

St. Mary's Orthodox Church
217 First Street – Coaldale Pa 18218-1602
Phone.....570-645-2772
OUR WEBSITE...www.stmarysnativity.org

Rector: V. Rev. James Weremedic
Retired Attached: V. Rev Paul Ropitsky
Choir Director: Wash King

Sunday, July 5, 2020
4th Sunday after Pentecost

Glory Be To Jesus Christ!

Glory Be Forever!

Welcome Back Everyone!

At this time, we are utilizing up to 50% capacity in the church, so the first 75 people who arrive at the church to attend Divine Liturgy on Sunday will be permitted to attend the service. At the candle stand will be a sign-in sheet that you must sign so we know who is attending the service. There is no pressure or expectation to attend services during this period of COVID-19. Remember to wear a mask and practice social distancing of six feet except for immediate family members. These procedures and guidelines are in effect not only to protect ourselves but also to protect one another. It is essential that we know who is attending the Divine Liturgy in the event that a "notice of infection" is requested and contact tracing becomes necessary.

Some points to remember:

You no longer need to call Father James each week to confirm that you will be in church.

Please sign in on the sign-in sheet as soon as you enter the church.

Your temperature will be taken.

Please follow the directions of the usher on lighting candles.

Please expect assigned seating to ensure proper social distancing.

Icons can be venerated by blessing yourself with the sign of the cross and bowing without physical contact (no kissing or touching the icons)

Please follow the instructions of the Priest on how to receive Communion.

Antidoron will not be distributed at this time.

Please remember to wear a mask and bring your own Divine Liturgy Book.

Liturgical Services have started, although with 'preventative measures'! Please see May 31, 2020 bulletin for the full procedures. We are blessed to have the services with restrictions and we pray for the time that these conditions are no longer necessary!

Vespers Services

Great Vespers will be held at 4:00 PM outside in the Church yard in front of the wooden Cross. Everyone is welcomed, but must wear masks and keep physical distance of six feet. If it is raining or looking like it will rain, this service will be cancelled. We will not be able to make an announcement of the rain cancellation.

Sun...July 5... 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

Sat...July 11... NO VESPERS

Sun...July 12... 9:30 AM – Divine Liturgy

Father James will be on vacation from July 6 – July 11. For any clergy emergencies, please call John Evetushick (570-573-0540).

Prayer List: HEAVENLY FATHER ... Physician of our souls and bodies, Who has sent your only begotten Son to heal every sickness and infirmity, visit us and heal us, Your servants, from all physical and spiritual ailments through the grace of Your Son Jesus Christ; grant to us patience in this sickness, strength of body and spirit, and recovery of health. Lord, You have taught us through Your word to pray for each other that we may be healed. You are the source of healing and to You, we give glory; to the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

Matushka Lovey Ropitsky, Matushka Lisa Weremedic, Michael Birosik, James Blair, Terry Blair, Clark Bogosh, Theodore Bogosh, Jane Bubernak, Cecil Buchanan, Stephanie Chmel, Edward Conarty, Irene David, Ilene Devine, Gloria Ferri, Julia Forte, Olga Hebda, John King, Claire Kononchuk, Michael Kulick, John Kushnir, Helen Macenka, MaryAnn Macenka, Mary Maholick, Alexandra Miller, Courtney Miller, Mildred O'Shura, Anna Pisko, Helen Scheese, Melissa Schmitt, Althea Shellock, Helen Suda, Martha Stafiniak, Martha Teno, Nancy Vanno, Russell Wishousky, Russell Yallas, & Richard York

If anyone is in need of a priest please call Father James Weremedic at 570-645-2772 Visitation of the Sick and Infirm: If you are going into the hospital for any reason, please inform Fr. James at the Rectory.

Emergency Calls: Please call the Rectory (570-645-2772) anytime (day or night) in an emergency

Financials 6/22-28/20 Operating Acct: - Candles 30 – Weekly 467.10 – Holy Days 39– Altar Candles 160 – Donations 70 = Total \$ 766.10 Please continue to keep filling your church envelopes. Thank you!

\$100 to the cemetery fund- in memory of Harry & Mary Wyshosky, Harry Wyshosky, Jr., & Peter Wyshosky & Family offered by Julia Forte.

Please support St. Mary's Orthodox Church by shopping at Amazon Smile

When you shop at Amazon Smile, Amazon will make a donation to St. Mary's Orthodox Church.

