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

December 2018 Sophia Issue #80 Services

Saturday December 1 - Vigil 6pm
Sunday December 2 - Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

Monday December 3 - Vigil 6pm Entry of Holy Theotokos into the Temple
Tuesday December 4 - Liturgy 10:30am Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple

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

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

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

- *Sunday Evening Vespers - 5pm*

Tuesday December 18 - Vigil 6pm St. Nicholas the Wonderworker
Wednesday December 19 - Liturgy 10:30am St. Nicholas the Wonderworker

Saturday December 22 - Vigil 6pm
Sunday December 23- Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers- 5pm*

Monday December 24 - Vigil 6pm St. Herman of Alaska
Tuesday December 25 - Liturgy 10:30am St. Herman of Alaska

Saturday December 29- Vigil 6pm
Sunday December 30 - Liturgy 10:30am

- *Sunday Evening Vespers- 5pm*

December Parish Saint's Days

Congratulations to Reader Nicholas, Alec, Alexander-Nikita, Katherine L, Katherine S, Catherine G, Caterina W, Andrew B, Andrew M, Andrei K, matushka Barbara, Julia H, Nicholas Bro., Nicholas Bri., Nicolai, Lucy S, and Naomi C. May God grant you all many, many, years!

Thank You – November Church Cleaners Florists & Gardeners

Thank you to the church cleaners (especially with having the extra events); and to those who arranged the beautiful church flowers, and of course, the continued efforts of the outdoor Garden Team!

2018 Pre-Nativity Concert, Arts and Crafts Fair, Bake, Preserves Sale, Church Mosaic Tour

Friends and supporters of our Parish were treated to a feast of impressions at the 27th annual event. Choir Director r. Lucas Corwin conducted the Friday evening Nativity Concert which attracted old friends of the parish, as well as newcomers. The music was interspersed with a reading from "The Year of the Lord" by Ivan Smelev. This year's concert was narrated by reader Igor.

The parish artists and designers transformed the trapeza into a festive holiday shop where locals and regular customers sought out their yearly favourites, of artistic, hand crafted items, seasonal baking and preserves.

Everyone who attended the Concert received a cup of hot tasty apple cider and spent their time in lively conversations and crafts shopping.

Our parish relies on this event for funds, fellowship and hospitality to those becoming familiar with Orthodoxy.

The Saturday Mosaic Studio tour led by Father John and Marie Allison brought distant and otherworldly images to the heart of Fairfield. The 40 guests were delighted to see the recent installment of 6 new Mosaics, depicting some of Christ's Holy Miracles.

Photo of Mosaic: **Christ's Miracle of Feeding the Multitudes, with Five Loaves and Two Fishes.** Scriptural References in all four Gospels: St. Matthew 14:13-21; St. Mark 6: 31-44; St. Luke 9: 12-17; St. John 6: 1-14

Thank you to all those who worked so hard dedicating their time and passion to concert rehearsals, trapeza decorating, creating arts, sewing, knitting, crocheting, baking, cleaning, and organizing. The above combinations helped the event go smoothly!

Prizes

Congratulations to Regina K., winner of the Grand Prize – a Byzantine Style Mosaic created by a parishioner;

Mary K. won the Deluxe Gift Basket; Andrew won the Zambri's Restaurant Gift Certificate; Ron C. received the Hand-woven tea towels; the Famous Galina Cake was taken by Kim S. and the Handmade Key Rack won by Thor H.

We offer a heartfelt thank you to all who generously donated their time and God-given talents towards this truly shining event.

Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

From the Ark A Parish Youth Quarterly

December 4/November 21

As a three-year old child, Mary is brought by her parents, Joachim and Anna, to the Temple in Jerusalem, where she "is presented today to the house of the Lord." The High Priest leads her into the Holy of Holies, an unusual act, for only the High Priest himself entered there once a year.

The Virgin Mary's parents, Joachim and Anna, had always worshipped God and were very faithful to Him. After Mary was about three years old, they went to the Temple in Jerusalem to pray and offer a sacrifice (a gift) to God for blessing them with their special little girl.

The Temple was a very large building, divided into several areas. There was a golden altar, with many vessels, and furniture that was covered with gold. There were places where the priests offered sacrifices of animals, and special areas where incense and candles were burned. There were lamp-stands of pure gold, cups, large bowls or basins where the priests could wash their hands, a small altar-stand for burning sweet-smelling incense, and gold and silver stored in the treasury. This glorious Temple stood on a large stone hill and could be seen from everywhere around.

