



“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No 51 February 2013



The Feast of the Meeting of our Lord and God and Saviour in the Temple; or the Purification of the Immaculate Virgin Mary

This feast commemorates the bringing of Jesus Christ to the temple by the Most Holy Mother of God, after the fulfilment of the days of purification (Lk. 2:22-39), established in the law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8; Ex. 13:2, 13; Num. 3:13, 8:16-18) with an offering for redemption consisting of 5 shekels. Although the Immaculate Virgin had no need of purification, she nonetheless came to the temple to fulfil the law. In the temple the Child was met by the Righteous Simeon. In sacred joy the holy elder sings praise and thanksgiving to God, having fulfilled the expectation of his heart, and, inspired with the feeling of unearthly blessing, takes the Child in his embrace and in the decline of his days utters the wonderful words, which the Holy Church repeats daily in the Vespers hymn at sunset:

Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy Word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel (Lk. 2:29-32).

Hearing these words, Joseph and Mary marvelled at them for these words clearly witnessed that the mystery of God was already revealed to the Righteous Simeon. Continuing then his divinely inspired prophesy, the righteous elder turned to Mary and pointing to the Child, said:

Behold, this Child is set for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword will pierce through thine own soul also), that the thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed (Lk. 2:34-35)

While the holy elder uttered his prophetic speech about the Divine Child, the Righteous Anna was in the temple. She also added her inspired voice to the voice of Simeon, giving glory to God and prophesying about the Child. Having fulfilled in the temple all that was required by the Law of Moses, Joseph and Mary returned to Nazareth with the Divine Child.



From the event of the meeting of the Divine Child by the righteous Simeon the feast received its name in the Orthodox Church. The Event of the Meeting is celebrated on 2 February because this day is forty days after the Feast of the Nativity on 25 December. The origin of the feast goes back to deep antiquity. Undoubtedly, this feast was known in the 4th Century in the Church of Jerusalem; from here it passed to other churches in the 5th - 6th centuries. The solemn commemoration of the Meeting began in the Greek Church in the time of Justinian (AD 541-542). At the end of 541, in Constantinople and its surroundings, there appeared a terrible plague continuing for 3 months and by the end of each day some 5 - 10 thousand people died. This affliction was soon joined by a new one – an earthquake in Antioch that destroyed many buildings and destroyed a multitude of people. During these afflictions, on the feast of the Meeting of the Lord in Constantinople, an all national solemn prayer, or Litya, was served for deliverance from evil, and the afflictions immediately stopped. In grateful commemoration of this deliverance, the Church prescribed the Litya on this feast before the liturgy in Cathedrals and monasteries. Celebrating

the Meeting of the Lord, the Holy Church, confessing and asserting that "Christ revealed Himself to the world not as an opinion, a phantom, but in truth", accuses those ancient false teachers who rejected the human nature in Jesus Christ, considering this to be unworthy and untrue of God. Together with this example of the Saviour and His Immaculate Mother, who did all that was required by the law, inspires us to fulfil the rules and rites of the Holy Church and reminds us of our churching in the Church of Christ, about our consecration to God, to Whom we also should bring our souls and bodies as a living sacrifice, pure and full of grace. Besides this the Holy Church, singing of Sts. Simeon and Anna on this feast, inspires us to find according to the example of the Righteous Simeon, graceful comfort and salvation in Christ, entrusting to Him a beneficial meditation on his life and death, and by the example of the Prophetess Anna, as often as possible, to visit the temple of God and thank the Lord with prayers and fasting. Finally, the history of the establishment of the feast of the Meeting teaches us, in the afflictions that overtake us, to turn to the Lord God, the ever quick Helper and Protector of all who call on Him with faith and true repentance.

Adapted from Fr Sergei Bulgakov's [Handbook for Church Servers](#)

❖ *Feast of the Meeting of Our Lord, God & Saviour, Jesus Christ* ❖

*Friday 15 February ~ 10.10am Hours & Divine Liturgy followed by
The Blessing of Candles*



Sunday of the New Martyrs & Confessors of Russia Sunday 10 February, 2013

The Life of Patriarch St. Tikhon of Moscow (1865 – 1925)

"Like the ancient leader of the Hebrew people, I shall also be calling to God, exclaiming, "Wherefore hast Thou afflicted Thy Servant? And wherefore have I not found favour in Thy sight that Thou layest the burden of all these people upon me?"... From now on my duty shall be to take care of all the churches of Russia, and to die for their sake every day."

With these words the future Patriarch of all Russia greeted the news that he had been elected to ascend the patriarchal throne. He knew full well that he was being handed a bitter cup: the throne was his Cross and the white patriarch's hood his crown of thorns. For nearly eight years he was to endure great sufferings which fell to him as to the head of the Russian Church during one of the most difficult periods in her history.

Patriarch Tikhon was born Vassily Ivanovich Bellavin on 19 January, 1865, the son of a priest. As an outstanding student in the Ecclesiastical Seminary of Pskov, he was both loved and respected by his classmates. Tall and fair, he was already characterised by firm yet unaffected piety which he preserved to the end of his life. Later, in the St. Petersburg Academy, his fellow students affectionately nicknamed him "the patriarch." How prophetic this proved to be! Who could have foreseen that this quiet and modest young man was to be elected the first patriarch after 217 years of church administration by the Holy Synod?

