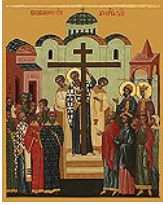


✠Bulletin✠

Week of June 7, 2026



Holy Cross Orthodox Church

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1st SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST — Tone 8

All Saints

"Seven Arrows", Icon of the Mother of God

Venerable Daniel of Sketis in Egypt (420). Hieromartyr Theodotus, Bishop of Ancyra (303). Hieromartyr Marcellinus, Pope of Rome, and with him Martyrs Claudius, Cyrenus, and Antoninus (304). Martyrs Cyriaca, Caleria (Valeria), and Mary, of Cæsarea in Palestine (304).

Weekly Liturgical Service Schedule

Sunday June 7th

9:15 am - Hours

9:30 am - Divine Liturgy

Saturday June 13th

5:30 pm - Vespers

Weekly Schedule

Sunday June 7th

➤ Inquirers & Catechism classes

Learning from Martyrs and Confessors:

Homily for the Sunday of All Saints in the Orthodox Church

By Fr. Philip LeMasters

It is tempting to think that what we read about in the Scriptures and the history of the Church occurred in a world so different from ours that it has become irrelevant. This Sunday of All Saints reminds us that our Lord's fundamental calling to every generation does not change, but challenges the

assumptions of every culture and the preferences of every human being. That calling is to participate personally in the holiness of God and to seek first His Kingdom, regardless of the cost.

When we hear today of our brothers and sisters in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia who are killed, abused, or become refugees due to their faithfulness to Jesus Christ, His words from today's gospel reading should come to mind: "Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My Name's sake, will receive a hundred fold, and inherit eternal life. But many that are first will be last, and the last first." When we hear of terrorist attacks upon churches, the kidnapping of bishops and priests, and other atrocities, we should recall the graphic descriptions in Hebrews of the suffering of the Old Testament saints who hoped for the Messiah: "Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, so that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth."

The first saints recognized by the Church were martyrs and confessors, people who accepted death or severe physical suffering instead of denying their Savior. As St. Polycarp said when urged to save his life by denying Christ, "For eighty and six years have I been His servant, and He has done me no wrong, and how can I blaspheme my King Who saved me?" Whether at the hands of the pagan Romans, Persian and Islamic empires, Communists, Fascists, ISIS or other terrorist groups, countless Christians have made—and continue to make—the ultimate witness for the Lord. According to His promise, He will acknowledge them before the Father because they acknowledged Him in the most profound way possible.

For Orthodox Christians, the saints are not dead figures from the past, but alive in Christ. There is one Church in heaven and on earth, and we are members of the Body of Christ together with them. They are the white-robed martyrs around the throne of God who worship Him eternally. We pray and worship God together with them, asking for their intercessions and seeking to follow their example of holiness. As our epistle reading states, "Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings too closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and

perfection of our faith.” As shining examples of what it means to love and serve Christ, the saints inspire us to ever greater faithfulness to Him. They are living proof that He has conquered death and that, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we may participate personally in His holy and eternal life. They point us to Him.

On this Sunday of All Saints, we commemorate all those who have entered in holiness into this great cloud of witnesses, especially those whose names we do not know. The Holy Spirit has revealed the names of many saints to the Church for our edification, but that is hardly an exhaustive list. And since humility is a necessary quality of holiness, that should not be surprising. When we remember the harsh realities of martyrdom and persecution through which they bore witness, it becomes immediately clear that the saintly path is not one of self-exaltation or pride. No, it is how those who are last—those who give up even life, family, and the most basic necessities—become first in a Kingdom not of this world.

Regardless of the country or time period in which we live, Christ calls us—no less than the martyrs and confessors—to acknowledge Him before others, to love Him even more than our families, and to take up our crosses. Today He calls us to be faithful witnesses to Him in a culture that has little place for principled self-restraint of any kind. We live in a time when many worship at the altars of immediate gratification and self-indulgence in every area of life. The selfishness, anger, hatred, and violence that we see so often in our culture reflect a failure to control our passions, which is a symptom of our collective disdain for putting anything or anyone before doing or saying whatever we feel like at the moment. Holiness in the relationship between man and woman, as well as faithful self-sacrifice in rearing children, are strange goals in our age of promiscuity and pornography, when many see no higher standard in life than fulfilling whatever desires they happen to have at the moment. Gluttony, greed, and trying obsessively to get what we want when we want it make many so spiritually and morally weak that they probably cannot even imagine living otherwise. And the fact that we celebrate these ways of thinking and living in the name of freedom or being true to ourselves makes them all the more dangerous.

