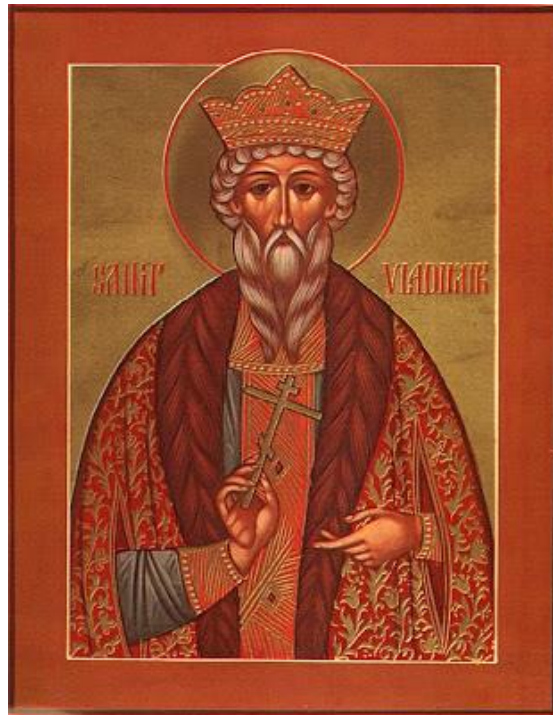




“Joy of All Who Sorrow”

No. 92 July 2016



Holy Prince Vladimir

Baptizer of Russia

The Holy Great Prince Vladimir, Equal of the Apostles. Few names in the annals of history can compare in significance with the name of St Vladimir, the Baptizer of Rus, who stands at the beginning of the spiritual destiny of the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people. Vladimir was the grandson of St Olga. He was born near Vybut, in about the year 960, and was given the Russian pagan name Volodimir, meaning ‘peaceful ruler’ or ‘ruling with a special talent for peace’. In the year 970, his father Svyatoslav set out on a campaign from which he was fated not to return. He had divided the Russian Land among his three sons. At Kiev Yaropolk was prince; at Ovrucha, the center of the Drevlyani lands, was Oleg; at Novgorod was Vladimir. In his first years as prince, we see Vladimir as a fierce pagan. He headed a campaign, in which the whole of pagan Rus was sympathetic to him, against Yaropolk the Christian, or in any case, according to the chronicles, "having given great freedom to the Christians". On 11 July, 978 he entered into Kiev, having become the "sole ruler" of the Kiev realm, "having subdued the surrounding lands, some by peaceful means, and the unsubmissive ones by the sword." But the Lord prepared him for another task: "And upon him came the visitation of the Most High, and the All-Merciful eye of the Good God gazed upon him, and shone forth the thought in his heart, of understanding the vanity of idolatrous delusion, and of appealing to the One God, Creator of all things both visible and invisible." The matter of accepting Baptism was facilitated through external circumstances. The Byzantine Empire was in upheaval under the blows of mutinous regiments, and turned for