See St. Mary's Facebook page for details.

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July Birthdays: 2- Mary Taylor, 5- Isaac Miller, 10- Helen Scheese (90), 11- Geri Vavra, 15- Sami Vavra, 17- Althea Shellock, 20- John Evetushick, 22- Michael Ropitsky, 28- Chris Kalavritinos

July Wedding Anniversaries: 9 – David & Chris King, 16 – Joseph & Dorothy Macenka, 18 – John & Dorothy King

Candles (from April 12):

7-Day Vigils/Altar...For the health of all **Shut-ins** offered by the Good Samaritans

Altar Candles... For the health of **Aunt Olga Hebda** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Family Members

Vigil Crosses ... In memory of **Parents, Nestor & Harriet Scarloss** offered by Stephanie Chmel

7-Day Vigil/Tetrapod... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Friends

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod... In memory of **Paul & Kay Maliniak** offered by Marie Kuzmicz

Candles (from June 28):

7-Day Vigils/Altar... In memory of **Say (Mary) Blair** offered by Lynn Sharpe

Altar Candles... In memory of **Mother, Mary Lutash** offered by Raymond & Mary Jo Danchak

Eternal Lamp... In memory of **Andrew & Mary Bybel Family** offered by Friends

Vigil Crosses ... In memory of **Mary & Andrew Yelsh** offered by William Yelsh

7-Day Vigils/Tetrapod... For the health of **John Herbert** offered by Millie O'Shura

Decorated Candles/Tetrapod... In memory of **Husband, Frank** offered by Julia Forte

If you do not feel comfortable coming to church yet, you may continue to watch **On-line Services:**

Go to the **Diocese of Eastern PA website** at the bottom of our church website.

At the **top of the page** – Click on **Live Streaming** – Scroll down to church services

St. Nicholas Orthodox Church – Mogadore, OH – You Tube

Services every day of the week – Mon. to Fri. at 7:00 PM

Saturday Vespers – 5:00 PM; Sunday Divine Liturgy – 9:30 AM

Thank you for all the cards and well wishes for my 90th birthday. They were greatly appreciated.
Herky King.

4th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST. Tone 3. Ven. Athanasius, Founder of the Great Lavra and Cœnobitic Monasticism on Mt. Athos, and his six disciples. Ven. Sergius of Rádonezh. Martyr Anna at Rome and Martyr Cyrilla, of Cyrene in Libya, a widow. Ven. Lampados of Irenopolis.

Uncovering of the relics of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh

Troparion — Tone 8

From your youth you received Christ into your soul, O venerable one, / and above all desired to leave behind the turmoil of the world. / You courageously settled in the wilderness, where you raised children in obedience, the fruits of humility. / Thus, as an abode of the Trinity, you enlightened all who approached in faith and granted healing to all. / Our Father Sergius, pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion — Tone 8

Having risen from the earth today and shining like the sun, / your precious and incorrupt relics are as fragrant flowers, scented with miracles, / granting healing to all the faithful, and making glad your flock which you wisely gathered and tended. / Now as you stand before the throne of the Trinity, entreat God's help and grace for them and for all Orthodox Christians, / so that we may sing: "Rejoice, divinely-wise Sergius."

Romans 6:18-23 (Epistle)

And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness. I speak in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves of uncleanness, and of lawlessness leading to more lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves of righteousness for holiness. For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness. What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now having been set free from sin, and having become slaves of God, you have your fruit to holiness, and the end, everlasting life. **For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Matthew 8:5-13 (Gospel)

Now when Jesus had entered Capernaum, a centurion came to Him, pleading with Him, saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, dreadfully tormented." And Jesus said to him, "I will come and heal him." The centurion answered and said, "Lord, I am not worthy that You should come under my roof. But only speak a word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." When Jesus heard it, He marveled, and said to those who followed, "Assuredly, I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel! And I say to you that many will come from east and west, and sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven. But the sons of the kingdom will be cast out into outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Then Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way; and as you have believed, so let it be done for you." And his servant was healed that same hour.

Venerable Athanasius, founder of the Great Lavra and Coenobitic Monasticism on Mount Athos, and his six disciples

Saint Athanasius of Athos, in holy Baptism named Abraham, was born in the city of Trebezond. He was orphaned at an early age, and being raised by a certain good and pious nun, he imitated his adoptive mother in the habits of monastic life, in fasting and in prayer. Doing his lessons came easily and he soon outpaced his peers in study.