In 1891 he received the monastic tonsure with the name of Tikhon. In 1898, at the age of 33, he was ordained bishop and appointed to the Aleutian-Alaskan diocese of North America. For seven years he tirelessly laboured there in the Lord's harvest fields, winning the love and respect of his flock. Soon, however, the spiritual and administrative talents of the young hierarch were

recognized and in 1907 he was appointed as Archbishop to Yaroslavl-one of the most important dioceses of Russia.

His simplicity, accessibility and modest demeanour won the hearts of people everywhere, and only he was surprised to hear that the people of Moscow had elected him as their archpastor. Three years later, on 15 August, 1917, he was raised to the rank of Metropolitan and elected Chairman of the Council. This Council was comprised not only of learned theologians, but also of simple peasants one of whom said, "We no longer have a Tsar, no father whom we can love; it is impossible to love the Synod; therefore we, the peasants, want a Patriarch."

Prompted by the intense difficulties facing the Church at that time and the fear that the communists may soon dissolve the Council, it was decided to proceed quickly with the election of a patriarch who could provide the sorely needed spiritual leadership. They chose three candidates by general vote and then cast lots, leaving the final decision to God's will. Thus did Patriarch Tikhon enter the arena as a spiritual warrior, to combat an enemy whose malice was to surpass that which anyone had anticipated or even imagined.

The consecration took place in the Cathedral of the Dormition on 21 November, 1917. The communists had not yet taken a definite stand against the Church and the ceremony was performed amid great triumph and rejoicing. Crowds of people filled the Kremlin and religious processions from all the churches of Moscow gathered on Red Square. Never again was there to be such a display of the Church's might and popularity. The hostile attitude of the godless authorities towards the Church and her faithful servants was soon fanned into a raging blaze of anger and hatred, and hundreds, thousands of the faithful were led like innocent lambs to the slaughter.

The Patriarch tried to bring the evil tyrants to their senses, and called upon the faithful to resist the communists-whom he anathematized as servants of Satan -and, if necessary, to suffer martyrdom. In an epistle to the Soviet of the People's Commisars, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the October revolution, Patriarch Tikhon wrote:

While you were seizing the power, you asked the people to trust you, and made promises to them. But have those promises been fulfilled? You gave a stone instead of a loaf, and a serpent instead of fish (Mt. 7:9-10). You have substituted a soulless international concept for our Motherland. You have divided the people into enemy camps and plunged them into a fratricidal war of an unprecedented cruelty. You have openly replaced Christ's love by hatred ... Mark the anniversary of your rule by liberating those imprisoned by you; by ceasing bloodshed, violence, destruction and oppression of religion.... Otherwise all righteous bloodshed by you, shall be required of you (Lk. 11:51), and 'you that take the sword shall perish by the sword'. (Mt. 26:52) (Epistle of Oct. 26, 1918)

The Patriarch never acted to protect himself and never hesitated to speak out in defence of the Truth.

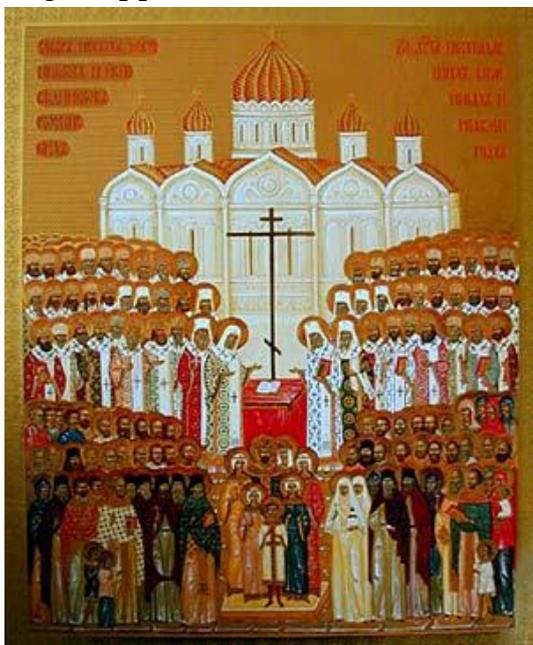


Fearing for his safety, many of his faithful supporters urged him to flee the country, but the Patriarch would not hear of it. "The flight of the Patriarch," he said, "would cause the enemies of the Church to rejoice and they would use it for their own evil purposes." Nevertheless, the Moscow parish communities organized a constant watch over the Patriarch. He continued to fearlessly visit churches in Moscow and elsewhere, drawing large crowds of the faithful who felt in the Patriarch "one of their kind".

