

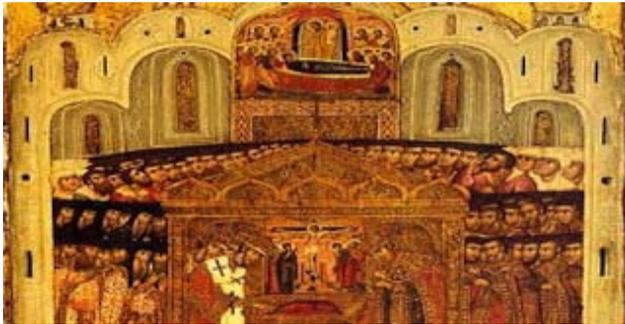
# Holy Cross

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Weekly Bulletin

Sunday, July 10, 2016



The Forty-five Martyrs of the Armenian City of Nicopolis suffered during the reign of the emperor Licinius (311-324), then a coregent with Constantine the Great. Licinius, the ruler of the Eastern Empire, fiercely persecuted Christians and issued an edict to put to death any Christian who would not return to paganism. When the persecutions began at Nicopolis, more than forty of the persecuted of Christ decided to appear voluntarily before their persecutors, to confess openly their faith in the Son of God and accept martyrdom. The holy confessors were headed by Leontius, Mauricius, Daniel, Anthony and Alexander, and were distinguished by their virtuous life. The procurator of the Armenian district, Licius, before whom the holy confessors presented themselves, was amazed at the directness and bravery of those who voluntarily doomed themselves to torture and death.

He tried to persuade them to renounce Christ and offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, but the saints remained steadfast. They refuted all the arguments of the governor, pointing out to him all the falseness of faith in the vile and vice-filled pagan gods, leading those that worship them to ruin.

The procurator gave orders to beat the confessors about the face with stones, and then shackle and imprison them.

In prison the saints rejoiced and sang the Psalms of David. St Leontius inspired and encouraged the brethren, preparing them to accept new tortures for the true Faith, and telling them of the bravery of all those formerly that had suffered for Christ. In the morning, after repeated refusals to offer sacrifice to the idols, the saints were again given over to torture. St Leontius, seeing the intense suffering of the martyrs and worrying that some of them might falter and lose faith, prayed to God that there might be a quick end of the matter for all.

When the holy martyrs sang Psalms at midnight, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared to them, and the prison blazed with light. The angel declared to the martyrs that their contest was near its end, and their names already were inscribed in Heaven. Two of the prison guards, Meneus and Virilad, saw what was happening and believed in Christ. On the following morning, the governor decided to put the martyrs of Christ to death. After beastly tortures they burned them in a fire, and threw their bones in a river.

Pious people found the relics, gathered them up and saved them. Later on, when freedom had been bestowed to the Church of Christ, a church was built on this spot in the name of the holy 45 Martyrs.



## **Gospel Reading**

The Reading is from Matthew 6:22-33

The Lord said, "The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is sound, your whole body will be full of light; but if your eye is not sound, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon. Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows you need them all. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well."

## **Welcome**

We warmly welcome all visitors and seekers in our midst today, trusting that your experience here will be an uplifting and enriching one. The Greek Orthodox Churches are the ancient and native Christian communities of the biblical world, with centers in the Holy Lands, Syria, Egypt and Asia Minor, and by extension in Greece, Cyprus and throughout the world. Like the ancient Christians, we engage the whole person, heart, mind and all senses in Divine Worship. This experience has been so powerful to seekers in the past that it was often said "We knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. We knew only that there God dwelt among human beings." (Russian Primary Chronicle) That communion experience of heaven on earth and God in our midst forms the heart of all Orthodox worship. It culminates in the sharing of Holy Communion, which not only unites us with the Divine, but also expresses the deep unity in faith and life between all Orthodox believers.

Since Holy Communion expresses that deep unity in belief and practice alike, it is reserved for observant Orthodox Christians. This does not mean, however, that non-Orthodox are 'excluded' – rather, the Orthodox choose not to make an external display of unity when actual unity does not exist. While working to restore the full communion that did exist in antiquity, today we offer the sign of the blessed bread at the service's conclusion as a symbolic gift of hospitality and growing unity that is offered to all present. If you would like to learn more about the Orthodox way of life, or have any questions about worship or Holy Communion, please approach Fr. Michael or one of the clergy following services.

Thank you for joining us, and again, we welcome you all.

## **Community News**

**Vacation Church School** is coming up fast! The dates of the program this year are July 25th - 29th and we have a need for volunteers to help in classes, with skits, athletics, music, arts & crafts, and snacks.

There will be a final meeting for all volunteers and teachers Wednesday July 20th at 7 pm, it is important everyone who is involved be there.

If you are able and interested, please contact Jonathan McClish at 412.833.3355 or [mclish.jonathan@gmail.com](mailto:mclish.jonathan@gmail.com)

## **New Parish Directory**

Dear Parishioners,

Work on an UPDATED Parish Directory with pictures has begun. Please expect a call from a committee member to verify and update information.

In addition to confirming mailing addresses and home phone numbers, we are gathering email address and cell phone numbers to have that contact information in the church database. It is your choice whether to have it published or not in the directory, but for emergency purposes, we would like to have it for the church files.

Also, while all families may use this opportunity to have family photographs taken and published in the directory as they see fit, we are hoping all adult children - those over the age of 21 - will have their own entry in the directory. Please plan your time with the photographer accordingly.

Dates for taking pictures are:

Monday through Thursday July 18-21 4pm-9pm

Saturday July 23 All Day

Monday through Thursday August 22-25 4pm-9pm

Saturday August 26 All Day

We want to inform and encourage everyone to have a picture taken for the directory. Look for information in church bulletins and handouts soon in the narthex.

Thank you for your cooperation! The Directory Committee

## **Holy Cross Today**

Coffee hour is sponsored by the GOYA of Holy Cross.

Please sign up for coffee hour. Check the calendar online: [www.holycrosspgh.org](http://www.holycrosspgh.org), click "Events", then "Coffee Hour", then scroll down to calendar, click on date to see if someone has taken it. Then email [holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org](mailto:holycrosspit@mail.goarch.org) or call the church office to request date.

\*\*\* All information for the Sunday Bulletin should be submitted to Jonathan McClish by 11:59 pm of the Wednesday prior for inclusion. Submit to [mclish.jonathan@gmail.com](mailto:mclish.jonathan@gmail.com)