Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding.

Sophia

A Devotional Newsletter of St. Sophia Parish

St. Sophia Orthodox Church
195 Joseph St.
Victoria, BC
V8S 3H6
Canada

St. Sophia Orthodox Church

a Parish of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia

195 Joseph Street,
Victoria, British Columbia
Canada V8S 3H6

email: info@saintsophia.ca
website: www.saintsophia.ca

Services are in English

Saturday

Vigil – 6 p.m. – Всенощное бдение

Sunday

Hours – 10 a.m. – Часы

Divine Liturgy – 10:30 a.m. – Божественная Литургия

Vespers – 5 p.m. – Вечерня

Archpriest John Adams
Priest Philosoph Uhlman
Protodeacon Gordian Bruce

September 2018 Sophia Issue #77 Services

***Saturday September 1 - Vigil* 6pm**
Sunday September 2 - Liturgy* 10:30am *Parish Feast Day *Translated from August 29,* ***The Icon Not Made by Hands;*** *(immediately after Liturgy will be the Blessing before Instruction for parish students and teachers) Potluck Picnic following, at the Allison Residence*

Saturday September 8 - Vigil 6pm
Sunday September 9- Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

Saturday September 15 - Vigil 6pm
Sunday September 16 - Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

***Thursday September 20 - Vigil with Litya; Nativity of Theotokos* 6pm**
***Friday September 21 - Liturgy; Nativity of Theotokos* 10:30am**
Saturday September 22 - Vigil 6pm
Sunday September 23 - Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

***Wednesday September 26 - Vigil; Exaltation of the Precious Cross* 6pm**
Thursday September 27- Liturgy; Exaltation of the Precious Cross -10:30am

Saturday September 29 - Vigil - 6pm
Sunday September 30 - Liturgy -10:30am *(Sisterhood Parish Feast Day)*

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

September Saints' Days

Congratulations to Samuel, Natalia W, Natalia Z, Zacharias S, Menodora, Metrodora, Anna T, Anna B, Anna P, Zora-Anna B, Vera, Deacon Gordian, Sophie S, Sofya S, Sophie L, Faith, Esperanza L, and Lubov! May God grant you all many, *many*, years!

Our Parish Feast Day

St. Sophia means Holy Wisdom (Our Lord Jesus Christ) and is commemorated on (n.s) August 29th and often transposed and celebrated to the next closest Sunday with an annual Parish Picnic. This is the day of commemorating the **Icon of Jesus 'Not-Made-By-Hands'.**

Our Festal *Tropar

We bow down before Thine all pure image, O Good One, asking forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God; for Thou wast well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh of Thine own will, that Thou mightiest save what Thou hadst created from slavery to the enemy. Wherefore, we cry out to Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with Joy, O our Saviour, Who hast come to save the world.

Festal *Kontakion

O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, knowing the victorious image, uninscribed and divinely wrought, of Thine ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true incarnation, we honour it with veneration.

*A tropar and kontakion are short hymns which teach about a special saint, prophet or Feast Day.

In the time that our Lord was preaching the gospel and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, there was in the city of Edessa, on the banks of the Euphrates, a certain Prince Avgar, who was riddled with leprosy.*

He heard of Christ, the Healer of every pain and sickness, and sent a portrait-painter, Ananias, to Palestine with a letter to Christ, in which he begged the Lord to come to Edessa and heal him of his leprosy. In the event of the Lord not being able to come, the prince commanded Ananias to paint His likeness and bring it, believing that the portrait would heal him.

The Lord replied that he could not come, (as the time of his Passion was at hand), and **He took a large cloth, a napkin and wiped His face, leaving a perfect reproduction of His most pure face on the napkin.** The Lord gave this napkin to Ananias, with a message to say that the prince would be healed by it, but not entirely, and He would therefore send him later an envoy to rid him of the remainder of the disease.

Receiving the napkin, Avgar kissed it and the leprosy fell from his body, with just a little remaining on his face.

Later, the Apostle Thaddeus, preaching the Gospel, came to Avgar, healed him secretly and baptized him. Then the prince smashed the idols that stood at the city's gateway and placed the napkin with the face of Christ above the entrance, stuck onto wood, surrounded with a gold frame and ornamented with pearls. The prince also wrote above the icon on the gateway: 'O Christ our God, no one who hopes in Thee will be put to shame'.

Later, one of Avgar's great-grandsons restored idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa came by night and walled in the icon above the gateway to protect it.

