

HOLY HIERARCH IGNATII (BRIANCHANINOV) ON FASTING

Head of the virtues is prayer; their foundation is fasting. Fasting is continuous moderation and discernment in food.

Proud man! You imagine so much and think highly about your mind, however, it completely and constantly depends on your stomach.

The rule of fasting, although it seems to be the rule for the stomach, in fact, is a rule for the mind.

If mind — this king within the man — demands its rights as the sovereign, and to retain them, it has to, first of all, submit itself to the rule of fasting. Only then it is going to be constantly cheerful and radiant; only then it will be able to rule over the wants of the heart and of the body; only with constant sobriety it is going to be able to study the Gospel commandments and to follow them. Fasting is the foundation of virtues.

The first-created man on entering the paradise was given the sole commandment — the commandment of fasting. Of course, only one commandment was given because it was sufficient for the first-created man to follow this one commandment to preserve incorruption.

The commandment didn't specify the amount of food, only its kind. May they keep silence who consider that fasting is moderation in the amount of food, not in the sort of food.

The fasting commandment, which was announced by God to man in paradise, is so important that the man was threatened with eternal death should he break the commandment.

Today, the death from sin continues to strike out the violators of the holy commandment of fasting. Those who do not observe moderation and the necessary discernment in food cannot preserve neither virginity, nor chastity, they cannot curb wrath, they give themselves up to laziness, listlessness and grief, they become slaves of vanity and habitation of pride — all this is the result, most of all, of a sumptuous and abundant meal.

The commandment of fasting is renewed and confirmed in the Gospel: "Take heed yourself, may you never weigh your hearts with gluttony and drunkenness". Overeating and drunkenness convey clumsiness not only to the body, but to the mind and heart, i.e. it introduces fleshly quality to

the soul and the body.

On contrary, fast brings the Christian into the spiritual state. He who is purified by fasting is humble in spirit, chaste, modest, silent, sensitive in the feelings of his heart and in his thoughts, light in body, he is capable of spiritual acts of heroism and contemplation and is capable of receiving the Divine grace.

Sunday, April 10

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Venerable Mary of Egypt Sunday

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

+++

Wednesday, April 13

Liturgy of the Pre-Sanctified Gifts 6:00 P.M.

+++

Friday, April 15

Akathist to Christ's Holy Passions 6:00 P.M.

+++

Saturday, April 16

Lazarus Saturday

Divine Liturgy 9:00 A.M.

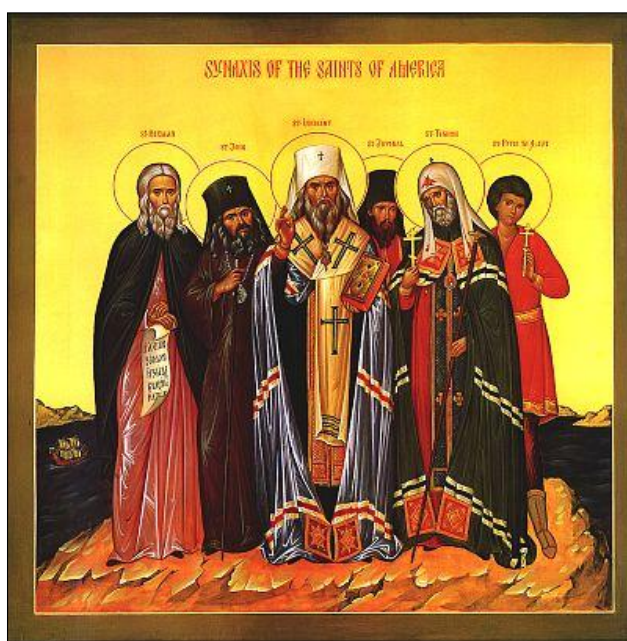
+++

Sunday, April 17

Palm Sunday

Entry of the Lord into Jerusalem

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.



We continue publishing short accounts of the lives of the saints depicted on the new icon in the narthex. The Lives are published in the hierarchical order.

Venerable Herman of Alaska (†1836)



Saint Herman, while he lived on earth, was a simple monk who came from his beloved Valaam Monastery in Russia to the shores of Alaska in the year 1794. In the previous year, Metropolitan Gabriel of St. Petersburg asked Igumen Nazarius of Valaam to gather a small group of monks to form a missionary team that would travel across Russia and Siberia to Alaska (at that time a Russian possession) to bring the Gospel of Christ to the native people.