After the death of his adoptive mother, Abraham was taken to Constantinople, to the court of the Byzantine emperor Romanus the Elder, and was enrolled as a student under the renowned rhetorician Athanasius. In a short while the student attained the mastery of skill of his teacher and he himself became an instructor of youths. Reckoning as the true life that of fasting and vigilance, Abraham led a strict and abstinent

life, he slept little and then only sitting upon a stool, and barley bread and water were his nourishment. When his teacher Athanasius through human weakness became jealous of his student, blessed Abraham gave up his teaching position and went away.

During these days there had arrived at Constantinople Saint Michael Maleinos (July 12), igumen of the Kyminas monastery. Abraham told the igumen about his life, and revealed to him his secret desire to become a monk. The holy Elder, discerning in Abraham a chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, became fond of him and taught him much in questions of salvation. One time during their spiritual talks Saint Michael was visited by his nephew, Nicephorus Phocas, a military officer and future emperor. Abraham's lofty spirit and profound mind impressed Nicephorus, and all his life he regarded the saint with reverent respect and with love. Abraham was consumed by his zeal for the monastic life. Having forsaken everything, he went to the Kyminas monastery and, falling down at the feet of the holy igumen, he begged to be received into the monastic life. The igumen fulfilled his request with joy and tonsured him with the name Athanasius.

With long fasts, vigils, bending of the knees, with works night and day Athanasius soon attained such perfection, that the holy igumen blessed him for the exploit of silence in a solitary place not far from the monastery. Later on, having left Kyminas, he made the rounds of many desolate and solitary places, and guided by God, he came to a place called Melanos, at the very extremity of Athos, settling far off from the other monastic dwellings. Here the monk made himself a cell and began to live an ascetical life in works and in prayer, proceeding from exploit to exploit towards higher monastic attainment.

The enemy of mankind tried to arouse in Saint Athanasius hatred for the place chosen by him, and assaulted him with constant suggestions in thought. The ascetic decided to suffer it out for a year, and then wherever the Lord should direct him, he would go. On the last day of this year's length of time, when Saint Athanasius set about to prayer, a heavenly light suddenly shone upon him, filling him with an indescribable joy, all the thoughts dissipated, and from his eyes welled up graced tears. From that moment Saint Athanasius received the gift of tenderness, and he became as strongly fond of the place of his solitude as he had formerly loathed it.

During this time Nicephorus Phocas, having had enough of military exploits, remembered his vow to become a monk and from his means he besought Saint Athanasius to build a monastery, i.e., to build cells for him and the brethren, and a church where the brethren could commune of the Divine Mysteries of Christ on Sundays.

Tending to shun cares and worries, Saint Athanasius at first would not agree to accept the hateful gold, but seeing the fervent desire and good intent of Nicephorus, and discerning in this the will of God, he set about the building of the monastery. He built a large church in honor of the holy Prophet and Forerunner of Christ, John the Baptist, and another church at the foot of a hill, in the name of the Most Holy Theotokos. Around the church were the cells, and a wondrous monastery arose on the Holy Mountain. In it were a trapeza (dining area), a hospice for the sick and for taking in wanderers, and other necessary structures.

Brethren flocked to the monastery from everywhere, not only from Greece, but also from other lands, simple people and illustrious dignitaries, desert-dwellers having labored in asceticism for long years in the wilderness, igumens from many monasteries and hierarchs wanting to become simple monks in the Athos Lavra of Saint Athanasius.

The saint established at the monastery a cenobitic monastic Rule on the model of the old Palestinian monasteries. Divine services were served with all strictness, and no one was so bold as to talk during the services, nor to come late or leave the church without necessity.

The Heavenly Patroness of Athos, the All-Pure Mother of God Herself, was graciously disposed towards the saint. Many times he was privileged to see Her with his own eyes. By God's dispensation, there once occurred such a hunger, that the monks one after the other quit the Lavra. The saint remained all alone and, in a moment of weakness, he also considered leaving. Suddenly he beheld a Woman beneath an ethereal veil, coming to meet him. "Who are you and where are you going?" She asked quietly. Saint Athanasius from an innate deference halted. "I am a monk from here," Saint Athanasius replied, and spoke about himself and his worries.