When they entered the Temple, Joachim and Anna led their little girl Mary towards the place called the "Holy of Holies" (like the Sanctuary, the place of the Altar in our Church).

It was the place in the Temple where only the priests were allowed to go, where they offered prayers and spoke to God. Outside the sanctuary, there were rooms where the priests lived and other places for people who helped to take care of the Temple and its visitors.

Joachim and Anna led their daughter towards the Sanctuary, to present her to the Lord, but something very unusual happened. As they neared the steps, the High Priest came out. He led Mary toward the holy place in the Temple, where only he could go, just once each year. Then, even more surprising, the High Priest took Mary's hand and led her into the Sanctuary, the most Holy of Holies! Joachim and Anna were not sure what had happened, but they believed God had blessed their child in a special way.

Many people came from long distances to worship and offer gifts and sacrifices in the Temple, like Joachim and Anna. They often stayed in the buildings around the Temple during the great holidays, where they were cared for by the women who helped provide them with food and shelter.

Mary's parents were growing old, and were older than most parents with a young child. They worried about what would happen to Mary when they died. Who would take care of her?

They made arrangements for Mary to live in the Temple with other pious women and help them with the work of caring for the Temple.

She remained there until she was old enough to marry.

A Speaker at the October 27th conference in Colchester England was St. Sophia parish's Reader Igor K

[Nicholas II and the Sacredness of a Monarchy: Truth and Myth Behind the Relations between the Power and Christianity.]

About the Symposium

"Nicholas II. Emperor. Tsar. Saint," October 27, Colchester, UK

On Saturday, 27th October, more than 100 people from 11 countries attended the "Nicholas II - Emperor. Tsar. Saint" Symposium in Colchester, UK.

The venue for the event was St. John of Shanghai Orthodox Church in Colchester, Essex, which is situated about an hour's train journey from London.

It was truly meaningful and appropriate that the conference should take place at the Church of St. John of Shanghai, who did so much for the glorification of the Holy Royal Passion-Bearers.

This historic event brought people from no less than 11 countries: England, Wales, Ireland, the Netherlands, France, Denmark, Vatican City, Russia, Canada, US and Australia.

Greetings for the conference and its attendees were received by letter from Vice-Chairman of the Department for External Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate Archimandrite Philaret; Head of the Russian Imperial House Her Imperial Highness Grand Duchess Maria Vladimirovna; and His eminence Archbishop Gregorios of Thyateira and Great Britain.

The conference featured 5 speakers, who presented 7 lectures, most of which were dedicated to clearing the name of the much slandered tsar.

After the opening prayer the first presentation was delivered by the organizer of the event, a Romanov enthusiast from Toronto Paul Gilbert (pictured above). Paul has been researching the Romanovs for more than 25 years, and in the process, he has become a specialist in the new Russian history and a deep admirer of the Christian Orthodoxy, the Russian monarchy, and, in particular, of the latest Russian Tsar Nicholas II. His first presentation was called “A Century of Treason, Cowardice and Lies” and it was devoted to listing and debunking most enduring myths concerning Nicholas II’s reign and personality.

In Paul’s opinion the Western civilization started to slowly correct its understanding of Nicholas Romanov, a Tsar and a person, in 1967 when the famous bestseller “Nicholas and Alexandra” by R. Massie was published. Massie’s book still holds a lot of historic value today (and is a good read at that!), however, the author’s treatment of Tsar Russia as a “backwater”, underdeveloped country is certainly not correct, as almost all speakers at the Symposium noted. Paul Gilbert pointed out that slandering of the martyred Tsar and the Romanov House continues today with popular and myth-based series, cartoons, books and movies because controversy sells.

He warned the audience that one must be very critical and cautious of any attempts at "picturing" Nicholas II, pointing out that the Russian Orthodox Church has always been a reliable source of truth about this great Russian Emperor.