help to Vladimir. As a reward for his military help, Vladimir asked for the hand of the emperors' sister Anna, which for the Byzantines was an unheard of audacity. Princesses of the imperial lineage did not marry "barbarian" rulers, even if they were Christians. At the same time the emperor Otto the Great was seeking the hand of Anna for his son, and he was refused. However, in Vladimir's case Constantinople was obliged to consent. Great Prince Vladimir accepted Baptism and sent the military assistance to Byzantium. With the aid of the Russians, the mutineers were destroyed. Together with the empress Anna, there arrived for the Russian See Metropolitan Michael. He came with his retinue and clergy, and many holy relics and other holy things. In ancient Chersonesos, where each stone brings to mind St Andrew the First-Called, there took place the marriage-crowning of St Vladimir and Blessed Anna, both reminiscent and likewise affirming the oneness of the Gospel of Christ in Rus and in Byzantium. In the spring of 988 the Great Prince and his wife set out through the Crimea, Taman and the Azov lands, which had come into the complexions of his vast realm on the return trip to Kiev. Leading the princely cortege with frequent Services of Thanksgiving and incessant priestly singing, they carried crosses, icons and holy relics. It seemed, that the Ecumenical Holy Church was moving into the spacious Russian land, and renewed in the font of Baptism, Holy Rus came forth to meet Christ and His Church. Then followed an unforgettable and quite singular event in Russian history: the morning of the Baptism of the Kievans in the waters of the River Dneipr. On the evening before, St Vladimir declared throughout the city: "If anyone does not go into the river tomorrow, be they rich or poor, beggar or slave, that one shall be my enemy." The sacred wish of the holy Prince was fulfilled without a murmur: "all our land glorified Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit at the same time." It is difficult to overestimate the deep spiritual transformation of the Russian people effected by the prayers of St Vladimir, in every aspect of its life and world-view. In the pure Kievan waters, as in a "bath of regeneration", there was realized a sacramental transfiguration of the Russian spirit, the spiritual birth of the nation, called by God to unforeseen deeds of Christian service to mankind. "Then did the darkness of the idols begin to lift from us, and the dawn of Orthodoxy appear, and the Sun of the Gospel illumined our land." In memory of this sacred event, the regeneration of Rus by water and the Spirit, the Russian Church established the custom of an annual church procession "to the water" on 1 August. Later, the Feast of the Procession of the Honourable Wood of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord, which Russia celebrated with the Greek Church, was combined with the Feast of the All-Merciful Saviour and the Most Holy Theotokos (established by St Andrew Bogoliubsky in the year 1164). In this combination of feasts there is found a precise expression of the Russian theological consciousness, for which both Baptism and the Cross are inseparable. Everywhere throughout Holy Rus, from the ancient cities to the far outposts, St Vladimir gave orders to destroy the pagan sanctuaries, to flog the idols, and in their place to clear land in the hilly woods for churches, in which altars would be consecrated for the Bloodless Sacrifice. Churches of God grew up along the face of the earth, at high elevated places, and at the bends of the rivers, along the ancient trail, as road signs and lamps of national holiness. Concerning the famed church-building activity of St Vladimir, the Metropolitan of Kiev St Hilarion (author of the "Word on Law and Grace") exclaimed: "They demolished the pagan temples, and built up churches, they destroyed the idols and produced holy icons, the demons have fled, and the Cross has sanctified the cities." From the early centuries of Christianity, it was the custom to raise up churches upon the ruins of pagan sanctuaries or upon the blood of the holy martyrs. Following this practice, St Vladimir built the church of St Basil the Great upon a hill, where a sanctuary of Perun had been located, and he built the stone church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos (Desyatinnaya) on the place of the martyrdom of the holy Varangian Martyrs (12 July). The magnificent temple was intended to become the cathedral for the

Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus, and thus the primal altar of the Russian Church. It was built in five years, and was richly adorned with frescoes, crosses, icons and sacred vessels, brought from Korsun. The day of the consecration of the church of the Most Holy Theotokos, 12 May (in some manuscripts 11 May), was ordered by St Vladimir to be inserted into the Church calendar as an annual celebration. This event was linked with other events celebrated on 11 May, and it provided the new Church with a twofold sense of continuity. On this day in the calendar is noted the churchly Founding of Constantinople, dedicated by the holy emperor St Constantine as the new capital of the Roman Empire. The city of Constantine is dedicated to the Most Holy Theotokos (330). On this same day of 11 May, the church of Sophia, the Wisdom of God was consecrated at Kiev (in the year 960 under St Olga). St Vladimir, having had the cathedral church consecrated to the Most Holy Theotokos, followed the example of St Constantine in dedicating the capital city of the Russian Land (Kiev) to the Queen of Heaven. Then a tithe or tenth was bestowed on the church; and since this church had become the centre of the All-Russian collection of churchly tithes, they called it the Tithe church. The most ancient text of the grant, or church rule by holy Prince Vladimir spoke thus: "For I do bestow on this church of the Holy Mother of God a tenth of all my principality, and also throughout all the Russian Land from all the princely jurisdiction a tithe of squirrel-pelts, and from the merchant, a tithe of the week, and from households each year, a tenth of every herd and every livelihood, to the wondrous Mother of God and the wondrous Saviour." The chronicle has preserved a prayer of St Vladimir, with which he turned to the Almighty at the consecration of the Dormition Tithe church: "O Lord God, look down from Heaven and behold, and visit Thy vineyard, which Thy right hand has planted. And make this new people, whom Thou hast converted in heart and mind to know Thee, the True God. And look down upon this Thy church, which Thine unworthy servant has built in the name of the Mother Who gave birth to Thee, the Ever-Virgin Theotokos. And whoever prays in this church, let his prayer be heard, through the prayers of the All-Pure Mother of God." To advance the Faith among the newly enlightened people, learned people and schools were needed to help prepare them. Therefore, St Vladimir and the holy Metropolitan Michael "commanded fathers and mothers to take their young children and send them to schools to learn reading and writing." St Joachim of Korsun set up such a school at Novgorod, and they did the same in other cities. "And there were a multitude of schools of scholars, and of these were there a multitude of philosophers." With a firm hand St Vladimir held in check enemies at the frontiers, and he built fortified cities. After Liturgy on Sundays and Church Feasts there were put out abundant feasting tables for the Kievans, they rang the bells, choirs sang praise, the "transported infirm" sang bylini-ballads and spiritual verses. On 12 May, 996, for example, on the occasion of the consecration of the Tithe church, the prince "made a bright feast." He distributed goods "to many of the poor, and destitute and wanderers, and through the churches and the monasteries. To the sick and the needy he delivered through the streets casks and barrels of mead, and bread, and meat, and fish, and cheese, desiring that all might come and eat, glorifying God." The Baptizer of Rus fell grievously ill and surrendered his soul to the Lord in the village of Spas-Berestov on 15 July, 1015. He had ruled the Russian realm for thirty-seven years (978-1015), twenty-eight of these years after his Baptism. The festal celebration of the holy Equal of the Apostles Vladimir was established under St Alexander Nevsky, in memory of the intercession of St Vladimir on 15 May, 1240, for his help in gaining the renowned victory by Nevsky over Swedish crusaders. But the first veneration of the holy prince began in Rus rather earlier. The Metropolitan of Kiev St Hilarion (+ 1053), in his "Word on Law and Grace," spoken on the day of memory of St Vladimir at the saint's crypt in the Tithe church, calls him "an apostolic sovereign", like St Constantine, and he compares his apostolic evangelisation of the Russian Land to the evangelisation by the holy Apostles.

Sermon by Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky) of Eastern America and New York (+1985) Before the Pannikhida for Archbishop John of San Francisco



In the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit!

The Russian Orthodox people for many years had a belief that bishops of the Orthodox Church die in groups of three, of course over a period of time. This ancient belief just came to mind now. Soon after the last Council of Bishops of the Church Abroad convened, one and a half years ago, a venerable elder, participant of this council, Vladyka Archbishop Stefan, died. Then a year ago or so, the Church Abroad sorrowfully escorted from the path of all mortals their Primate and spiritual father of many years, the unforgettable elder Metropolitan Anastassy. And now finally the third... Yesterday, during all-night vigil, an urgent telephone call was received from Bishop Nektary from California with the sorrowful news: one of the eldest hierarchs of our church, First Deputy of the President of the Synod, the ascetic archpastor Archbishop John, suddenly died in Seattle, where he was accompanying the Miracle-working Kursk-Root Icon of the Mother of God "of the Sign" along with Vladyka Nektary. Stunning news...

Now when I think of Vladyka John, I remember what happened over 30 years ago, when my late father, Vladyka Dimitry, knowing the sorrows and unpleasanties which were being endured in Yugoslavia by the Primate of the Church Abroad, Metropolitan Anthony of blessed memory, invited him to the Far East, to the city of Harbin, where church life was peaceful. "You will rest here with us Vladyka," wrote Vladyka Dimitry the head of the Church Abroad. Vladyka Anthony responded "My friend, I am already so old and feeble that I cannot even think of undertaking such a journey, I can only make the journey to the cemetery... But instead of myself, I am sending you Vladyka John, who is close to my soul and to my heart. This slight, feeble person, almost childlike in appearance, is by some miracle a staunch ascetic and strong in our age of spiritual weakness." This is how Vladyka John was described, who was then still young, only just ordained a bishop, by his great Abbot. Vladyka John was like that then, and so he remained, and even now, in our days, he was right before our eyes a miraculously ascetic person, a lofty example of spiritual and prayerful life. Vladyka John always prayed, Vladyka John prayed everywhere.