"Would you forsake the monastery which was intended for glory from generation unto generation, just for a morsel of dry bread? Where is your faith? Turn around, and I shall help you." "Who are you?" asked Athanasius. "I am the Mother of the Lord," She answered, and bid Athanasius to strike his staff upon a stone.

From the fissure there gushed forth a spring of water, which exists even now, in remembrance of this miraculous visitation.

The brethren grew in number, and the construction work at the Lavra continued. Saint Athanasius, foreseeing the time of his departure to the Lord, prophesied about his impending end and besought the brethren not to be troubled over what he foresaw. "For Wisdom disposes otherwise than as people judge." The brethren were perplexed and pondered the words of the saint. After giving the brethren his final guidance and comforting all, Saint Athanasius entered his cell, put on his mantiya and holy kukolion (head covering), which he wore only on great feasts, and emerged after prolonged prayer. Alert and joyful, the holy igumen went up with six of the brethren to the top of the church to inspect the construction. Suddenly, through the imperceptible will of God, the top of the church collapsed. Five of the brethren immediately gave up their souls to God. Saint Athanasius and the architect Daniel, thrown upon the stones, remained alive. All heard the saint call out to the Lord, "Glory to Thee, O God! Lord, Jesus Christ, help me!" The brethren with great weeping began to dig out their father from the rubble, but they found him already dead.

Uncovering of the relics of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh

The Uncovering of the Venerable Relics of Saint Sergius of Radonezh: The relics of the Saint Sergius (September 25) were uncovered on July 5, 1422 when Saint Nikon (November 17) was igumen. In the year 1408, when Moscow and its environs was invaded by the Tatar horde of Edigei, the Trinity monastery was devastated and burned, and the monks led by Saint Nikon hid themselves in the forests. They saved the icons, 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. Metropolitan Philaret wrote about this in his Life of Saint Sergius: "Just as it suited Christ to suffer, and through the Cross and death to enter into the glory of the Resurrection, so it also becomes everyone who would be blessed by Christ with length of days in glory, to be tested by one's own cross and death." Going through its own fiery cleansing, the monastery of the Life-Creating Trinity was resurrected unto length of days, and Saint Sergius himself rose up, so that his holy relics should dwell within it forevermore.

Before the beginning of construction of the new temple of the Life-Creating Trinity on the site of the former wooden one (which was consecrated on September 25, 1412), Saint Sergius appeared 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, in the presence of the son of Demetrius of the Don, the prince of Zvenigorod Yurii Dimitrievich (+ 1425), 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.

Naming a church for the Holy Trinity within the Russian land began with holy Equal of the Apostles Olga (July 11), who built the first Trinity temple at Pskov. Afterwards, similar churches were built in Great Novgorod and other cities.

The spiritual contribution of Saint Sergius in teaching the theology of the Holy Trinity is quite 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 (i.e. in Three-Persons) God, and in the spiritual experience of communion with God and God-likeness.

"Coheirs of the perfect light and contemplation of the Most Holy and All-Sovereign Trinity," explained Saint Gregory the Theologian, "are those which become perfectly co-united in the perfection of the Spirit." Saint Sergius knew from personal experience the mystery of the Life-Creating Trinity, since in his life he became co-united with God, he became a communicant of the very life of the Divine Trinity, i.e. he attained as much as is

possible on earth to the measure of “theosis” [“divinization”], becoming a “partaker of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). “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 and conversants, 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 unto the world and to mankind in the “Sobornost” [“Communality”] of the Church, with 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 It would be conquered the fright of the hateful discord of this world.”

The worship of the Holy Trinity, in forms created and bequeathed by the holy Igumen Sergius of Radonezh, became one of the most profound and original of features of Russian ecclesiality. With Saint Sergius, in the Life-Creating Trinity there was posited not only the holy perfection of life eternal, but also a model for human life, a spiritual ideal toward which mankind ought to strive, since that in the Trinity as “Indivisible” (Greek “Adiairetos”) discord is condemned and “Sobornost” [“Communality”] is blessed, and in the Trinity as “Inseparable” [“Akhoristos” -- per the Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon in year 451] coercion is condemned and freedom blessed. In the teaching of Saint Sergius about the Most Holy Trinity the Russian nation sensed profoundly its own catholic and ecumenical vocation, and comprehending the universal significance of the Feast, the people embellished it with all the variety and richness of the ancient national custom and people’s verse. All the spiritual experience and spiritual striving of the Russian Church was embodied in the liturgical creativity of the Feast of the Holy Trinity, of trinitarian church rituals, icons of the Holy Trinity, and churches and monasteries of this name.