Centuries passed. In the time of the Emperor Justinian, the Persian King, Chozroes, attacked Edessa, and the city was in great affliction. The Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, had a vision of the most holy Mother of God, who revealed to him the secret of the icon, walled in and forgotten. The icon was found and by its power the Persian army was defeated. *Source- Saint Sophia Church School notes…*

*Leprosy is a disease of the skin and nervous system. It spreads easily, and

those with a weakened immune system are susceptible. Left untreated, it can cause long term damage. Nowadays there are medical treatments that can prevent its spread.

Church Cleaners & Gardeners

Thank you to the month of August Church Cleaners Marina and Shura - (who also arranged the monthly church flowers) Thank you to the Garden Team: Zoe, Melania, Readers Peter Hen and Peter Hal, and John M.

Parish Sisterhood Feast Day

Not to be confused with our Parish Name's day, our Parish *Sisterhood* is also named St. Sophia, but after *another* St. Sophia - St. Sophia and her three daughters: Faith, Hope and Love. The Sisterhood supports our parish through 'behind the scenes' work… Community and International Charities, upkeep of Church Vestments, cleaning and decorating of the church and its icons, Youth Choir, Youth Education, Youth Socials, Parish Fundraisers and Parish Festal Events. The Sisterhood also assists parishioners who may need meals temporarily made for them.

We last met in February to establish and implement new team ideas to adjust with the growing parish size, and larger-scale events. Although several members were missing during the February flu season, the current core of the St. Sophia Parish Sisterhood is pictured here.

There's room for more! <u>All</u> adult women parish members are welcome. We strive to serve Christ Jesus in His holy temple by supporting the many aspects of parish life, and also by supporting each other… in the spirit of love and friendship; to the glory of God! *– m Barbara Senior Sister, and Assistant Senior Sister; Irena*

St. Sophia Parish Youth Summer Camp July 29 – 31

This year 16 youth attended! From ages 5 – 17!

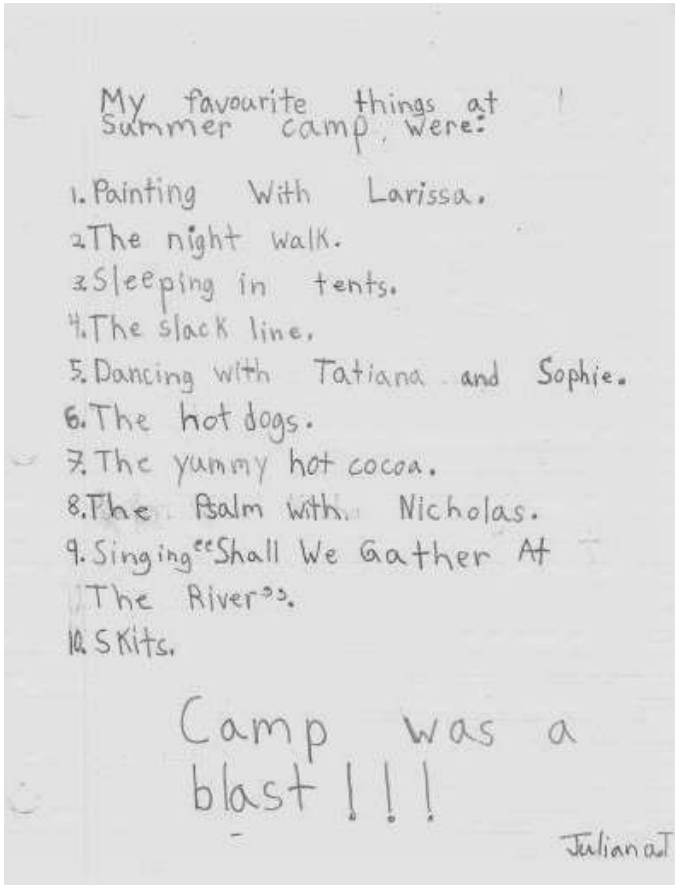
Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. - Psalm 133

This seems to sum up the overall feeling of all that we shared together these past days. We were blessed with beautiful weather, and the serenity of the forest helped us shed those extra things we think so necessary in our everyday lives. This experience was enhanced by all the hard work and dedication of the many that volunteered and by the cooperativeness of our youth who made it a joy to be part of it all. May we be blessed to come together again for many years. – Fr. Dcn. Gordon

<u>Thank you</u> Volunteer Activity Assistants!

