so that by constant attention to the Trinity, it would conquer the hateful discord of this world."

"The hateful discord," quarrels and commotions of worldly life were surmounted by the monastic coenobitic life, planted by Saint Sergius throughout all Rus. People would not have divisions, quarrels and war, if human nature, created by the Trinity in the image of the Divine Tri-Unity, were not distorted and impaired by ancestral sin. Overcoming by co-crucifixion with the Saviour the sin of particularity and separation, repudiating the "my own" and the "myself," in accord with the teachings of Saint Basil the Great, the coenobitic monks restored the First-created unity and sanctity of human nature. The monastery of Saint Sergius became for the Russian Church the model for renewal and rebirth. In it were formed holy monks, bearing forth features of the true path of Christ to remote regions. In all their works and actions, Saint Sergius and his disciples gave a churchly character to life, giving the people a living example.

To Saint Sergius, as to an inexhaustible font of spiritual prayer and grace of the Lord, thousands of the people come in veneration for edification and for prayers, for help and for healing. And each of those having recourse with faith to his wonderworking relics he heals and renews, fills with power and with faith, transforms and guides upwards with his light-bearing spirituality. But it was not only spiritual gifts and grace-filled healings that were bestowed on all who approached the relics of Saint Sergius with faith; God also gave him the grace to defend the Russian land from its enemies. The monk by his prayers was with the army of Demetrius of the Don at the Battle of Kulikovo Pole ("Field"), -- he even blessed his own monks, Alexander Peresvet and Andrew Oslyab to serve in the army. He told Ivan the Terrible where to build the fortress of Sviyazhsk and helped in the victory over Kazan. During the Polish incursion, Saint Sergius appeared in a dream to the Nizhni Novgorod citizen Cosmas Minin, ordering him to gather funds and equip an army for the liberation of Moscow and the Russian realm. And when, in 1612 after a Molieben to the Holy Trinity, the militia of Minin and Pozharsky moved towards Moscow, a propitious breeze fluttered the Orthodox standards, "as though from the grave of the Wonderworker Sergius himself."

For one and a half years, from September 23, 1608 to January 12, 1610, the Polish laid siege to the monastery of the Life-Creating Trinity, hoping to plunder and destroy this sacred bulwark of Orthodoxy. But by the intercession of the Most Holy Theotokos, and through the prayers of Saint Sergius, "with much disgrace" they fled finally from the walls of the monastery, pursued by divine wrath, and soon even their leader Lisovsky perished in a cruel manner on the very day of Saint Sergius's commemoration, September 25, 1617. In 1618, the son of the Polish king, Vladislav, came right up to the walls of the Holy Trinity monastery. But being powerless against the grace of the Lord guarding the monastery, he was compelled to conclude a peace treaty with Russia at the monastery village of Deulino. After this, a church was built in the name of Saint Sergius.

In later times, the monastery continued to be an inextinguishable torch of spiritual life and enlightenment. From its brethren, many famed hierarchs of the Russian Church were chosen for service, one after another. In the year 1744, for its service to the country and the Faith, the monastery was designated as a Lavra. In 1742 a religious seminary was established within its enclosure, and in the year 1814 the Moscow Spiritual Academy was transferred there. And at present the Domicile of the Life-Creating Trinity serves as one of the primary centres of grace of the Russian Orthodox Church. Here, at the promptings of the Holy Spirit, the Local Councils of the Russian Church take place. At the monastery is a place of residence of His Holiness the Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus, which carries upon it the special blessing of Saint Sergius, in the established form, "Archimandrite of the Holy Trinity-Saint Sergius Lavra." The fifth of July, the day of the Uncovering of the relics of holy Abba Sergius, igumen of the Russian Land, is a solemn feast day at the monastery.



Ikon depicting St Sergius' vision of the birds, during which he heard a heavenly Voice saying, 'As many birds as thou seest, by so many will thy flock of disciples increase; and after thy time they will not grow less if they will follow in thy footsteps'.