The theological insight of Saint Sergius in transformation was rendered as the wonderworking icon of the Life-Creating Trinity painted by the Saint Andrew of Radonezh, surnamed Rublev (July 4), a monastic iconographer, lived in the Trinity-Sergiev monastery, and painted with the blessing of Saint Nikon in praised memory to holy Abba Sergius. (At the Stoglav Council of 1551 this icon was affirmed as proper model for all successive church iconographic depiction of the Most Holy Trinity).

“The hateful discord,” quarrels and commotions of worldly life were surmounted by the monastic cenobitic 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 his own co-crucifixion with the Savior the sin of particularity and separation, repudiating the “my own” and the “myself,” and in accord with the teachings of Saint Basil the Great, the cenobitic monks restore 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 thereof 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 of its possibility. Not for renouncing the earth, but rather for transfiguring it, they proclaimed ascent and they themselves ascended unto the Heavenly.

The school of Saint Sergius, through the monasteries founded by him, his disciples and the disciples of his disciples, embraces all the vastness of the Russian land and threads its way through all the remotest history of the Russian Church. One fourth a portion of all Russian monasteries, the strongholds of faith, piety and enlightenment, was founded by Abba Sergius or his disciples. The “igumen of the Russian land” was what people called the founder of the Domicile of the Life-Originating Trinity. The Monks Nikon and Mikhei of Radonezh, Sylvester of Obnora, Stephen of Makhrisch and Abraham of Chukhlom, Athanasius of Serpukhov and Nikita of Borov, Theodore of Simonov and Therapon of Monzha (May 27), Andronicus of Moscow and Savva of Storozhevsk, Demetrius of Priluki and Cyril of White Lake -- they were all disciples and conversers of “the wondrous Elder”, Sergius. The holy hierarchs Alexis and Cyprian -- Metropolitans of Moscow, Dionysius Archbishop of Suzdal, and Stephen Bishop of Perm, were associated with him in spiritual closeness. The Patriarchs of Constantinople

Callistus and Philotheus wrote letters to him and sent their blessings. Through Saints Nikita and Paphnutius of Borov threads a spiritual legacy to Saint Joseph of Volokolamsk and others of his disciples, and through Cyril of White Lake to Nil Sorsky, to Herman, Sabbatius and Zosima of Solovki.

The Church venerates also disciples and co-ascetics of Saint Sergius, whose memories are not specifically noted within the “Mesyatseslov” lists of saints under their separate day. We remember that the first to arrive for Saint Sergius at Makovets was the Elder Basil the Gaunt (“Sukhoi”), called such because of his incomparable fasting. Second was the monk Yakuta, i.e. Yakov (James), of simple peasant stock, who without a murmur spent long years at the monastery on errands of drudgery and difficult obedience.

Among the other disciples of Saint Sergius were his fellow countrymen from Radonezh the Deacon Onesimus and his son Elisha. When twelve monks had gathered and the constructed cells were fenced in by an high enclosure, the abba appointed Deacon Onesimus as gate-keeper, since his cell was farthest from the entrance to the monastery. Under the protective shadow of the Holy Trinity monastery the igumen Metrophanes spent his final years. It was he who had tonsured Saint Sergius into the angelic schema and guided him in monastic efforts. The grave of the blessed Elder Metrophanes became the first in the monastery cemetery.

In the year 1357 Archimandrite Simon arrived at the monastery from Smolensk. He had resigned his venerable position as head of one of the Smolensk monasteries, to become a simple obedient of the God-bearing Radonezh igumen. In recompense for his great humility, the Lord granted him to share in the miraculous vision of Saint Sergius about the future increase of his monastic flock. With the blessing of the abba, the Blessed Elder Isaac the Silent took upon himself the deed of prayerful silence; his silence was more instructive than any words for the monks and those outside. Only one time after a year of silence did the monk Isaac open his mouth -- to testify, how he had seen an angel of God serve together at the altar with Saint Sergius, during the Divine Liturgy.