The next presenter was Archpriest Andrew Phillips (top left of first picture), Father of the Russian Orthodox Church of St. John of Shanghai at Colchester, UK, where the Symposium was taking place. Father Andrew is a well-known personality in the ROCOR community as he is a vocal advocate of the last Russian Tsar, as well as a popular writer of multiple books about the saints of the British Isles (you can find several books by Fr. Andrew in our Church Library). Fr. Andrew offered this excellent and very appropriate venue for the Symposium completely free demonstrating an example of Christian generosity (a venue in London would start at five thousand pounds). His topic was "Why Nicholas II is a Saint in the Russian Orthodox Church".

In it he addressed some popular untruths about Tsar Nicholas II and outlined the huge economic advances the Tsar Russia was making in the beginning of the 20th century. Fr. Andrew reminded the audience that Nicholas II was the patron of the whole universal Orthodox Church restraining the world evil from unleashing its destructive influences upon Europe. Without the spiritual and moral guidance of this "Angel of Peace" as Nicholas II became known after his famous Peace Manifesto of 1898 calling all world nations to disarmament and eternal peace, Europe and then the world quickly plunged into the horrors of the 20th century, a century which at the time was expected to be the first century without wars.

In today's warped reality when we see traditional values being discredited at every turn by immoral politicians and profit-seeking mainstream media we must realize: it would have been all different had the people of Russia saved the Tsar and kept the monarchy. But the godless Bolsheviks had their way with a lot of popular support for long 70 years and as a result the world is still suffering from God's wrath after the sin of 1918 regicide, and will continue to suffer until mass repentance of this terrible sin.

I delivered the next report, and it was entitled "**Nicholas II and the Sacredness of a Monarchy: Truth and Myth Behind the Relations Between the Power and Christianity.**" In it I discussed the biblical roots of a monarchy as a way to govern a nation, addressed some common myths and misunderstandings about the monarchy.

The message of this part of my paper is a reminder of the historic importance of a monarchy that brought the world to its current state of prosperity, and a discussion of advantages of a monarchy that can help nations avoid common pitfalls of a democracy which have become so evident recently.

Then I moved on to the Russian history and cited several National Geographic articles from the beginning of the 20th century which present an unbiased description of huge achievements that Russia under Tsar Nicholas II was making – and which were completely lost for Russia and the world after the lawless seizure of power by Bolsheviks in 1917.

My presentation was followed with a lot of friendly comments and questions. Obviously, the information presented struck a chord with many listeners who realized just how much better off both Russia and the world have been had the Romanov rule of Russia survived, and had the spiritual and moral values of Nicholas and his family been upheld ever since.

One of the comments was offered by another presenter at the Symposium Marilyn Swezey. She shared that during her research she had been looking for one of the National Geographic sources I cited in my report for many years, an article by Gilbert H. Grosvenor "Young Russia: The Land of Unlimited Possibilities" (November 1914).

She could not find it as she had learnt that Bolshevik envoys purchased the whole print run of this issue

over the years because this article painted a picture of the Tsar Russia that was vastly different from their anti-monarchic propaganda. Fortunately, now anybody can read this issue and all other issues of National Geographic published since the magazine year of birth 1888. They all have been digitized and are now available on DVDs!

American author Marilyn Swezey delivered presentation “The Romanovs Under House Arrest. From the 1917 Diary of a Palace Priest” based on the book under the same title she had co-authored. Her talk highlighted some excerpts from the diary by the Archpriest Afanasy Belyaev who served as a priest and confessor for the Russian Imperial Family while in Tobolsk and Ekaterinburg exile in 1918.

These excerpts open a window into the souls of the sainted Royal Family and the struggles endured in their first five months of confinement. Father Afanasy documented the extraordinary purity of their souls, the intense fervor of their prayer, deep humility and complete submission to God’s will.

In her talk “Imperial Tea Party. Family, Politics and Betrayal. The Ill-Fated British and Russian Royal” British author Frances Welch touched upon the uneasy historic relationships between the Russian and the British Royalty.

She recounted the three extraordinary meetings between the British and the Russian Royal families which took place during the reign of Nicholas II. Although well-intentioned and generally hailed as successes, they were beset by misunderstandings and misfortunes.

British King George infamously denied his Romanov cousins exile in Britain when the Bolsheviks were closing in 1917, but the assassination of the Tsar and his family horrified him, and whether or not things might have turned out differently if he had organized their refuge has been the subject of speculation ever since, resulting in such studies as the recent bestselling book “The Race to Save the Romanovs” by Helena Rappaport.