To be true to ourselves as human beings means to become holy, to direct all our desires to their ultimate fulfillment in the Lord, and to be healed from our self-imposed slavery to self-centered desire. The saints are icons of what it means to be true to ourselves as those created in God’s image and likeness. The martyrs and confessors are shining examples of how to love and serve

Christ above all else, and to order all our other attachments in light of our most fundamental commitment to Him. Their example calls us to acknowledge Him each day by living in this way. We acknowledge Him by taking up our crosses as we resist the pervasive temptations in our culture to worship ourselves, our possessions, our pleasures, and our loved ones. It may seem strange for Christ to warn against loving family members more than Him, but think for a moment how destructive it is for anyone to become a false god to another person. That kind of idolatry leads only to abuse, disappointment, and despair; we diminish ourselves and others when we do that. We distort marriage, family, and sex when we make them ends in themselves. It is far better to serve Christ in our family members through prayer, encouragement, and self-denial. That is how we and our loved ones will find fulfillment, blessing, and joy together as God’s children.

Our path to holiness will likely be through our daily struggle to be faithful in small ways that few will notice or celebrate. The question is not whether to serve God through grand gestures or extraordinary circumstances, but whether there is something of the martyr and the confessor in each of us. That means dying to our self-centeredness out of love for Christ. That means loving people in Christ, ordering our relationships such that they fulfill His purposes for us and them, even when that requires suffering. And it means turning the other cheek and loving our enemies, even when we risk being rejected, criticized, or ignored for being out of step with the ways of the world.

No, that is not easy. But when we remember the martyrs and confessors and all that they endured—and still endure—for faithfulness to Christ, we should have confident hope that the same Lord Who strengthened them even to the shedding of blood will surely not abandon us in our smaller struggles each day. And unless we are faithful in small challenges, we will never be prepared for the large ones. “Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfection of our faith.” It is through His love, mercy, and grace that we too may share in the holiness that shines so brightly in all the saints.

Schedule of Services

Saturday June 27th

5:30 pm – Vespers

Diocese of the South (DOS) Assembly

The upcoming 48th Diocesan Assembly will be held at the Hyatt Place in St. Augustine/Vilano Beach from Tuesday, July 21st through Friday, July 24th, 2026. Per the annual parish meeting, the church council has voted for our council secretary, Anthony (Theophan) Gordon to represent Holy Cross as our delegate during this assembly. Fr. Leonid and Matushka Irene will be attending as well.

Observers are also welcome to attend. More information, including the itinerary and hotel arrangements, can be found at:

<https://dosoca.org/events/2026-diocesan-assembly/>

In addition, at the recent extraordinary session of the diocesan council of the DOS, they discussed the process for selecting a new ruling bishop following Archbishop Alexander's planned retirement. The following was voted on:

The Motion from Archpriest Marcus Burch, "I move that the Diocesan Council of the Diocese of the South, acknowledging the anticipated vacancy in the See of Dallas and the South upon the effective retirement of His Eminence, Archbishop Alexander, and acting in preparation for the formal canonical process to occur following the declaration of the vacancy and the appointment of the Locum Tenens, identify His Grace, Bishop Gerasim, Auxiliary Bishop and Administrator of the Diocese of the South, as the candidate to be presented for consideration at the anticipated Special Nominating Assembly, subject to the direction of His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon, the Holy Synod of Bishops, and the formal action of the Diocesan Council after the vacancy is declared," was seconded by Archpriest Theodore Pisarchuck.

Prayer Requests

Agape Brill

Walter Kallaur – brother of the Constantine & Arlene Kallaur

Anne and Scott Peatross

Nicholas Kowalski

Robert Kozera

Megan – David & Phyllis Bartos' daughter

Rosemary – Friend of David & Phyllis Bartos

Please pray for our families in Ukraine

Leonid, Nadiia, Andrii, Halyna,
Volodymyr, Maryna, Dmytro, Bohdan,
Nadiia, Oleksandr, Tetiana,
Roman, Mykola
Anatoly, Olga, Maria, Andrei

Please let us know of anyone you would like to add to the Prayer Lists.

Inquirers & Catechism Class

Classes will be on Sundays following Divine Liturgy. For those new to understanding Orthodoxy or for those who want to expand your foundation, please join us for our classes. Please check the schedule for changes.