Larissa H – Art 5 - 10 yr olds
Genevieve – Mosaics Art 12 – 17 yr olds
Genevieve – Funny skits and Aesop's Fables Skits for all age groups
Tatiana M and **Sophie S** - Dance 5 -10 year olds
Caterina B and **John-Tallis** Games – All ages
Reader Nicholas - Cell Phone Photography 12 – 17 year olds
John M hike leader and stargazer – All ages
Elena and Val hike leaders – All ages
Anna B - Kitchen Supervisor
Irena and Fr. Gordon – Floated where needed
m Barbara – First Aid and Campfire Sing along

Parish Youth Camp Report <u>by</u> Parish Youth


My favourite things at Summer camp were:

1. Painting With Larissa.
2. The night walk.
3. Sleeping in tents.
4. The slack line.
5. Dancing with Tatiana and Sophie.
6. The hot dogs.
7. The yummy hot cocoa.
8. The Psalm with Nicholas.
9. Singing "Shall We Gather At The River".
10. Skits.

Camp was a blast!!!

Julianaf

The river was really cold, but I really had fun splashing in it, doing the art class and doing skits. My favourite skit was *Echo* and the *Doctor's Office*. My very favourite thing to do was making things in the woods, the little forest houses. – Eleanor

At this church summer camp my favourite things were the mosaic class with Genevieve and the sports like the ultimate Frisbee and playing catch with Father Gordon. This camp was my favourite out of all the other church camps I've been to so far. – S.

My absolute most favourite part of camp was eating S'mores. Oh, and the skits. *Attention* was my favourite skit because I got to act in it. Oh, and the games and dance. I don't know, there are too many things to like to think about. But I really liked eating the camp cookies. – Esperanza

My Favourite Parts of Camp Angela

This year at Goldstream was a blast.
I really enjoyed making mosaics with Genvieve.
It was relaxing and fun. I also had fun attempting
to play ultimate frizbee. Mostly, I loved Spending
time with my best friend Alix. I was very
sad that I had to leave early. Hopefully I will
have better luck next summer.

Church Liturgical New Year

September 1/14

The entire Liturgical Church Year is a treasury of spiritual wisdom and blessings.

In September, there are two Great Feasts, the Nativity of the Theotokos and the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. There are also other holy days during this month. One is the "Beginning of the Church New Year" on September 1 (September 14 civil new style date).

The first day of the Church's Liturgical New Year is also called the Beginning of the Indiction. It occurs in September for both Scriptural and historical reasons. The Scriptural reason is that God, through Moses, ordained the Old Testament Church to celebrate the New Year at the time of the harvest in "the seventh month," that is, in September. The historical reason is the Roman-Byzantine Emperors and the Eastern Patriarchs of the New Testament Church also decreed the New Year should be in September.

According to Holy Tradition, Christ entered the synagogue on September 1/14 to announce His mission to mankind (Luke 4:16-22). He was given the book of the Prophet Isaiah to read. He opened it and proclaimed, “The spirit of the Lord is upon me; because He has anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent me to proclaim release to captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord…” Isaiah 61:1-2

Tradition says the Hebrews entered the Promised Land in September. The Holy Scriptures (Lev. 23:24-25 and Num. 29:1-2) confirm the people of Israel celebrating the feast of the Blowing of Trumpets on this day, with the offering of hymns and thanksgiving. The Church also keeps festival this day, asking God for temperate weather, seasonable rains, and the abundance of the fruits of the earth.

The spiritual significance of the Liturgical New Year reminds us time is precious. Each day and each service is a gift. Do we remember Divine Liturgy begins *Saturday evening* with Vespers and continues until sunset Sunday? How do we plan our holidays?

Holiday comes from the old English word Holy Day. Are Church holy days the first thing we put in our monthly planners, or the last thing? Let us seriously re-examine our priorities and let us offer unto the Lord, a New Year… in which we put Him first. - *Anonymous Source*

Rejoice and Be Glad!

Congratulations to Annushka and Brian on the birth of their daughter, in August. May God grant your family many years!

The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary

Commemorated on September 8/21

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born at a time when people had reached such a degree of moral decay that it seemed altogether impossible to restore them. People often said that God must come into the world to restore faith and not permit the ruin of mankind.

The Son of God chose to take on human nature for the salvation of mankind, and chose as His Mother the All-Pure Virgin Mary, who alone was worthy to give birth to the Source of purity and holiness.

The Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence

to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary was born in the small city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Righteous Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since Saint Anna was barren.

Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna did not lose hope in God's mercy. They had strong faith that for God everything is possible, and that He would be able to overcome the barrenness of Anna even in her old age, as He had once overcame the barrenness of Sarah, spouse of the Patriarch Abraham. Saints Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them, to the service of God in the Temple.