Paul Gilbert delivered the last report called “Nicholas II in Post-Soviet Russia.” He came up with the timeline for most important events concerning the Romanovs in the Post-Soviet Russia. These events demonstrate that the realization of the terrible sin of regicide is slowly

spreading in the Russian society with more people viewing the Romanovs positively and more of them condemning the cruel murder of the Tsar and his family with servants in a Siberian basement. Paul also touched upon the fate of the Ekaterinburg remains the disputed authenticity of which has been given much press in Russia recently. Confirming the authenticity of the remains is another important step of the Russian society towards repenting the sin of regicide. If confirmed authentic they will become the saintly relics and would need to be treated appropriately. Another appropriate treatment would be needed then for all those who had ordered and carried out the terrible murder, as there are still streets, places, monuments and "sights" associated with these people in Russia.

There is a long road for the Russian and the Western society towards common understanding of the true meaning and importance of the fate of Nicholas II.

This road is not an easy one as it is often blocked with deep-rooted malign myths which still surround the reign of the last Russian monarch. However, the work on removing those blocks has started and is actively going on thanks to the interest from historians and enthusiasts of the Romanovs, patronage of the Church.

The meetings like the Nicholas II Symposium at Colchester contribute to this valuable and God-blessed effort. – *Reader Igor K, St. Sophia Parish*

Almsgiving

With the Nativity Fast upon us, we are compelled to work a little harder in preparation for the Feast of the Lord's Nativity, not only by means of fasting, but of increased prayer and giving alms. The opportunities to show Love for One's Neighbour; near or far, are indeed endless.

All through the year, the Sisterhood separately tithes funds, giving extra alms on behalf of St. Sophia Parish. This year, we sent donations to the Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary; to the ROCOR Diocese of Montreal and All Canada; to the Maiwa Foundation to purchase a bike in the Pink Bike

Project (helping village girls travel to school to receive an education in rural India); to the Nourish Cowichan Society – a program that provides nutritious breakfasts to over 500 children-in-need at schools in Duncan; to the various ROCOR Funds for Assistance Program – supporting international Orthodox clergy in need; and to Victoria's Cridge Centre for the Family – supporting the Women's Transition Centre. We also recently sent a donation to Holy Trinity Seminary, and the St. Herman's Conference. In addition to financial contributions, there are two hampers in the vestibule awaiting donations; one for non-perishable food bank items, and the second for the C.A.R.T.S Outreach, which has specific needs, for their mission of helping people on the street.

It is the Truth that we have already received, now in good turn, it's our time to Give – in whatever form you are able to share; financial, personal or in prayer. "Go and do likewise" and you will fulfill the commandment of Love.

Thank you for supporting the Sisterhood and May God Help you with your Efforts.

Looking Ahead to Christmastide

Christmastide is the 12 day celebration of Jesus Christ's Incarnation. There is no fasting during this time. We traditionally give gifts to one another, imitating the magi who brought gifts to the Infant Saviour and the Theotokos, the Holy Mother of God, who offered Christ, as a Gift for the Life of the world.

On the day after Christmas (Jan. 8/Dec. 26), the Theotokos is celebrated. By giving birth to Christ, she became an instrument of salvation through the Incarnation of God. This celebration of the Virgin Mary is followed by the commemoration of the first Christian martyr following Christ's ascension: the deacon Stephen (Jan. 9/Dec. 27).

On Jan.11/Dec. 29, we remember the dreadful slaying of 14,000 male infants by King Herod, due to his fear and jealousy of the coming Messiah. This day reminds Christians to not be like Herod, whether through our conscious or unconscious actions to remove Christ from our lives.

The Sunday after Nativity commemorates Christ's ancestors and relatives "according to the flesh." St. Joseph the Betrothed is commemorated. St. David the king and psalmist, is an image of true repentance, and provides to this day, a profusion of prayers and hymns to the faithful. St. James, the "brother of the Lord" was a son from the previous marriage of St. Joseph the Betrothed. St. James was the first leader of the church of Jerusalem.

The circumcision of Christ is celebrated (Jan. 14/1), not only as a fulfillment of the Jewish Law but also for the naming the child Jesus (which means "Saviour"), as we too receive a new name through the mystery of Baptism in the Church.

The holy prophet Malachi (Jan. 17/4) is honoured. In the 5th century BC, he prophesied that a "Sun of Righteousness" would enter the world with "healing on his wings" (Mal. 4:2).