When he was still a young man in Harbin, the equally-spiritual monastic, hieromonk Methodius (Yogl), noted perceptively that we all stand up for prayer, but Vladyka John does not need to stand, he is always in a prayerful mood... And whatever changes occurred in his external life, the task of prayer and divine service always took precedence for him, and nothing could tear him away from that.

Not one person can accommodate within himself to be a perfect bearer of all spiritual gifts. Everyone makes mistakes, not one person is free from that. But those knew Vladyka John knew him as a man of prayer, as an archpastor, who cared for human souls and was always ready to help, those who experienced personally and who saw their loved ones benefit from his prayers will never forget Vladyka John, and will always carry within themselves the blessed memory of his warmth and light.

Vladyka John died, his constant prayer with which our great men of prayer burned constantly, has been interrupted—he prayed for everyone and for all. But the Church Abroad will not forget him.



*Pilgrimage to Bawburgh for the 1000th Anniversary of the repose of
St Walstan of Taverham*



Notes & Jottings



IKEN

This year's visit to Iken was more low-key than usual since the churchwardens were both away and thus it was not possible to organise the usual impressive lunch. Never-the-less, Fr Liviu Barbu and a group from the college sang a moleben, with the Akathist in honour of St Botolph, in Iken church on Saturday 25 June. We are grateful to the Vicar, Revd David Murdoch, for permission to use the church.

LOOKING AHEAD

Make a note in your diary that College Day will be on 3 September this year. On this day we commemorate the Ikon of Our Lady of Mettingham by singing the Akathist, in her honour, in church. This is always followed by a social event to welcome visitors. Our patronal festival, in honour of the Ikon of the Mother of God, 'Joy of All Who Sorrow', will be on a Sunday this year; Sunday 6 November. Founder's Day, the 6th anniversary of the repose of the foundress, is on Tuesday 15 November. There will be the usual requiem services; Vigil for the Departed 7.30pm on Monday (14 Nov) and the Liturgy at 10.30am on Tuesday, followed by prayers at the tomb of the foundress.

BOOKS

A further consignment of *Everyday Saints and other stories* by Archimandrite Tikhon (Shevkunov) is expected to arrive any day now. The publishers have asked that we always keep this in stock because there is no other official distributor in this country. We were happy to agree to this.

The newly written Akathist in honour of St Walstan of Taverham was sung for the first time on his millennial anniversary. This text is being prepared for publication in the near future.

Thanks are due to all who donate books to our shop – Olland Bookshop, 22 Upper Olland Street. Bungay. We have something over 20,000 secondhand books in stock covering a vast range of subjects, non-fiction and fiction. Also we stock a range of new books, especially subjects under the general heading of *Local Interest*. The core opening times for the shop, when we guarantee to be open, are 10am – 3pm, Monday to Saturday. However, the shop is usually open for longer than that each day. So, if you are in the area, do call in and browse.

NAMEDAYS

We congratulate all who are celebrating a nameday at this time and wish them:

MANY YEARS!

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

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

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

18 July – **St Elizabeth the New Martyr** – Elizabeth Tattum-Smith

24 July – **St Olga of Rus** – Oliga Jermy

30 July – **St Marina (Margaret) of Antioch** – Marina Lock, Marina Andrews, Marina Randall



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

JULY 2016

Friday 1 July

6.00pm ~ Vigil

Saturday 2 July

9.00am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St John Maximovitch)

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 3 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (All Saints of Russia & Romania)

Saturday 9 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 10 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (All Saints of Britain)

Monday 11 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Tuesday 12 July

10.10am Festal Liturgy for Sts Peter & Paul

Saturday 16 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 17 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (Holy Royal Martyrs)