Childlessness was considered among the Hebrew nation as a Divine punishment for sin, and therefore the righteous Saints Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feast days at the Temple in Jerusalem the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

Saint Joachim in deep grief went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to the Lord for a child. Saint Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Jerusalem Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family.

The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained to extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling: to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God and of them would be born a most blessed daughter Mary, through whom would come the Salvation of all the World.

The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God,

so the Church sings in its festal hymns: “the East Gate… bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls” (2nd Stikhera on “Lord, I Have Cried” Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change of the times when the great and comforting promises of God for the salvation of the human race from slavery to the devil are about to be fulfilled. This event has brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life.

The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to whom we have recourse with filial devotion.

- https://oca.org/saints/lives/2017/09/08/102541-the-nativity-of-our-most-holy-lady-the-mother-of-god-and-ever-vi

Pearls of Wisdom

… Internal work on oneself is an investment in the Church. This is a gathering in the powers of the Church…in the moral life of Her members. One must serve the Church as the one body of Christ, a single organism, a single substance. Each one’s personality is the plot of land entrusted to him for him to labour over, clean up and produce fruit on. In working on ourselves, we work for the whole, for the entire Church, for Its Head, the selfless Saviour. In letting one’s plot grow over, neglecting it, condemning it, we bring harm not only to ourselves but also to the Church. By not gathering for our own soul, we scatter what belongs to the Church.
– excerpts from “How Each of Us Can and Ought to Serve the Church”, Protopresbyter Michael Pomazansky, 1996.

… Life is not found in the head, only the tip of life. Life is in the heart, and only what comes forth from the heart can influence the currents of life. - *St. Theophan the Recluse*

...The Mother of God always is and will be with those who are faithful to her Divine Son; who go according to His call to eternal salvation. She, according to St. John Chrysostom, is the first Receiver of Divine gifts and the first Giver of these gifts and blessings to people who seek help from the Lord and mercy from her. Thus it will always be, until the final hour, until the final second of the life of the world. And let the hearts our faithful, who know the great power of the intercession of the Mother of God, ever fall at the feet of the Mother of God with heartfelt sighing, with their needs and sorrows, in all trials, and in moments of lamentation over sins. She, the Joy of all who sorrow, our heavenly Mother, will spread out upon us her sovereign Protection, intercede for us, save us, and have mercy upon all of us. - *Archimandrite John Krestiankin*

For children who have been watered from a young age on piety: do not have fear for them, and if they stray a little due to their age or because of temptations, they will come back... - *Elder Paisios of Mt. Athos*

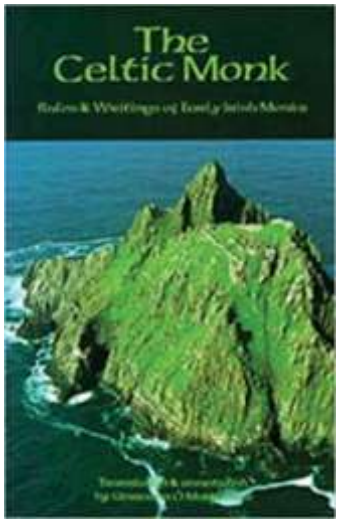
While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal. - *II Corinthians 4:18*

It is good to remember these words "LET US ATTEND" from the Divine Liturgy, and to repeat them in one's spirit as we journey through life. As we look at the beauty of God's world, God's creation, it is good to tell oneself "LET US ATTEND." How much evil, pain, irritation, hostility, untruth would begin to disappear from our lives, from our relations with others, if we carry these words beyond the walls of our churches and used them as a lantern as a torch, to shed light on each step we take, each movement we make, each person we meet. - *Fr. George Benigsen*

Prayers during church services have so much power and significance that just the words, 'Lord, have mercy,' surpass all the spiritual exercises performed in one’s cell. - *St. Anthony of Optina*

September Parish Library Features

Откровенные рассказы странника духовному своему отцу.
- М.: Изд-во Сретенского монастыря, 2009. - 368 стр. - (Б-ка духовной прозы). Эта книга написана неизвестным русским автором из глубины русского народа в конце 19-го века. Его глубокие, мудрые, а временами и забавные истории посвящены постижению им искусства Иисусовой молитвы. **The Way of a Pilgrim** is one of the most famous religious books devoted to the art of the Jesus prayer. An unknown writer from the midst of the common Russian people wrote these deep, thoughtful, and sometimes funny essays from his own experience in the later part of the 19th century.