On Jan.18/5, the original seventy apostles are commemorated. They were sent into the world with the Gospel message.

As we receive the infant Christ, the King of Kings; upon celebrating His Holy Nativity, we too, like the apostles and disciples, must learn to share him with the rest of the world.

We wind up the 12 Days of Christmas with the Great Feast of Holy Theophany (sometimes called the Epiphany) on January 19/6th. In the baptism of Christ, by St. John the Forerunner and Baptist, the divinity of Christ and the full mystery of the Trinity are made manifest. The word

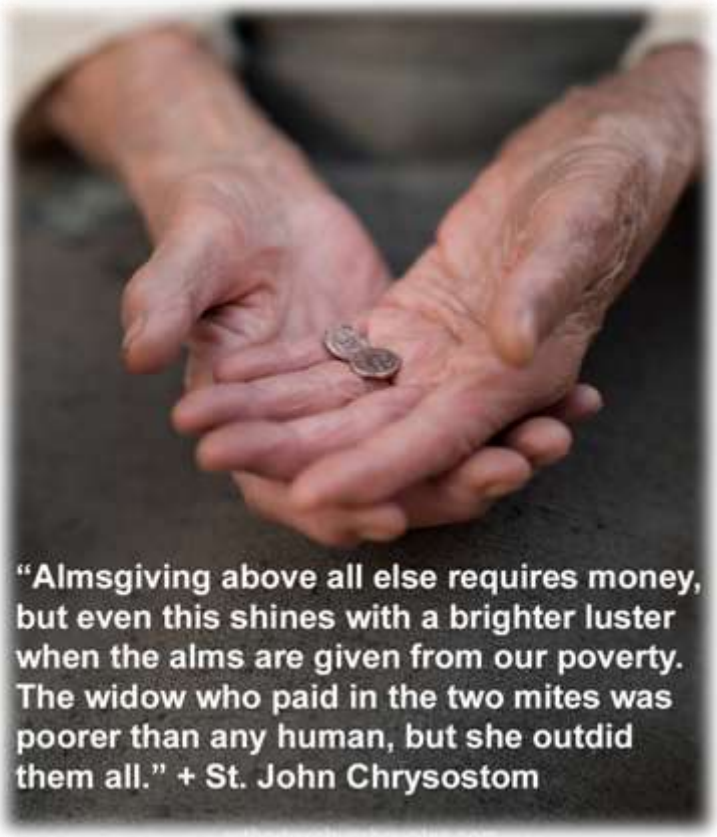
Theophany means “divine manifestation.” The steps that Christ took into the River Jordan were His first steps to the Cross, Crucifixion, and Resurrection.

What is Boxing Day?

The third day of Christmas is known as St. Stephen’s Day in commemoration of the First Christian Martyr. He was one of the seven original deacons of the Church, ordained by the Apostles to care for widows and the poor.

On St. Stephen’s Day it became a tradition for the churches’ yearly Collection Coin Boxes to be opened and distributed to the poor and needy. This included hampers of food or clothing collected to share with those in need.

(The popular name in the West, for the day after Christmas is Boxing Day. Although today in general society “boxing day” has mostly commercial connotations of “treating oneself to sales.”)



It is spiritually beneficial for us to open our internal box, our “hearts” and give alms to “others,” to the needy… *particularly* if alms are given in the name and memory of a loved one who has passed on. In this regard, our donation serves ‘three in one’ by helping the recipient, the eternal memory of a friend or relative, and oneself.

The meaning of both the Nativity of Christ and the entirety of what falls within the 12 Days of Christmastide is in essence the *receiving and giving of Christ*. It is He who is truly the Gift and the Giver.