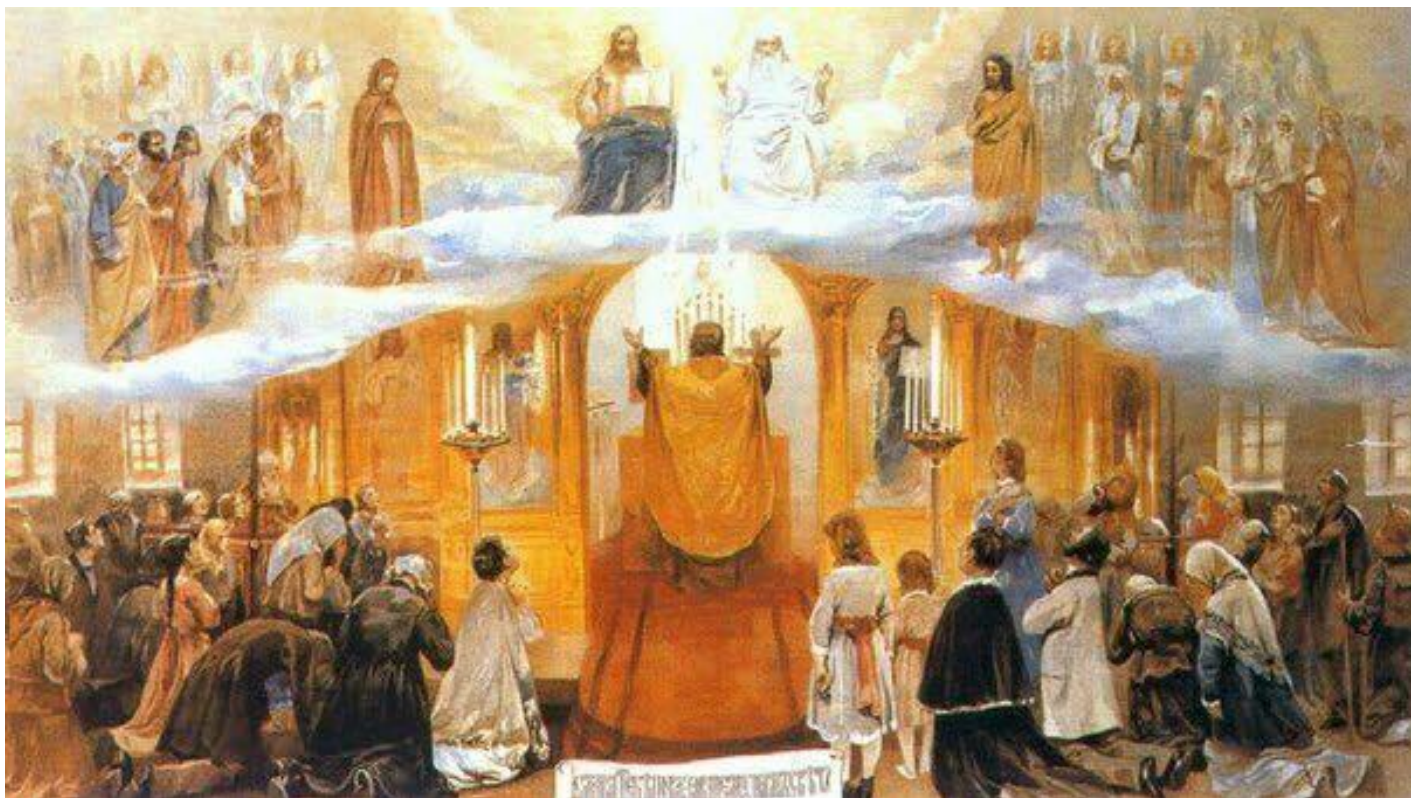
2pm ~ Akathist to St Elizabeth the New Martyr

Saturday 23 July

7.30pm ~ Vigil

Sunday 24 July

10.10am ~ Hours and Divine Liturgy (St Olga, princess of Russia)



We must have our gaze fixed on heaven. Then nothing here can shake us.

Elder Amphilochius of Patmos

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