



**Holy Prophet Zachariah and Holy Righteous Elizabeth** were the parents of the Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord, John. They descended from the lineage of Aaron: St Zachariah, son of Barach, was a priest in the Jerusalem Temple and St Elizabeth was the sister of St Anna, the mother of the Most Holy Theotokos. The righteous spouses, “walking in all the commandments of the Lord” (Luke 1:6), suffered barrenness, which in the times of the Old Testament was considered a great punishment from God.

Once, during his turn of priestly service in the Temple, St Zachariah was told by an angel that his aged wife would bear him a son, who *will be great in the sight of the Lord* (Luke 1:15) and *will go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias* (Luke 1:17). Zachariah doubted that this prediction would come true, and for his weakness of faith he was punished by becoming mute. When Elizabeth gave birth to a son, through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit she announced that his name would be John, although no one in their family had this name. They asked Zachariah about the child's name, and he wrote 'John' on a tablet. Immediately the gift of speech returned to him, and inspired by the Holy Spirit, he began to prophesy about his son as the Forerunner of the Lord.

When impious King Herod heard from the Magi about the birth of the Messiah, he decided to kill all the infants up to two years old at Bethlehem and the surrounding area, hoping that the new-born Messiah would be among them. Herod knew about John's unusual birth and he wanted to kill him, fearing that he was the foretold King of the Jews. But Elizabeth hid herself and the infant in the mountains. The murderers searched everywhere for John. Elizabeth, when she saw her pursuers, began to implore God for safety, and immediately the mountain opened

up and concealed her and the infant from their pursuers.

During those tragic days St Zachariah was taking his turn at the services in the Temple. The soldiers, sent by Herod, tried in vain to learn from him the whereabouts of his son. Then, by command of Herod, they murdered this holy prophet, having slain him *between the temple and the altar* (Mt. 23:35). Righteous Elizabeth died forty days after her husband, while St John, preserved by the Lord, dwelt in the wilderness until the day of his appearance to the people of Israel.

## Sunday, September 18

*Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

### Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Commemoration of Prophet Zachariah and Righteous Elizabeth, parents of Holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John, and Venerable Martyr Athanasios of Brest (†1648)

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## Wednesday, September 21

Akathist to the Mother of God 5:30 P.M.

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## Sunday September 25

*Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost*

### Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Commemoration of the translation (in 1704) of relics of Righteous Symeon of Verhoturie (†1642)

### Ask Your Parish Priest

*Question:* Forgive me, Father, recently I have read the *Orthodox Life* published by Holy Trinity Monastery in New York, its September-October edition lists guidelines for Confession and Holy Communion:

*"In Holy Communion we receive a great gift from God. We express our gratitude for God's great act of mercy through these thanksgiving prayers. At the end of the service, the ones who partook of Communion carefully listen to the thanksgiving prayers and do not come up to venerate the cross with everyone else. When the thanksgiving prayers are over, the Cross is brought out to them for veneration. At that time, when one kisses the Cross, it is not customary to kiss the priest's hand."*

This is the prayers you read in the altar after the end of the service and when everyone departs, so if I am fortunate to partake of the Holy Communion I should abstain from coming forward until the prayers are read and am not to kiss your hand? Thank you Father.

*Answer:* During the last several centuries, as it remains true for our day and age, the Christians adhered to a special prayer rule when preparing to receive the Holy Communion. This *Prayer Rule of Preparation for the Holy Communion* is universally upheld. *Prayers of Thanksgiving after the Holy Communion* are the concluding part of this rule. After the Holy Communion, one must read these *Prayers of Thanksgiving* either to himself, or to his family (if several family members communed), or hear it read in the temple at the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy.

It is a general practice in the Slavic parishes to read the *Prayers of Thanksgiving* either while the

faithful come up to venerate the Cross, or immediately after that. These prayers are read by a reader from the *kliros* (a place where the singers and readers stand) or from a spot not far from the amvon so that all the communicants could hear.

The ban of venerating priest's hand while venerating the Cross for the communicants sounds like a local practice (the source cited by the inquirer does not give an explanation: *At the end of the service, those who communed listen to the thanksgiving prayers and do not come up to venerate the Cross with everyone else. When the thanksgiving prayers are over, the Cross is brought out to the communicants for veneration.*

**Explanation:** *The people who have not taken Holy Communion come up to the Cross immediately and receive a piece of antidoron, as a consolation that they were unable to take Holy Communion at this Liturgy. The communicants, without interruption, listen to the thanksgiving prayers and then venerate the Cross, since they have partaken of the True Gifts and have no need to receive the antidoron (which means "in place of the Gifts"). Following Holy Communion, we piously return home, retain a prayerful and peaceful disposition, do good works, and exert all our efforts not to return to the sins from which we have been cleansed.* The stress is made here on the attention with which the communicants should listen to the *Prayers of Thanksgiving*, the attention which can be undermined by movement in the line and occasional conversation which may occur while coming up to venerate the Cross. What can be said here is that one should not venerate anything: icons, the Cross or priest's hand, if one did not drink the *zapivka* (after-communion drink) and eat piece of prosphora. This is done to prevent leaving the particles of the Body of Christ, which might remain in our mouth, on the icons, the Cross, priest's hand, etc. For the same reason we should not talk or sing till we have eaten a prosphora and drunk a sip or two of *zapivka*.