The Celtic Monk
Rules and writings of early Irish monks, translated by Uinseann O'Maidin. This collection of monastic rules, spiritual writings, and hymnography from the sixth to eleventh centuries gives us a glimpse into spiritual ancient Celtic Christianity.

North-American Years of St. Tikhon, 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia

(Russian and English sources)

Choosing the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia during the Local Council of 1917-18, was probably the most important event in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church in the 20th century. New Patriarch Tikhon (†1925) was a man of an exceptional strength of character. He was chosen to lead the Russian Church in its darkest hour and it turned out to be the best choice. He led the faithful bravely as a true shepherd in the paths of righteousness through the valley of the shadow of death (which Soviet Russia was), died presumably from the hands of his enemies, and was duly canonized in 1989 as a martyr and a confessor. Today he is unceasingly praying for us to our Father in the Heaven, just as he was doing it during his life time. An important place in his prayers is reserved for North America and its faithful, and we can be assured: with such a fervent intercessor we should fear no evil!

In the world the man chosen to this high and responsible service was called Vasili Bellavin. He was born in 1865 in an old, provincial town of Toropetz, in the Government of Pskov, where his father was a priest. As one of the best students in the Academy of Pskov he was transferred to the Ecclesiastical Academy of St. Petersburg which he finished in 1888. His vast knowledge and exemplary reputation at the Academy was so evident that his fellow students humorously called him “Patriarch”. Little did they know how right they were! In 1892 at the age of 27 he was named Inspector, and soon after Rector, of the Seminary of Kholm. He was consecrated Bishop at 33 (the youngest possible age to become a bishop) and in 1898, he was translated to the North American diocese.

A few words must be said about the history and the cultural background of this unique mission. Russian missionaries were very active in Alaska and Aleutian Islands throughout early 1800s, when Russians began to settle in this far-away Russian land. Among those missionaries were such prominent figures as St. Herman of Alaska, St. Innocent of Alaska, St.

Juvenaly of Alaska and other enlighteners and martyrs. Their stories have been described in multiple books and are commemorated on dedicated feast days. Through their tireless and fearless efforts Orthodoxy quickly and successfully spread among North Americans and local Aleut peoples alike, and the mission flourished.

In 1867 Alaska was sold to the USA. This event brought about the question about the fate of the mission. Thanks to support from St. Innocent of Alaska who used to be the Archbishop of the Alaskan vicariate for many years, and who later became the Metropolitan of Moscow and All Russia, the mission continued its important work. St. Innocent wrote to the Ober-Procurator of all Russia about the sale of Alaska: "I see in this event one of the ways of Providence whereby Orthodoxy will penetrate the United States (where now people have begun to pay serious attention to it)". Then he goes on to advise not to close the American vicariate, to allow the Bishop to ordain to the priesthood converts to Orthodoxy from among American citizens who accept all its institutions and customs, to allow the Vicar Bishop and all clerics of the Orthodox Church in America to celebrate the Liturgy and other services in English, to use English rather than Russian in all institutions in the schools to prepare people for missionary and clerical positions, etc.

Thus, on advice of St. Innocent, the Aleutian Islands and Alaska diocesan was created in 1870. In September, 1898 Tikhon was made Bishop of this diocesan. From 1899 to 1907, he remained in America.

There Tikhon found himself in a completely new environment with characteristic features including freedom of religion, no censorship, the hurrying, business-like American bustle, and overall – a clash of Galician, Syrian, Bulgarian, Serbian, Greek and Russian nationalities within his mission. Being in the midst of this “melting pot” he decided to take the constructive leading force reorganizing the mission administratively and creating new facilities. Thus, the American mission was made into Archdiocese, with two Sub-Vicariates, one located in Alaska and the other one – in Brooklyn, New York. St. Nicholas Cathedral was built and completed in New York City on 97th street and the Episcopal See was

removed there from San Francisco. Tikhon established the Ecclesiastical Seminary in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and the St. Tikhon' Monastery in New Canaan, Pennsylvania, both of which are very active today. The number of North American parishes during Tikhon's time increased from 15 to 70 and all the parishes became self-supporting. In 1905, due to the great increase of Orthodox parishes in America, chiefly under Tikhon's guidance, he was promoted to the rank of Archbishop at the age of 40.

When asked to reflect on his American sojourn the humble Tikhon called those years “not particularly successful”, and added that for him personally they were the years of useful experience widening both his ecclesiastical horizon and his political outlook. One of Tikhon's wishes was that North American churches would not be dependent on Russia for a constant supply of clergy and that all priests have local citizenship – a feature serving the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia very well today.