The Divine Liturgy

Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom

Variable Hymns and Readings

Tone 8 Troparion (Resurrection)

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!
Thou didst accept the three day burial to free us from our sufferings!//
O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

Tone 4 Troparion (All Saints)

As with fine porphyry and royal purple,
Thy Church has been adorned with Thy martyrs' blood shed throughout all
the world.
She cries to Thee, O Christ God:
"Send down Thy bounties on Thy people,//
grant peace to Thy habitation and great mercy to our souls!"

Tone 8 Kontakion (All Saints)

The universe offers Thee the God-bearing Martyrs
as the first fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator.
By their prayers keep Thy Church, Thy habitation, in abiding peace//
through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One!

Tone 8 Prokeimenon *(Resurrection)*

Pray and make your vows / before the Lord, our God! *(Ps. 75:10a)*

V. In Judah God is known; His Name is great in Israel. (Ps. 75:1)

Tone 4 Prokeimenon *(All Saints)*

God is wonderful in His saints, / the God of Israel. *(Ps. 67:35a)*

Hebrews 11:33-12:2 (Epistle)

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented – of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Tone 4

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. The righteous cried and the Lord heard them, and delivered them out of all their troubles. (Ps. 33:17)

V. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; the Lord will deliver them out of them all. (Ps. 33:19)

Matthew 10:32-33, 37-38, 19:27-30 (Gospel)

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. But many who are first will be last, and the last first.

Explanation of Today's Gospel Reading

By Blessed Theophylact

Archbishop of Ochrid and Bulgaria

32-33. Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. He exhorts them to bear witness even unto martyrdom. For belief only within one's soul does not suffice; He desires also the belief confessed with the tongue. He did not say, "Whosoever shall confess Me," but "in Me," that is, in My strength. For he who confesses does so aided by the grace which is from above. But as for him who denies, Christ did not say "in Me," but "whosoever shall deny Me," showing that he denies because he does not have the aid from above. Therefore, everyone who confesses that Christ is God will find Christ giving confession of him to the Father, that he is a true servant. But those who deny will hear the words "I do not know you."

37. He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. Do you see when it is that we must hate our parents and children? When they want us to love them more than Christ. And why should I speak of father, mother, and children? Hear what is even greater than this:

38. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. Whoever, He says, does not renounce this present life and give himself

over to shameful death, for this is what the cross signified to the ancients, is not worthy of Me. But since there are many who are crucified, such as robbers and thieves, He added, "and follows after Me," that is, live according to My laws.

19:27. Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" Even though it seems that Peter had not forsaken very much, as he was poor, understand that in actuality he, too, forsook much. For the fewer possessions we humans have, the greater the attachment. But Peter also rejected every worldly pleasure, even natural affection for his parents. For these passions¹ war against the poor as well as the rich. What then does the Lord answer?

¹ Natural affection for one's family becomes a passion when it is placed before love of God.

28. So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Surely they will not be seated? Of course not, but He indicated by means of a throne the great honor they will enjoy. Will Judas also be seated? No; for Christ said, "which have followed Me," that is, "followed Me to the end," but Judas did not follow to the end. By a different interpretation, God often promises good things to those who are worthy. But if they should change and become unworthy, as Judas did, those good things are denied. Similarly with more menacing things, He often threatens but does not carry out the threat, because we have repented. By "regeneration" understand the resurrection of the dead at the Last Judgment.

29. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life. So that no one would think that what was said applied only to the disciples, Christ broadened the promise to include everyone who does likewise. For they will have, instead of family of the flesh, intimacy and brotherhood with God; instead of lands, Paradise; instead of houses of stone, the heavenly Jerusalem; instead of a mother, the venerable mothers in the Church; instead of a father, the priests; instead of a wife, all the faithful women, not in marriage - far from it! - but in affection and spiritual relation and compassionate care for them. The Lord does not bid us simply to separate from our families, but only when they impede our piety. In the same manner, He bids us to despise even our own life and body,

but not with the result that we slay ourselves. See how good God is: He not only gives us these good things but adds to them eternal life. You, then, O reader, hasten to sell your possessions and give to the poor. Possessions are, to the wrathful person, his anger; to the fornicator, his disposition for debauchery; to the resentful person, his remembrance of wrongs. Sell these things and give them to the poor demons who are in want of every good thing. Return the passions to the creators of the passions, and then you will have treasure, which is Christ, in your heaven, that is, in your mind which has been exalted above this world. For he who becomes like the heavenly One has heaven within himself.

30. But many who are first will be last, and the last first. Christ is suggesting here the Jews and the Gentiles. For the Jews, who were first, became last, while the Gentiles, who were last, were put first.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*
Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! *(Ps. 32:1)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!