Pearls of Wisdom

Freeing ourselves from sin is not an immediate but a gradual process which resembles growing up. Through our perseverance, the purification of the heart is attained slowly, and inexplicably, with the assistance of Grace. First the mind is cleansed and illuminated and then it recognizes the essence of thoughts and is not deceived. After making proper use of thoughts and obeying the commandments exactly, the heart is purified…
- *Elder Joseph of Vatopedi*

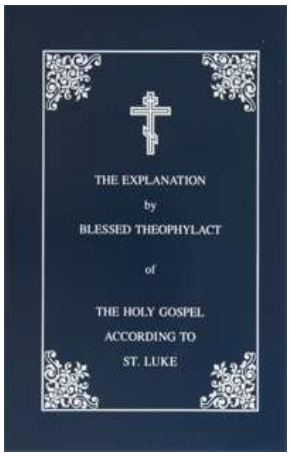
Since the Most Holy Virgin was brought into the temple to be instructed in the Lord, let us talk now about the benefit and necessity of going to the church of God as the house of God and place where we are raised for the Heavenly Fatherland. We are called Christians, and we are called by Jesus Christ to the Heavenly Fatherland, to be heavenly citizens, Divine inheritors, co-inheritors with Christ. Our calling is very high, our duties are also just as important; our spirit should be very exalted, holy, meek and humble. - *St. John of Kronstadt; Excerpted Homily of the Day of the Entry*

From this day forth from this very hour and this very minute, let us love God above all and seek to accomplish His Holy Will. - *St. Herman of Alaska*

Do not ever say: 'These beggars annoy me!' So many millions of men live on earth and all are beggars before the Lord; emperors as well as laborers, the wealthy as well as servants, all are beggars before the Lord and the Lord never said: 'These beggars annoy me!'"
- *St. Nikolaj Velimirovic*

Each time we participate in the Sacrament of Sacraments, the Eucharist, the Divine Liturgy, we become the Body of Christ. We are in anticipation of the glory to come. We are already in that glory, we already enjoy this divine life, we are already sitting to the right side of God the Father, we are already exalted to the Heaven with Christ. This is what happens in the Church. This is what the Church is all about. - *Archpriest Demetrius Basalygo*

December Parish Library Features



The Gospel According to Saint Luke

The explanation by Blessed Theophylact
This classic Orthodox commentary of the New Testament was written in about the year 1100 A.D. by a brilliant and saintly Byzantine churchman. His commentary has remained a primary text of New Testament interpretation throughout the Orthodox world of Greece, Russia, Serbia, Bulgaria and Romania. Blessed Theophylact distills the teaching of the earlier Church Fathers, especially St. John Chrysostom, in language that is profound, powerful, and direct.

Сказки и рассказы для детей. - М.: ИД Православный мир», 2010. - 400 стр.
Сборник сказок и рассказов для детей представляет читателю классические образцы той части русской детской литературы, которая основана на православном мироощущении.
This collection of short stories for kids contains the best examples of Russian classical children's literature rooted in Orthodox Christianity.

100 Years without the Tsar

On the Iconography of the Royal Passion-Bearers

The main reference point of any true Orthodox Christian icon should be eternity. An icon is a witness to the Heavenly Kingdom which cannot be a subject for personal interpretation. The saints are the people who became Christ's vessels and each icon must demonstrate this spiritual truth. The Second Council of

Nicaea determined: “The honour paid to an image traverses it, reaching the Model, and he who venerates the image, venerates the person represented in that image.”

Thus, by venerating the saints depicted in icons we actually venerate Him Who made their sainthood possible. Therefore, veneration of saints and icons has nothing to do with idolatry.

Creating a new icon is not an easy task. It requires not only artistic mastery and diligently following the canon, but also a deep religious feeling on the part of the author, their ability to reject their sinful subjective “take on it” for the purpose of creating dogmatic, objective, historically-correct and eternal content.

Canonization of thousands of Russian Martyrs and Confessors of the 20th century has brought about the task of creating numerous icons of these saints.

The discussion of the iconography of the Royal Passion-Bearers should also touch upon the definition of who passion-bearers are.

The idea of passion-bearing has its root in the New Testament, as in “Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ” (2 Tim. 2:3).

Being a good soldier of Jesus Christ means conquering evil with love, not with evil; not fighting back but acting in a Christian-like manner. Passion-bearers usually belong to noble families and they go through martyrdom for their faith at the hands of their own people, not external enemies. They hold to their faith with piety and true love of God, and they perish because of wrath, greed, cunning, or treachery. They demonstrate with their own example that true Christian “Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth” (1 Cor. 13:6). For all these reasons passion-bearers are particularly revered in their own lands.

Such saints as Russian princes Boris and Gleb (†1015), Prince Igor II of Kiev (†1147) were among the first passion-bearers in the Russian land. Passion-bearers are often depicted with a cross in their hands as a symbol of their martyrdom.

