



FOLLOWING THE STEPS OF CHRIST

Quarterly Bulletin of Saint John the Baptist Russian Orthodox Church

Diocese of the West - Orthodox Church in America

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God and Country: On Christian Patriotism

This year, we celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence and the founding of the United States of America. As Orthodox Christians, our citizenship, according to the Holy Apostle Paul, “is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:20) Nevertheless, the same apostle also instructs us to be “subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing all humility to all men.” (Titus 3:1-2) Thus, it is right and virtuous for a Christian to love his country, to be a loyal citizen, to rejoice in the successes and good things of the nation, and to work for its well-being. That does not mean that we cannot hold differing opinions on the best course for this. Likewise, the book of Proverbs tells us that “righteousness exalts a nation, but sins diminish tribes.” (Proverbs 14:35, LXX) Therefore, it is also right and virtuous for a Christian to oppose falsehood, unrighteousness, and injustice even when they are promoted and enforced by the surrounding society, either culturally or through civil legislation.

Recently, the Holy Synod of the Orthodox Church in America made the following statement concerning the anniversary of our nation's founding: "We give thanks to Almighty God for the United States of America—a nation that has, by the grace of God, afforded its people the freedom to worship, to follow the way of Jesus Christ, and to bear witness to the Gospel without fear or compulsion. We do not take these gifts for granted. They are blessings of divine providence, entrusted to us as a sacred responsibility. The freedom to gather in our churches, to catechize our children in the Faith, to proclaim the Resurrection of Christ openly and without hindrance—these are gifts for which every generation must give thanks to God and remain worthy stewards." Perhaps herein lies the key to Christian patriotism: we must strive to live as worthy stewards of this land and nation. The Holy Apostle Peter instructs us to conduct ourselves honorably and do good works so that, when our neighbors and fellow citizens encounter us, they may "glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12) Thus, in our striving to live out our Orthodox Christian faith, we can only be a benefit to the surrounding society. May our righteousness exalt this nation!

The Church, in proclaiming the Gospel and shepherding her flock, has produced saints in every land wherein she has labored. The psalms tell us that "unto the saints that are in His land hath the Lord made wonderful all His desires in them." (Ps. 15:3, LXX) While we must give thanks to God for His blessings upon us as Americans, even more must we rejoice in the saints that He has revealed in this land, honoring their memory and imitating their faithfulness and righteous deeds. On Friday, July 3, we will have the opportunity to participate in the annual pilgrimage to Fort Ross, a place where Saint Innocent of Alaska labored for the Lord. On Saturday, July 4, we will celebrate the feast of our local saint, Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco, at Holy Virgin Cathedral, and on Sunday, July 5, we will again welcome our archpastor, His Grace, Bishop Vasily, as we celebrate our parish altar feast. Last year, we witnessed our Church glorify Saint Olga of Alaska. This year, the Church begins the process of glorifying another local saint: Hieromonk Seraphim Rose, who not only labored in this country but in our state of California and in our local community. Let us then, in renewing our love for this country in this jubilee year, also renew our life in Christ. Come to the Church, participate in her services and sacraments, have fellowship with your brother and sister Christians, and support the work of the Church through your prayer, your labors, and your almsgiving. May God bless America!

Namesdays, Birthdays, and Anniversaries

May 13- Namesday of Santiago Drexler and Jacalyn Drexler

May 14- Namesday of Tamara Mikhailovsky

May 15- Namesday of Boris Gerlovin

May 20- Namesday of David Lozes

May 21- Namesday of Lilia Govorovskaia

May 26- Birthday of Andronik Yiu

June 2- Birthday of Filippo De Luca

June 3- Namesday of Konstantin Timokhin

June 20- Namesday of Andronik Yiu

July 11- Birthday of Barbara Roquemore

July 13- Birthday of Santiago Drexler

July 17- Birthday of Julitta (Diane) Del Pozo

July 24- Namesday of Olga Tinina

If you would like your namesday, birthday, and/or anniversary included in the future, please contact Fr. Edward at revedwardhenderson@gmail.com.

Saint Eugene's Orthodox Summer Camp

June 21-27

located at:

Archbishop Varche Hovsepian Camp

45000 Kings Canyon Road

Dunlap, CA 93621

www.steugenecamp.org

For several decades, Orthodox youth (ages 7-17) have come together for a week to play and pray at our diocesan summer camp. Offering all the activities of a summer camp, in addition, attendees have the opportunity to meet other Orthodox kids, be encouraged in their faith in a solid Christian environment, and grow spiritually. Moreover, our parish has offered to sponsor two youths, covering the entire camp tuition (please contact Fr. Edward for sponsorship).

For more information, contact the Camp Director at director@steugenecamp.org

Schedule of Services

Sundays: Divine Liturgy at 10:00am

Saturdays: Vigil *or* Great Vespers at 5:00pm

May, June, July services

Tuesday, May 5		Vespers	6:00pm
Wednesday, May 6	Mid-Pentecost	Liturgy	10:00am
Wednesday, May 20	Leave-taking of Pascha	Vigil	6:00pm
Thursday, May 21	Ascension	Liturgy	10:00am

More detailed service schedules are available on the parish website and at the candle desk.

Upcoming Events

June 8-July 11: Apostles' Fast

“We have received by tradition that God does not need the material offerings which men can give, seeing, indeed, that He Himself is the provider of all things. And we have been taught, and are convinced, and do believe, that He accepts those only who imitate the excellences which reside in Him, temperance, and justice, and philanthropy, and as many virtues as are peculiar to a God who is called by no proper name. And we have been taught that He in the beginning did of His goodness, for man’s sake, create all things out of unformed matter; and if men by their works show themselves worthy of this His design, they are deemed worthy, and so we have received—of reigning in company with Him, being delivered from corruption and suffering. For as in the beginning He created us when we were not, so do we consider that, in like manner, those who choose what is pleasing to Him are, on account of their choice, deemed worthy of incorruption and of fellowship with Him.”

- Saint Justin Martyr