Bishop Tikhon proved to be exceptional in his simplicity, wide benevolence, and purely Christian character. A gentle, strong, learned man; he was a practical church worker, an accessible leader. Tikhon's actions everywhere created a lot of amazement. He never refused to serve in the churches, monasteries, or even the smallest village parish churches. He constantly made trips to churches without any pomp or ceremony, examined minutely all the affairs of the church and even climbed up to the church belfries to inspect the bells. With high and low he remained the same friendly manner, usually speaking kindly and always ready with a joke. Parish priests soon came to expect the archbishop at any time, arriving on foot without fanfare, examining books, discussing local problems, and quick to notice all the details of the provincial church life.

From America Tikhon was translated to Yaroslavl in 1907. The people of Yaroslavl fully appreciated the goodness of their Bishop and elected him an honorary citizen of this ancient town. In 1916 Tikhon received an official letter from Tsar Nicholas II in which the Emperor thanked Tikhon for his work in Russia and North America. A diamond cross to wear on his klobuk (hood) was enclosed with the letter. This happened just a year before Tikhon would be selected the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, and

nine years before his falling asleep as the mercilessly persecuted and all hated enemy of the godless Bolshevik regime…

100 Years without the Tsar - Oppression of the Russian Orthodox Church and Martyrdom of St. Tikhon

(Russian and English sources)

The life of St. Tikhon (†1925) who was chosen to be the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia in 1917, took place on the verge of two Russia's: the Russia with and without the Tsar.

The first part of his life as the enlightener and administrator of the Orthodoxy in Russia and North America was a constructive relationship with the Tsar authorities, characterized by peace, prosperity, mutual respect, support and acknowledgement of successes. After 1917 under the godless Bolsheviks the Orthodox faith became persecuted and marginalized. Tikhon, as the new head of the Church took a strong stance against oppression and lies, which Bolsheviks spread about the Tsar and the Orthodoxy, fearlessly witnessing to the truth. This was the time of martyrs and confessors for the Russian Orthodox Church. Tikhon joined the myriads of the New Martyrs and Confessors of the Soviet Yoke among the first.

As an experienced and respected bishop he was called to Moscow in 1917 to participate in the Local Council of the Russian Orthodox Church. During initial proceedings he was selected to be the 11th Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia. This was an event of historic importance as the previous Patriarch was heading the Church in the 17th century. Peter the Great fundamentally transformed the Church government moving it under the control of a committee known as the Most Holy Governing Synod, which was composed both of bishops and lay bureaucrats appointed by the

Emperor. Now the enemy arrested Nicholas II with his family, and the faithful needed a new “father”. The only person who could substitute the Tsar for the faithful would be a new Patriarch.

In his speech to the Council Tikhon compared the news about his Patriarchate with the scroll that had to be eaten by the prophet Ezekiel on which was written "Weeping, sighing and sorrow". To this God replied: "Son of Man, eat that thou findest; eat this scroll, and go speak unto the house of Israel" (Ez. 2:10, 3:1). Tikhon said: “How many tears will I have to swallow or how many sighs emit in my forthcoming Patriarchal office and especially in the present woeful year? From now on I am entrusted with the care for all the Russian churches, and what awaits me is my gradual dying for them all my days”. He mourned that he had been elected, but then, with "God's will be done" he laid his hopes to the intersession of the Virgin Mary.

Almost immediately after seizing the power the new government started to deliver a long series of crippling blows to the Orthodox Church.

With their very first decrees they took away all Church land (the greater source of Church income). They stopped all financial aid for purposes of religious worship and discontinued all priests' and catechists' salaries.

Births and deaths were no longer to be registered by ecclesiastical authorities. Then they separated the Church from state and schools. These were such changes in the life of the Russian Orthodox Church that it is safe to say no one in Russia was unaffected by it.

The entire Church life was reorganized as well as its relation with the whole country.

To intimidate the faithful, many famous clergy were cruelly murdered in daylight without any sort of trial, right or lawfulness. Churches were despoiled and robbed of their treasures.

The new Patriarch could not watch it happen without a strong response.

