



In the 11th century the Eastern Roman Empire was going through terrible times: the Muslims put an end to its influence in Asia Minor, they destroyed cities and villages, they murdered the inhabitants, and they accompanied their cruel outrage with the desecration of churches, holy relics, icons and books. The Muslims also attempted to destroy the relics of St Nicholas, deeply venerated by the whole Christian world.

The desecration of holy things shocked not only Eastern, but also Western Christians. Christians in Italy were particularly apprehensive for the relics of St Nicholas, and among them were many Greeks. The inhabitants of the city of Bari, located on the shores of the Adriatic Sea, decided to save the relics of St Nicholas.

In the year 1087 merchants from Bari and Venice went to Antioch to trade and they also proposed to take the relics of St Nicholas and transport them to Italy. In this plan the men of Bari commissioned the Venetians to land them at Myra. At first two men were sent in, who in returning reported that in the city all was quiet. In the church where the glorified relics rested, they encountered only four monks. Immediately forty-seven men, having armed themselves, set out for the church of St Nicholas. The guards, suspecting nothing, showed them the raised platform, beneath which the tomb of the saint was concealed, and where they anointed foreigners with myrrh from the relics of the saint. At this time the monks told them about an appearance of St Nicholas that evening to a certain elder. In this vision St Nicholas ordered the careful preservation of his relics. This account encouraged the men from Bari, they saw an avowal for them in this vision and, as it were, a decree from the saint. In order to facilitate their activity, they revealed their intent to the monks and offered them money, 300 gold coins. The guards refused the money and wanted to warn the inhabitants about the misfortune threatening them. But the newcomers bound them and put their own guards at the doorway.

They took apart the church platform above the tomb with the relics. In this effort a youth Matthew was excessive in his zeal, wanting to find the relics of St Nicholas as quickly as possible. In his impatience he broke the cover and the men saw that the sarcophagus was filled with fragrant

holy myrrh. The compatriots of the men, the priests Luppus and Drogus, served a litia, after which the break made by Matthew began to lift the body of the saint from the sarcophagus.

This occurred on April 20, 1087. Priest Drogus wrapped the relics in the cloth and carried them to the ship. The monks, having been set free, alerted the city with the sad news about the abduction of the relics of the Wonderworker Nicholas by foreigners. A crowd of people gathered at the shore, but it was too late.

On May 8 the ships arrived in Bari, and soon the joyous news made the rounds of all the city. On the following day, May 9 (May 22, according to the contemporary reckoning of time), 1087, they solemnly transported the relics of St Nicholas into a church, not far from the sea. The solemn bearing of the relics was accompanied by numerous healings of the sick, which inspired still greater reverence for God's saint. A year later, a church was built in the name of St Nicholas. This event, connected with the transfer of the relics of St Nicholas, evoked a particular veneration for the Wonderworker Nicholas and was marked by the establishment of a special Feast day on May 9/22.

The significance of the intercession of the great saint of God is expressed by the ancient compiler of the Life, in the words of whom St Nicholas "did work many glorious miracles both on land and on sea, aiding those downtrodden in misfortune and rescuing the drowning, carried to dry land from the depths of the sea, raising up others from corruption and bringing them home, liberating from chains and imprisonment, averting felling by the sword and freeing from death, and granting healing to many; sight to the blind, walking to the lame, hearing to the deaf, and speech to the mute. He brought riches to many suffering in abject poverty and want, he provided the hungry food, and for each in their need he appeared a ready helper, an avid defender and speedy intercessor and protector, and such as appeal to him he doth help and deliver from adversity. Both the East and the West know of this great Wonderworker, and all the ends of the earth know his miracle-working."

**Christ is Risen!**  
**Χριστός Воскресе !**  
**Χριστός Ανέστη!**  
**Sunday May 22**

*Fifth Sunday of Pascha*  
*Samaritan Woman Sunday*

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

Feast of translation of the relics of Holy Hierarch Nicholas the Wonderworker to  
Bari in 1087

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**Wednesday, May 25**  
**Moleben 6:30 P.M.**

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**Sunday, May 29**

*Sixth Sunday of Pascha*  
*Sunday of the Blind Man*

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

Commemoration of Venerable Theodore the Sanctified (†368)

**Holy New Venerable Martyrs**  
**Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna and Barbara**  
*by Metropolitan Anastasy (†1965)*  
*Part III*



Striving to be an obedient

daughter of the Orthodox

Church in all things, the grand duchess did not desire to make use of the advantages of her position, fearing lest even in the smallest way she take liberties and depart from obedience, from the rules or specific statutes established for everyone by the Church authority. On the contrary, she fulfilled with complete readiness the slightest desire of the latter, even if it did not coincide with her personal views. At one time, for example, she seriously thought about reviving the ancient institution of deaconess, in which she was zealously supported by Metropolitan Vladimir of Moscow. Bishop Germogen, because of a misunderstanding, stood up against this idea and counseled her to abandon her cherished dream. Having been misunderstood in the best of her strivings, the grand duchess did not stifle her spirit because of this trying disappointment, but rather put her whole heart into her beloved Martha and Mary Convent.



*Saints Martha and Mary Monastery complex*

It is not surprising that the convent quickly blossomed and attracted many sisters from the aristocracy, as well as the common people. Nearly monastic order reigned within the inner life of the community and, both within and without the convent, her activities consisted in the care for the sick who were lodged in the convent, in the material and moral help given to the poor, and in the almshouse for those orphans and abandoned children found in every large city. The grand duchess paid special attention to the unfortunate children who bore within themselves the curse of their fathers' sins, the children born in the turbid slums of Moscow only to wither before they had a chance to blossom. Many of them were taken into the orphanage built for them where they were quickly revived spiritually and physically. For others, constant supervision at their place of residence was established.