Those monks were Archimandrite Joasaph, Hieromonks Juvenaly, Macarius, Athanasius, Stephen and Nectarius, Hierodeacons Nectarius and Stephen, and Monks Joasaph and Herman. This trek over land and water took more than a year (the longest recorded single missionary journey in the history of the church)! At the end of the journey, they arrived at Kodiak Island aboard the ship *Three Hierarchs* on September 24, 1794.

Immediately, the monks began to fan out across Alaska, while Saint Herman remained at the home base in Kodiak at the newly built Holy Resurrection Church to administer the overall mission

and newly established school. The mission was a thriving one, received with great enthusiasm by most of the native people and resulting in thousands of baptisms. Schools were started, churches built, many sacramental marriages were performed — all through the grace-filled efforts of 10 monks who labored in the midst of harsh and primitive conditions. Often they did not enjoy the support of the Russian American Company, which was the local Russian authority in the area. The head of the company was a tyrannical and self-serving man. Father Herman and the other monks labored mightily to protect them and intercede on their behalf with the higher authorities in Russia.

After about 15 years, Saint Herman moved to Spruce Island, which is a small densely wooded island about 1 mile off the coast of Kodiak, to pursue a more hermit-like life. He brought his whole monastic spiritual formation, rich experience and Orthodox inheritance to bear upon this new life. He built a church and a cell, planted a garden and in a short time started an orphanage and school for the people on the island. With burning love and compassion he began to deposit within the hearts of all who came something of the wondrous Christian treasure that had been entrusted to him.

He labored for the most part alone at this stage of his life, pressing forward with great patience and humility. He chanted the church services, contemplated the Scripture, the writings of the *Philokalia* and other writings of the saints which he had brought to the New World and pursued an intense life of interior prayer. He was once asked, "How do you live alone in the forest, Father Herman, don't you become bored and lonely?" He replied, "No! I am not alone here. God is here, as God is everywhere. Holy angels are here. Can one become bored with them? With whom is converse better and more pleasant, with men or with angels? Of course, with angels!"

Much more could be said about the life and miracles of Saint Herman, both while he lived on earth and after his repose on November 15, 1836, but they will not fit into this short hagiographical sketch. He foresaw the time of his earthly departure, and when the time came, he was surrounded by his beloved orphans and spiritual children who were reading the Acts of the Apostles by his bedside. At that moment they recorded that his face suddenly began to shine and the cell was filled with a divine fragrance and they knew that their elder was dead. That same evening, others in the village of Katani on Afognak Island recorded that they saw an unusually bright column of light rising in the air above Spruce Island. The Creole Gerasim Vologdin said, "It looks as though Father Herman has left us" and they all began to pray to God.

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

London, U.K.: Churches can "no longer remain silent on the issue of sexual violence", according to a Christian NGO, which said religious institutions were failing the communities they were meant to serve by not speaking out against the assault and rape of children in Congo, Rwanda and Liberia. Tearfund, a UK-based Christian relief and development agency, commissioned research on the current and potential role of the church to tackle sexual violence in Africa. It said the results were a "shocking indictment of the widespread lack of a church-based response". In *Silent No More*, a report launched at a conference on Monday at Lambeth Palace in London, Tearfund said: "The research showed there have been various responses from the church. In many cases the church has remained silent, where the church has spoken out, it has often led to increased stigma towards survivors. "The silence of the churches on this issue is often the result of fear and their inability to envisage how to engage effectively. Churches have too often failed to realise their mandate to care and stand up for people on the margins. For this reason the aid agencies, donors and governments too have failed to recognize the potential of the church to respond to this need." One community

leader in Rwanda told Tearfund: "The church is the only reliable social network within poor countries. People cannot go to the cinema or a club in order to find space where they can get away from their problems. The church is all they have. Also, many people no longer have family. The church becomes their only source of 'family'."