Also, perhaps it is time for all the communicants either to stay in the church to listen to the *Prayers of Thanksgiving after the Communion* or to read them at home unfailingly.

## Life of Right-believing Prince Peter and Princess Fevronia of Murom (†1228)

### III

The page returned to the prince and repeated to him the words of Fevronia. Prince Peter did not take her words seriously, thinking that it would be impossible for a prince to marry the daughter of a man whose station in life was as low as that of one who collects pitch. And he instructed his page to tell the maiden that she must cure him, and that if she did, she would become his wife.

The page repeated these words to the maiden. She then took a small pitcher and scooped up some leaven from a barrel and told the page: "Prepare a steam bath for your prince, and, after the bath, spread this leaven over the sores and ulcers on his body. But you must take care not to cover all of the scabs, but leave one uncovered. And then your prince will return to good health." The young man brought the ointment made from leaven to the prince, and the servants immediately prepared the steam bath.

While the servants were preparing the steam bath, the prince decided to learn how wise this maiden really was, for he had only the word of his servant in this matter. To this end he sent her a small bundle of linen, asking that she make him a shirt, towel, and pants from this linen while he was in the steam bath, and if she were successful, she would thereby prove her wisdom.

A servant brought the bundle of linen to Fevronia and repeated the command of Prince Peter. Fevronia, without any hesitation, ordered the man to climb up on the stove and fetch down a piece of dry wood. When the servant gave her the piece of wood, she marked off a piece one foot in length and ordered the man to cut off this piece. When the servant had done so, she told him to take

the block to his master and ask him to make from it a spinning wheel and a loom, while she was combing the linen in preparation for making the shirt, pants, and towel.

The servant took the block of wood to Prince Peter and repeated Fevronia's request. The prince laughed, and said: "Go to Fevronia and tell her that it is not possible to prepare so many things from so small a block in so short a time."

Fevronia had anticipated this answer, and told the servant: "Well, if your prince is unable to make a spinning wheel and a loom from such a small piece of wood in so short a time, how can I, in return, weave a shirt, pants, and a towel for him from such a small bundle of linen, while he takes a steam bath?" When the page returned to the prince, he was astounded by the wisdom of her answer.



*Servants applying ointment over Prince Peter's sores*

Then Prince Peter went into the steam bath, and his servants applied the ointment over the sores and ulcers, leaving only one scab uncovered, as was ordered by Fevronia. When Prince Peter left the steam bath, his pains left him, and the next morning all his body was clear and healed excepting the one scab that had been left uncovered. He marveled at the curing powers of Fevronia. However, since Fevronia was the daughter of one of lowly birth, Prince Peter did not wish to marry her. He did, however, send her luxurious gifts, but Fevronia would not accept them.

*To be continued*

..... News From All The Ends Of The Earth .....



**Irkutsk, Russia:** On September 14, a sculpture of Holy Right-believing Prince Peter and Princess Fevronia, the Wonderworkers of Murom, who are considered patrons of love and marriage, was unveiled in the Siberian city of Irkutsk. The monument was erected on the grounds of the Church of the Saviour by the lower embankment of the Angara River and its unveiling is timed to be part of the city's 350th anniversary celebration. Besides the local officials and the representatives of the organizations and programs aimed at strengthening family-centered values in the society, the main guests at the unveiling were several couples of the newly-weds who laid flowers to the foot of the monument and released snow-white doves to the sky, as a symbol of pure love and fidelity. To the date, there are about 20 monuments of Saint Peter and Fevronia erected in different cities of Russia.

**New York, NY:** Film director Vladimir Sinelnikov made a documentary based on *Mosque of Notre Dame de Paris*, an anti-utopia novel of Russian writer Elena Chudinova. "I see what is going on around us and after reading Chudinova's book I understood that we're a step from the catastrophe and perhaps we've already passed the point of no return. So I was finishing the job in sad mood," Sinelnikov said. The film will open the Week of Russian cinema in New York which will start on October 28, *Radio Freedom* reports. Four years ago, *Mosque of Notre Dame de Paris* provoked a great stir in Russia. This is a dystopian thriller aimed to warn the Old World of possible effects resulting from losing Christian heritage. The action takes place in 2048; by that time, Islam is proclaimed the established religion of the European Union, and the Church goes down into catacombs as at the time of persecutions of Christians.

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. September bulletin covers' sponsor is Robert Hamady — in memory of mother Mary Hamady.
2. This Sunday, the Eternal Light is offered in memory of Joseph Fesko, Barbara Feczko, Michael Feczko, Anna Feczko and for health of the Feczko family.
3. Next Sunday, September 25, besides our usual Hobart Food Pantry non-perishable food items collection, we are having our last off-season Bake Sale. Please plan to participate. Anything you can cook or bake is welcome.
4. Holy Archangel Michael Church in Niles, IL, is hosting a DDD Dinner this year. The dinner is on Sunday, Oct. 30. DDD donation forms and dinner information can be found in the narthex.
5. We would like to thank Richard Sulich for managing minor repairs and maintenance projects around the rectory.
6. We have a new altar server in our church. On Sunday, Sept. 4, Bobby Gary went for confession for the first time in his life and joined the team of our altar servers. Concerning his serving in the altar, Bobby commented: "It was a cool experience for!" Any man in the parish who would like to share in the cool experience of serving in the altar is welcome to join Bobby.