The spirit of initiative and moral sensitivity which accompanied the grand duchess in all her activities, inspired and impelled her to search out new paths and forms of philanthropic activity, which sometimes reflected the influence of her first, western homeland, and its advanced organizations for social improvement and mutual aid. And so she created a cooperative of messenger boys with a well built dormitory, and apartments for the girls who took part in this activity. Not all of these establishments were directly connected with the convent, but they were all like rays of light from the sun united in the person of their abbess, who embraced them with her care and protection. Having chosen as her mission not only to serve one's neighbor in general, but also the spiritual re-education of contemporary Russian society, the grand duchess wanted to speak to the latter in a closer, more understandable language about Church art and Orthodox liturgical

beauty. All the churches founded by her were built in the Novgorod-Pskov style by the famous architect Shchusev and adorned with icons painted by Nesterov, were distinguished by their austere style and the artistic unity of the interior and exterior ornamentation. The crypt located under the arches of the convent church also evoked general admiration for its peaceful warmth. The church services in the convent were always outstandingly well performed, thanks to the exceptionally capable spiritual father chosen by the abbess. From time to time, she attracted other fine pastoral forces from Moscow and all parts of Russia to serve and preach. Like bees gathering nectar from all flowers, according to the words of Gogol, for her, as a true Christian, there was no ultimate course of study and she remained a conscientious humble student all her life.

*To be Continued*

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



**Kiev, Ukraine:** At 3 A.M. on May 15, a tent church consecrated 6 years ago in honor of St Alexander Nevsky and located before the Ukrainian Parliament building was destroyed by the Ukrainian police. In 2005, the faithful of Holy Trinity Church in the village of Rohmaniv (*Ternopol district*) were forced out of their church, since the Ukrainian government decided to hand it over for the shared usage by the Greek-Catholics and the schismatics of the so-called “Kievan Patriarchate”. The rector of the parish Archpriest Oleg Sirko and the faithful appealed the government’s decision in the Supreme Court and won the

case. However, since the government was not going to honor the court’s decision, Fr Oleg and his flock set up a tent church next to the Parliament building and regularly held Divine Services in it. Last Sunday early in the morning (the people were in their church around the clock), the police, using tear gas and smoke grenades, forced the people to leave the temple. Then the law enforcement officers threw out and broke into pieces the holy icons, desecrated and totally destroyed the tent church. Within a few hours, rolls of turf were laid where the church had stood, thus leaving no trace of the temple of God. “Although the tent church is destroyed, I continue walking in front of the Parliament building and praying. I am going to strict fast, receiving the Holy Communion and drinking only water, just as I did in 2005”, said Fr Oleg. “Yesterday, I served outdoors, in order not to leave my parishioners without communion. Therefore, I am asking for your prayers, that the Lord would strengthen us, so that we might endure till the end, so that God’s truth would prevail”, concluded the priest.



*Archpriest Oleg Sirko*

**Los Angeles, CA:** Sexual perversions have many dire consequences, besides the fact that they “*will not inherit the Kingdom of God*” (1 Cor. 6:9). Homosexual men have a higher prevalence of cancer

compared with normal men, and lesbian and bisexual female cancer survivors report poorer health than normal female cancer survivors, a study led by BU School of Public Health researchers shows. The study included data from the California Health Interview survey from 2001, 2003, and 2005. The survey is the largest state health survey conducted in the U.S. A. The lesbian and bisexual female cancer survivors were 2 and 2.3 times more likely, respectively, to report fair or poor health, compared with heterosexual female cancer survivors. Among males, gay men were 1.9 times more likely to report a cancer diagnosis than heterosexual men. Ulrike Boehmer, associate professor of community health sciences at the BU School of Public Health and lead author of the study said more work needs to be done to determine why. "We can only speculate why gay men have a higher cancer prevalence than heterosexual men," she said. "It is conceivable that HIV status may have contributed to the higher cancer prevalence in gay men. There are AIDS-related cancers, but in addition, there are also non-AIDS defining cancers, which are anal, lung, testicular cancer and Hodgkin lymphoma. These cancers may have contributed to our finding of a higher prevalence." Boehmer said the findings of differences in the prevalence of cancer survivorship raise questions about the possible role of sexual orientation in cancer incidence. Boehmer said the larger significance of the study is its finding that sexual orientation may be a factor in cancer incidence and outcomes.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. May bulletin covers' sponsors are Djuric family — Ryan Campbells' Chrismation and birthday and Alexander Djuric's 2nd birthday.
2. Last Sunday, we had our last Coffee Hour this season. We would like to thank those of our faithful who paid attention to the schedule and prepared the coffee and desserts on the assigned days. Our parish is in a dire need of our desire to labor for the church, to provide for her and to serve her. The first step to doing that would be regularly coming to the Divine Services, both on Sunday and during the week (for some of us this poses a major difficulty). Second step would be seeking the ways to contribute to the church life, be it by cleaning, bringing flowers (*just the past week, one of the handmaids of God planted flowers by the cross on the western side of the church*), wiping the icons, making sure that the vestments are clean, cleaning the candle stands, taking care of the lampadas, taking active part in chanting during the services and, for men, serving in the altar. One renowned contemporary priest said that every normal man should desire to be a priest. It is an honor for a man even to help in the altar, let alone serving God in the exalted rank of a deacon or a priest. Our altar servers are still learning to execute their responsibilities well, learning that serving half-heartedly is unacceptable. If your priest is giving his whole being to the service of God, then you should strive to reach that goal even if only on the Sunday mornings.