In the early 1918 acting alone when the Council was not in session due to Nativity recess, Tikhon issued a proclamation in which the famous anathema to Bolshevik persecutors and oppressors was proclaimed: "The Holy Orthodox Church of Christ is at present passing through difficult times in the Russian land; the open and secret foes of the truth of Christ began persecuting that truth, and are striving to destroy the work of Christ by sowing everywhere in place of Christian love the seeds of malice, hatred, and fratricidal warfare... By the authority given us by God, we forbid you to present yourselves for the sacraments of Christ, and anathemize you, if you still bear the name of Christians, even if merely on account of your baptism you still belong to the Orthodox Church. I adjure all of you who are faithful children of the Orthodox Church of Christ, not to commune with such outcasts of the human race in any matter whatsoever; "cast out the wicked from among you" (Cor. 5:13)". The proclamation was given full and enthusiastic support by the Council when it reconvened.

Throughout his Patriarchate, Tikhon again and again tried to rouse the Russian people to knowledge of their sins. He constantly dwelt on one theme: the Russian people had forgotten God.

In a speech given at the New Year in 1918, he said: "The past year has been a year of the building of the Russian Realm – by the power of men and with only belief in a material world. But alas! Does it not remind us of the sad experiment of Babylonian building? ...The Church condemns such building of ours and we warn most decisively that there will be no success until we remember God".

In July 1918 the Tsar, his family and their faithful servants were brutally murdered by commissars. In a crowded service in the Kazan Cathedral in Moscow the Patriarch condemned it as "the very greatest of crimes" and announced that those who aided or sympathized with it "will be guilty of this blood". He held a solemn pannykhida for the murdered Tsar and his family.

The Patriarch also spoke against the shameful Brest-Litovsk treaty which stopped the Great War for Russia. According to this treaty vast Western-European lands of Russia were given as reparation to Germany (although Germany was gradually losing that war to Russia under the Tsar). The commissars wanted the war to end desperately as it would give them enough force to hold the power in Russia. They were ready to do it on any conditions, however unfavorable they were for Russia.

The treaty of Brest-Litovsk legalized those most unfavorable conditions. Tikhon openly condemned them saying they were so unfair and humiliating for Russia the Bolshevik government was scared to make them public.

The Bolsheviks could not tolerate such fearlessness as it was seriously undermining their gains with their supporters. Besides, they had more devious plans for the Church, as the campaign to widely "expropriate Church treasures" in order to aid the funds of the mass famine (caused by the Bolshevik mismanagement) was being prepared.

To this effect, incessant attacks on Tikhon and the Church were launched by most popular newspapers calling him "traitor", "servant of foreign powers" and "enemy of the starving people". A group of prominent clergy and liberal professors calling themselves "The Living Church" started a campaign from inside trying to "modernize" the Church by demanding immediate change in the Church administration, by promoting the revolution, by proposing a "connection" between Christianity and Communism, a greater secular freedom for the clergy (particularly, proposing easier divorce procedures and "free relationships" within the Church), etc.

To get some control over Tikhon Bolsheviks placed him under house arrest in 1922. A trial was planned with charges of "counter-revolutionary work directed toward overthrowing the Soviet order, opposition to decrees of the authorities, and using religious beliefs and prejudices for creating a disobedient and rebellious attitude among the masses". However, the trial kept being postponed; the Bolsheviks obviously did not want to give a stage to such a fearless and truthful speaker. They preferred threats and intimidation.

Thus, in 1924 Jakob Ostroumoff, Tikhon's faithful servant of many years, was shot in Tikhon's house. Jacob was the closest person to Tikhon throughout those harrowing years. This terrible incident shattered the already poor health of the Patriarch. A couple of weeks later the Patriarch was hospitalized for a variety of conditions. The doctors at the hospital were constantly counseling rest, to which Tikhon would respond that he would have plenty of rest in the grave. He continued conducting liturgies every day and meeting with people. In his last conversations with friends Tikhon said that probably the only way for the Church to remain loyal to Christ under the Soviets was to go into the catacombs. On April 7, 1925 after much physical suffering of undetermined causes he went to bed and passed away. It is possible that he was poisoned by Bolshevik agents, such hated and fearful enemy he was to them.

It is difficult for us today to assess the greatness of Tikhon, his spiritual power and strength of character. Certainly it was far beyond that of the ordinary mortal. Yet the trait that many of his contemporaries noted about him was the warmth and humaneness of his personality. No one was afraid to approach him, and the humblest Siberian pilgrim would receive the same personal interview as a visiting archbishop. He also possessed a great and never failing sense of humor. He loved people, loved to talk with them, entertain them, and like all Russians, drink tea and visit late into the night. As a man of God, he clearly felt that God's wrath had been provoked in Russia, and therefore the country was being punished for her own transgressions and must suffer the punishment in order to be purified.