Constantinople, Turkey: Acting on the decision of the Turkey's court, Orthodox Church has to close its schools in Constantinople, as there are virtually no students left. Directly, the court ruling has to do with two schools. However, according to the Turkey's Department of Education, the city has thirteen more Greek schools which, the official insist, has been lacking full-scale educational process for several decades. Today, there are almost no Orthodox Christians left in Turkey, while in the early 20th century they comprised 45% of Constantinople's population (with Greeks – 38%). According to Greco-Turkish exchange agreement of 1923, Orthodox Greeks had to leave Turkey (the predominantly Greek Asia Minor occupied by the Turks since 12th-15th centuries), while the Muslim Turks had to leave Greece (liberated from Turks in the beginning of the 19th century). According to some researchers, the Orthodox population of modern Turkey is no more than 0,008%.

Erevan, Armenia: April 7, when the Orthodox Church, as well as the non-Chalcedonian Churches, celebrates one of its greatest feasts – the Annunciation to the Mother of God, Karekin II, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, proclaimed the Feast of the Annunciation as Day of Blessing of Motherhood and Beauty. On that day, all Armenian churches conducted a special blessing service for women anticipating motherhood.

Chicago, IL: Archimandrite Matthias (Moriak), who formerly served in the Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Diocese of the USA (he served parishes in Jenners, PA, Freehold, NJ, Gary, IN, St Claire, PA, Seaford, NY and as the prefect of Christ the Saviour Seminary in Johnstown, PA) and in September of 2010 was accepted into the OCA is to be consecrated bishop of the Diocese of Chicago and Midwest (for the OCA) at the Christ the Saviour Church in Chicago on Saturday, April 30.

Sofia, Bulgaria: Bulgarian Orthodox Church has canonized the martyrs of massacres committed by the Muslims during the April Uprising of 1876. Thousands of Bulgarian freedom fighters rebelled against the authorities of the Ottoman Turkish Empire in April 1876 seeking to liberate their nation and re-establish an independent nation state. The April Uprising was crushed with great violence by Ottoman forces but it led to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78 that liberated the Bulgarian nation-state. A total of 30 000 Bulgarians, mostly civilians including women, children, and elderly, are estimated to have been slaughtered by the Ottoman forces in April and May 1876. While thousands of Bulgarians were murdered by the Ottoman Turkish forces, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church has canonized the victims of the Batak and Novo Selo massacres in particular as martyrs and defenders of the Christian faith as they sought refuge from the troops dispatched against them in local churches and monasteries. In the case of the Novo Selo massacre, the Bulgarian Orthodox Church canonized in particular two monks and seven nuns from a local monastery who were tortured and murdered by the Ottoman troops.



Patriarch Maxim blessing the icons of the new martyrs

The canonization, performed Sunday in the St. Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia by Bulgarian Patriarch Maxim, was followed by a street procession honoring the newly proclaimed saints. Patriarch Maxim consecrated specially designed icons of the martyrs. This is the first canonization performed by the Bulgarian Orthodox Church since 1963. "We accept the decision of the Holy Synod and believe that the martyrs of Batak and Novo Selo deserve to be canonized," declared Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov in the Alexander Nevsky Cathedral. The canonization of the martyrs of the 1876 April Uprising was also welcomed and attended by Bulgarian Parliament Chair Tsetska Tsacheva, Sofia Mayor Yordanka Fandakova, and hundreds of Bulgarians including MPs. "We are here to pay our respects to the martyrs for the faith and freedom of Bulgaria," Tsacheva declared.



Procession on the streets of Sofia

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. April bulletin covers' sponsors are Petyo family — birthdays and anniversary.
2. This Sunday, April 10, two votive candles on the Holy Altar and the Eternal Light are offered in memory of Michael Ferio by his nephews Robert and Matthew. May Michael's memory be eternal!
3. On Sunday of Pascha, April 24, the Eternal Light will be offered by Ann Hakos.
4. Camp Nazareth raffle tickets are on sale for \$20.00 each and kept in the Camp Nazareth envelope on the office. Please purchase the tickets and leave the money (checks should be made payable to "Camp Nazareth Raffle") inside the Camp Nazareth envelope. The tickets will be available throughout April.
5. We are continuing to collect donations towards purchasing the flowers to adorn the Tomb of the Lord. So far we haven't collected even one half of the needed sum. In the past pussy willows and palm branches were donated. This year, we are going to pay for them from the flowers money. Please help!
6. Pre-Paschal church cleaning is scheduled for Great Monday, April 18. As usual, we are going to have two shifts: morning and evening. Please come and participate in cleaning your church.