The communists, however, were unwilling to make a martyr out of him. Instead they tried to demoralize him by murdering clergy everywhere and weaving about him a net of lies, slander and threats. It was increasingly apparent that nothing he could do or say would pacify their bloody intent to liquidate the clergy whom they blindly accused of counter-revolutionary activity. Under the pretext of raising money to feed the starving populace, the communists ordered the confiscation of Church valuables. Hoping to avoid a blood-bath, the Patriarch issued an appeal, blessing the voluntary donations of valuables. But, the communists would stop at nothing and only used this as an excuse to further terrorize the Church. Some 10,000 executions of the faithful occurred in connection with the requisition of valuables.

Hoping to gain control over the Church, the atheist regime arrested the Patriarch and organized a new Church administration, the so-called "Renovationists," who had the audacity to declare that never before had the Church been so free as it now was under communist rule. While in prison the Patriarch was deliberately misinformed as to the true situation of the Church and came to believe that the Renovationists had all but usurped the Russian Church. Hoping to preserve what little remained, he asked to be released stating that he was no longer an enemy of the Soviet state and expressing regret over the past. He deliberately made this humiliating concession in order to somehow try and save the Church: "Let my name be ruined in historical annals as long as the Church profits by it."

No amount of concession or compromise, however, would satisfy the communists and the position of the Patriarch grew more and more difficult: "It would be easier for me to stay in prison. I am supposed to be free, but actually I can do nothing. I appoint a bishop to the South, and he gets to the North. I send one to the West and they take him to the East." A special agent was assigned to the Patriarch to harass him and extract concessions under the guise of what at first might appear to be beneficial to the Church. The strain of being surrounded by such lies and



deceit, the feeling of responsibility for the persecuted flock, the arrests and exile of his hierarchy-all this caused such a strain on the Patriarch that he became a victim in the fullest sense of the word.

Exhausted physically and mentally, Patriarch Tikhon entered a private hospital on 12 January, 1925. When he was feeling better he would go and serve in the churches of Moscow, returning to the hospital at night. Even there the communist agents continued to torment him. On the eve following the feast of Annunciation, the Holy Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow and all Russia reposed, having voluntarily offered himself to God as a bloodless sacrifice.

(from "Spiritual Heroes of 20th Century, [Orthodox America](#))

CHURCH NOTES AND JOTTINGS

2013 DIRECTORY

The *2013 Directory of Orthodox Parishes & Clergy*, which is published by the Orthodox Fellowship of St John the Baptist, is now available at £4 per copy. It covers all the jurisdictions of the Orthodox Church represented here in the British Isles. We have copies in stock that can be purchased on-line [here](#).

2013 WALL CALENDAR

We still have copies of the wall calendar published by the Russian Orthodox Church's Fund for Assistance. This is a charity that raises funds to support church communities in poor countries. The sale of calendars is part of the fund-raising effort. The calendars cost £10 each and can be purchased on-line [here](#).

NEW VESTMENTS AND GIFTS

The new festal vestments have been completed and were used for the first time on Christmas Day. We have also received the gift of a splendid gong to summon college guests to dinner. Thanks are due to all who have contributed to the Church by bringing flowers to decorate the church for Christmas, and food for the Christmas party and for regular Sunday lunches. We must mention the generous gifts of books for the bookshop and the college library. We are extremely grateful for all the affection and support that we receive. May God bless you all.

GIFT AID

Anybody giving a donation to the Mettingham Orthodox Trust, is urged to sign a Gift Aid Form so that, now we are a registered charity, we can recover the Income Tax that the donor had paid on that donation. If you are a UK Tax Payer, then please fill out and send us back the form on the page below. For every £1 you donate, the Trust can claim back 25p from HMRC. Thus a donation of £10 becomes £12.50, and a donation of £100 becomes £125.

RENOVATIONS

Due to pressure of other work and the festal period, progress with the college renovations has slowed down. Work on the two newly created single bedrooms has been completed. Those two rooms have now been painted and carpeted. Further painting is required in the top landing and back stairs to enable that whole area to be re-carpeted. This work is in hand. After initial problems with water seeping into the new mail-box that was built into one of the new brick gateposts, the builders have now solved this problem. Unhappily the heavy weight of snow did cause a problem with some of the guttering on the church but this is receiving attention.

NAMEDAYS

On 8 February, Sts Xenophon and Mary are commemorated. This was the nameday of Mary Bond, our foundress. On the eve, Thursday 7 February, the regular evening service will be at 6pm and there will be a panikhida at 7.30pm.

To everyone celebrating a nameday at this time we send congratulations & wish you **Many Years!**

21 February - **Great Martyr Theodore Stratelates** - Tudor Daniel Costec

23 February - **St Valentina of Palestine, Martyr** - Valentine Meade

26 February - **St Zoe of Bethlehem** - Zoe Andrews

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GIFT AID DECLARATION

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But who is to work for the spread of the Orthodox Faith for the increase of the children of the Orthodox Church? Pastors and missionaries, you answer. You are right; but are they to be alone? St. Paul wisely compares the Church of Christ to a body, and the life of a body is shared by all the members. So it ought to be in the life of the Church also ... The spread of Christ's faith ought to be near and precious to the heart of every Christian. In this work every member of the Church ought to take a lively and heartfelt interest ...

Holy New Martyr Patriarch Tikhon of Moscow

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