Since those times, Russia has suffered a lot indeed, but Christ has not abandoned it completely. Many of the clergy went underground and thousands of Russians would bear tales of wandering priests, secret councils of bishops, and of a burning faith which no KGB, no new materialism, no scientific "advances" had been able to kill.

So strong was this faith and so good for the Russian people that an official Church was allowed during the Second World War to administer to the permitted spiritual demands of the struggling people. That was a factor contributing to the overall victory in that terrible war.

The Tikhonite underground movement continued as an outlawed but flourishing institution. Its history is discussed in the book "Russia's Catacomb Saints" by Andreyevsky.

Up to the present the grave of Tikhon in Moscow's Donskoy Monastery is constantly visited by the people and he has been rightly enshrined in the hearts of the believers as a shepherd, confessor, enlightener and defender of the Apostolic Tradition of the true Church.

Holy Hierarch Tikhon, Humble Shepherd of your (North) American Flock,
Pray to God for us!

Practical Tips

Does your Family need a little lift once in awhile?

Are you finding that quiet time for reading is becoming more of a chore than it used to? Need respite from the 'flood' of everyday life? Perhaps it's time you take refuge in ***The Ark*** – a St. Sophia published booklet that has been created for families of young children, youth and teens – and the adults that read to, or with them. ***The Ark*** is also a simple read for those converted to Orthodoxy and young at heart! In every issue, you will find stories of Tradition relating to Church Feasts and Fasts, Beloved Saints, Parish Youth events and activities, relevant Bible Stories, and various articles that directly respond to questions posed by young Parishioners and their families. Sometimes there are family-oriented activities, recipes or puzzles to try. Each issue is full of tender, loving Orthodox images so that even the youngest child can glance through ***The Ark*** as a picture book. Watch for ***The Ark***, four times/year. See it in full colour online, or pick up a printed booklet from the Church candle table.

Volume 6

St. Sophia Parish Online Youth Quarterly The Ark

http://www.saintsophia.ca/the-ark/

Volume 7 available soon! ☺

Links

St. Sophia Orthodox Church, Victoria BC
http://saintsophia.ca/

St. Sophia Parish Youth Quarterly: The Ark
http://www.saintsophia.ca/the-ark/

St. Sophia Parish's FREE Lenten Cookbook Recipes "Come and Dine"
http://comeanddinerecipe.blogspot.ca/

Official site of the Montreal and Canadian Diocese
http://mcdiocese.com/en/

Official site of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia
http://www.russianorthodoxchurch.ws/synod/indexeng.htm

The Rudder: Streaming Orthodox Christian sacred music 24/7
http://www.myocn.com/rudder/

Holy Trinity Orthodox Church, Vancouver BC
http://russianorthodoxchurch.ca/en/

Morning Offering by Abbot Tryphon
http://blogs.ancientfaith.com/morningoffering/

"We knew not whether we were in heaven or earth… We only know that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations."

The Orthodox Church

With these words, envoys sent from Russia by Prince Vladimir in the year 987 recorded their impression of Constantinople's awesome Orthodox Cathedral, Hagia Sophia. They had been sent to search for the true religion. Within a year of their report, Prince Vladimir and the Russian people were baptized in Christ by Orthodox missionaries. Today, as in Prince Vladimir's time, the Orthodox Church – fully aware that man is a union of body and soul – uses all the beauty of creation to move her faithful children to prayer and worship: icons, beautiful singing, sweet-smelling incense, and majestic services.

The Greek word 'Orthodoxia' means 'correct praise' or 'correct teaching' and in the Orthodox worship the praise and teaching are closely interwoven.

Jesus Christ founded His Church through the Apostles. By the grace received from God at Pentecost, the Apostles established the Church throughout the world. In Greece, Russia, and elsewhere, the True Apostolic Church continues to flourish, preserving the Faith of Christ pure and unchanged.

"Christ the Power of God,
and the Wisdom of God"

– First Corinthians

Troparion in the Second Tone

We bow down before Thine all pure image, O Good One, asking forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God; for Thou wast well pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh of Thine own will, that Thou mightest save what Thou hadst created from slavery to the enemy. Wherefore, we cry out to Thee in thanksgiving: Thou hast filled all things with joy, O our Saviour, Who hast come to save the world.

Kontakion in the Second Tone

O uncircumscribable Word of the Father, knowing the victorious image, uninscribed and divinely wrought, of Thine ineffable and divine dispensation towards man, of Thy true incarnation, we honour it with veneration.