An eyewitness of the grace of the Holy Spirit, co-effectualised for Saint Sergius, was also the ecclesiarch Simon, who once saw, how a heavenly fire came down upon the Holy Mysteries and that the saint of God “did commune the fire without being burned.” The Elder Epiphanius (+ 1420) was somewhat later, during the time of igumen Nikon, a priest of the Sergiev flock. The Church calls him Epiphanius the Wise for his deep learning and great spiritual talents. He is known as the compiler of the Life of Saint Sergius and of his conversant Saint Stephen of Perm in eulogy to them; he wrote also the “Account of the Life and Repose of Great Prince Demetrius of the Don.” The Life of Saint Sergius, compiled by Epiphanius 26 years after the death of the monk, i.e. in 1418, was later reworked by the hagiographer Pachomius the Serb, called the Logothete, who had come from Athos.

To Saint Sergius, as to an inexhaustible font of spiritual prayer and grace of the Lord, at all times came in veneration thousands of the people -- 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 bestowed to all, approaching with faith the relics of Saint Sergius; 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.”

To the period of the Time of Troubles and the Polish incursion belongs the heroic “Trinity sitting-tight,” when many monks with the blessing of the igumen Saint Dionysius repeated the military holy deed of the Sergiev disciples Peresvyet and Oslyab. 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 the year 1619, Patriarch Theophanes of Jerusalem visited the Lavra during his journey to Russia. He especially wanted to see those monks who in time of military danger made bold to put the chain-mail coat on over their monastic garb and with weapon in hand to go up onto the walls of the holy monastery, warding off the enemy. Saint Dionysius the igumen (May 12), in speaking about the defense, presented to the patriarch more than twenty monks.

The first of them was Athanasius (Oscherin), very up in years and with the yellowed greyness of an elder. The patriarch asked him: "Did you go to war and lead soldiers?" The Elder answered, "Yes, holy Master, it was made necessary by bloody tears."

"What is most proper for a monk, prayerful solitude or military exploits before the people?"

Bowing low, Saint Athanasius replied: "Every thing and every deed has its own time. Here on my head is a Latin signature, from a weapon. There are six more memorials of lead in my body. Sitting in the cell at prayer, could I have found such inducements for moaning and groaning? I did all this not at my own pleasure, but for the blessing of the service of God sent us." Touched by the wise answer of the humble monk, the Patriarch blessed and embraced him. He blessed also the other soldier-monks and expressed his admiration to all the brethren of the Lavra of Saint Sergius.

The deed of the monastery, during this grievous Time of Troubles for all the nation, was recorded by the steward Abraham (Palitsyn) in "An Account of the Events of the Time of Troubles," and also by the steward Simon Azar' in in two hagiographic collections: "The Book of the Miracles of Saint Sergius," and the Life of Saint Dionysius of Radonezh. In the year 1650 Simeon Shakhovsky wrote an Akathist to Saint Sergius, as "valiant vovod (military-leader)" of the Russian land, in memory of the deliverance of the Trinity monastery from the enemy siege. There is another Akathist to Saint Sergius composed in the eighteenth century, and its author is believed to be Metropolitan Platon (Levshin) of Moscow, who reposed in 1812.

In later times, the monastery continued to be an inextinguishable torch of spiritual life and church 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 centers 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 crowded and solemn church feastday at the monastery.

THOSE WHO DIED FOR THEIR FAITH

"It has often been said that **'the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church.'** That is to say, the killing of believers in Christ has not destroyed the Faith, but in fact has nurtured it to greater growth. The example of those valiant men and women who have suffered and given up their lives for Christ has inspired faithful throughout the ages and continues to do so today.

We often think that the age of martyrdom has long since passed. Certainly, the Calendar of Saints records the amazing stories of the martyrs of the early centuries of the Christian Church. History records the persecutions by the Roman emperors of the era. But there have been martyrs in every age, and certainly there have been in our times.

Many martyrs are commemorated during the course of the year. Some of these are termed **'Great Martyrs'** for their outstanding witness for Christ. Other saints who were not killed but who suffered much for their faith are called **'Confessors.'** Normally, saints are remembered on the day of their falling-asleep in Christ, since that day is looked upon as their **'birthday into eternal life.'**

The icon of our bulletin depicts the **GREAT MARTYR KIRIAKIA**, born to a pious Christian family of Asia Minor in the 3rd century. When her parents were arrested for their faith and sent to prison, Kiriakia carried on missionary work. She then was arrested and sentenced to death by the authorities of Emperor Diocletian. She fell asleep in the Lord at the age of 21."

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