The entire Imperial Family of Russia, executed by the Bolsheviks in July 1918 were canonized as passion-bearers. This is reflected in their icons. In

them we can see the Romanov family each holding a cross of their own as the symbol of their martyrdom. We usually see them together: Nicholas, Alexandra, their son and heir to the Russian throne Alexei are in the middle, the Royal Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Maria and Anastasia are around them.

Their attire can be different: from humble military uniforms on Nicholas and Alexei to the full royal costume including the Monomakh's Cap ornamented with gold, precious stones and fur. We can see such symbols of royal power as a scepter with an orb and cross, as well as rich red ornamented cloaks, sometimes with white spotted ermine fur neckpiece on Nicholas and Alexandra. The Grand Duchesses might wear white cloaks.

The composition of the icon can be completed with the image of Jesus Christ, Who is blessing the Passion-Bearers, or two angels with the icon Our Lady Derzhavnaya ("The Sovereign") above. There should be an inscription "Royal Passion-Bearers" with the name of each member of the family. The royal family must be featured in any icon of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, preferably in the centre.

As in any icon it is very important to understand the symbolic meaning of the colours used to create an icon.

For the Royal Passion-Bearers it is often red, white, green, and gold. Red being the color of blood stands for their flaming faith, self-sacrifice and Paschal joy at once. The Byzantine tradition attaches royalty to red (think of Byzantine emperors born in the Purple Chamber of the Great Palace of Constantinople). The Our Lady Derzhavnaya ("The Sovereign") icon is done in red-purple, for example. White is the colour of eternity and the Pre-eternal Power. It is the colour of sainthood, piety and purity of souls, of physical virginity. Gold is the colour of God's Grace. Halos of the saints are usually golden. Green is the colour of life and restoration of Great Russia for which the Passion-Bearers shed their blood.

With a lot of various icons today believers sometimes ask which icons they should choose to revere. Good advice would be to choose such an icon that is close to them. There has been some discussion around icons of separate members of the royal family. The canonized family is always depicted together (and thus being a patron of a traditional Christian family, as well as the symbol of Great Imperial Russia), it is not a violation of the canon if each member of the family is depicted separately, as they each represents

some particular quality believers would seek: be it religious consolation and protection for nurses (Tsarina Alexandra), protection for Christian children and people with hemophilia (issues of blood)- (Prince Alexei), protection for Christian girls (Duchesses Romanov), or the royal and pious father figure of Nicholas II.

The Ark

Volume 8
January – March 2019

St. Sophia Parish Online Youth Quarterly

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

Practical Tips

Looking Ahead

During this time of the year, social invitations tend to increase.

Don't forget to set aside time for the important December Feasts Days as well. The Entry of the Theotokos Into the Temple Vigil on Monday evening December 3 and Liturgy the morning of December 4th. As well, there is St. Nicholas the Wonderworker's Feast Day Vigil the evening of Tuesday December 18th and Liturgy Wednesday morning December 19th.

These services along with Sts. Spyridon and Herman's (24th and 25th) service are ancient and beautiful.

There will be a blessing of having Litya at those evening vigils.

Our 2019 church calendars will be available for sale 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/

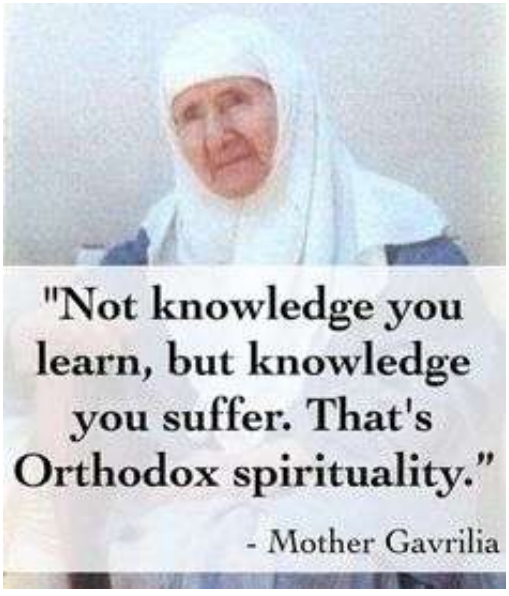
Official site of the Montreal and Canadian Diocese
http://mcdiocese.com/en/

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.