Notes & Jottings

DEVELOPMENTS & COLLEGE NEWS

On 30 June the new chandlery (workshop for candle making) was constructed in the grounds. Electricity and water will be connected this coming week. The previous workshop will be cleared of unwanted junk and used as a store for tools and all the miscellaneous items that need to be stored but are currently filling the double garage. This garage had been constructed by the previous owners, who had sacrificed part of the house (the laundry in the servants' wing) for the purpose. The idea is to reincorporate this area, together with the old scullery, into the house as a common room for social purposes.

The college has benefitted by gifts from Jonathan and Sue Olanczuk who have donated a filing cabinet and a swivel chair for the office, large serving dishes for the dining room, plus numerous books for the library and many other items. We very much appreciate this generous support.

Last week a further piece (the top section) of the cross on the main cupola fell to the ground, revealing just how weak and rotten the wood had become. Clearly replacement crosses need to be made of metal.

Sadly, College Day has been cancelled this year. The plan was to hold this annual event on the first Saturday in September (2 Sept this year) as usual. This is now impossible because Bishop Irenei has called the clergy to London on that day, for a Diocesan Clergy Convention and Diocesan Assembly Meeting. As a matter of interest, we note that this day is the 35th anniversary of the repose of Fr Seraphim (Rose) of Platina – Memory Eternal.

Looking ahead, please make a note, in your diary, that Founder's Day is on Wednesday 15 November. This will be the 7th anniversary of the repose of the Foundress. There will be the usual programme of requiem services. Prayers will be said at the tomb of the Foundress and the memorial meal will be served in the college dining room.

SAINT BOTOLPH OF IKEN

On Saturday 1 July we made our annual pilgrimage to Iken to sing the Akathist in honour of the great 7th Century monk, St Botolph who founded a monastery in the remotest part of Suffolk. Fr Antony and Fr Dn Andrew we joined by Fr Liviu Barbu (Mettingham and Gillingham), Fr Evgeny Selensky (Ipswich) and Fr Alexander Haig (Colchester) for this joyous occasion. We were entertained to a splendid buffet lunch at the former school house by churchwarden Annabel Chamberlain. We are grateful to Annabel and Colin Chamberlain, who very kindly made their beautiful garden available for the occasion. On taking our leave, Annabel said, "See you next year". According to the calendar, the last Saturday in the month will be 30 June. Clearly, we will confirm this later. Also, for those of you who rely on a satnav, we've been asked to provide the post code. This is duly noted and will be added to next year's flyer announcing the pilgrimage.

NAMEDAYS

2 July – **St John the Wonderworker** - William John Stewart

9 July – **St Dionysii of Suzdal** – Didier (Dionysii) Dembri

12 July – **Holy Apostles Peter & Paul** – Archpriest Paul Elliott, Peter Bauer Smith, Peter Jermy

18 July – **New Martyr Saint Elizabeth** – Elizabeth Tattum-Smith

24 July – **St Olga, Princess of Rus** – Olga Ward. Oliga Jermy

30 July – **Great Martyr Marina of Antioch** – Marina Lock, Marina Andrews, Marina Randall. Marina Jermy

We send congratulations to everyone who is celebrating a nameday at this time and wish them

MANY YEARS!



**COLLEGIATE CHURCH OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
JOY OF ALL WHO SORROW**

JULY 2017

Sunday 2 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St John the Wonderworker)

Saturday 8 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 9 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St David of Thessalonica)

Tuesday 11 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Wednesday 12 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Festal Liturgy (Holy Apostles Peter & Paul)

Saturday 15 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 16 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Martyr Hyacinth and those with him)

Saturday 22 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 23 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Holy 45 Martyrs at Nicopolis)

Saturday 29 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 30 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Great-martyr Marina/Margaret)



In the coming Kingdom of God there will be unity, mutual love and concord.

St John Maximovitch

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