



# “ORTHODOX 9” PARISHES BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH IN CANADA

Monthly Newsletter for the family of Orthodox Churches including:



**St. Mary’s (the Nativity of the Holy Virgin) - NISKU**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - BONNYVILLE**

**St. John the Baptist - HOREN**

**Holy Ascension - CALMAR**

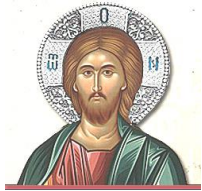
**St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)**

**Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY**

**Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)**

**St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE**

**Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)**



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## February the 16<sup>th</sup> – St. Nicholas, Equal-to-the-Apostles, enlightener of Japan (1912)



At the end of His time on earth, Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded His Apostles and disciples, saying, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Mt. 28:19).

These words were heard, by the future Church hierarch, Ivan Dmitrievich Kasatkin, who was born on August 1, 1836, in a village of the Smolensk region in a family of a deacon of a rural church.

The future archbishop and saint studied in the Ecclesiastical Primary School, the Smolensk Seminary, and then also St. Petersburg Theological Academy.

In the spring of 1860, when an announcement inviting a graduate to serve as chief priest of the Russian Embassy church in Japan was posted at the academy, the young man, ready to answer this call, received some supernatural affirmation from Above at the evening service.

Soon he became monastic, and was ordained to a holy priesthood, and was assigned as head of the consular church in the city of Hakodate in Japan.

After a year’s journey, in June 1861 Hieromonk Nicholas arrived at the port of Hakodate.

At the time of his arrival the medieval charter of 1614, which entirely prohibited Christianity, was still in force.

The preaching of the Gospel in Japan seemed completely impossible. In Father Nicholas’s own words: “the Japanese of the time looked upon foreigners as beasts, and on Christianity as a villainous sect, to which only villains and sorcerers could belong.” He spent eight years in studying the country, the language, manners and customs of the people among whom he would preach.

In 1868, the flock of Father Nicholas numbered only about twenty Japanese.

*(continued on the next page)*



Icon of Nicholas of Japan at Hakodate Orthodox Church

In 1871 there was a persecution of Christians in Hakodate. Many of his dear children in Christ were arrested (among them, the first Japanese Orthodox priest Paul Sawabe – the former samurai, converted by St. Nicholas).

Only in 1873, after St. Nicholas had been laboring for twelve years, conditions began to improve. The Japanese government issued a new civil law granting religious tolerance. The Mission was then moved from Hakodate to Tokyo, the new imperial capital, where the number of Orthodox faithful soon reached a thousand.

St. Nicholas continued his earnest study of the country's language, culture and history. "He sometimes strolled around the streets of Hakodate, listening to the ordinary people and professional storytellers. He made the acquaintance of leading Buddhist priests and listened to their sermons.... Hieromonk Nicholas spent fourteen hours a day over the course of seven years studying every aspect of Japan..." This hard labour enabled him to successfully deliver the words of life to the Japanese people in their own language and culture.

In this year Archimandrite Nicholas began the construction of a stone building in Tokyo which housed a church, a school for fifty men, and later a religious school, which became a seminary in 1878.

In 1880 St. Nicholas was consecrated as the first bishop of Japan, and by 1884 he had begun the construction of a beautiful cathedral in Tokyo. It was completed and consecrated in 1891, and dedicated to Christ's Holy Resurrection. However, it soon became known among the people as "Nikolai-do" ("Nicholas' house"), a name it bears to this day. While St. Nicholas handed down the traditions and liturgical customs of the Russian Church to his flock, he nevertheless strove to form a truly Japanese Church, in both language and identity. Thus, having a profound love and respect to the Japanese people, he translated the service books, compiled a special Orthodox theological dictionary, and presented his disciples the most precious gift – Gospel in their native language.

Great hardship befell the saint and his flock at the time of the Russo-Japanese War. For his ascetic labor during these difficult years, he was elevated to the rank of Archbishop. God granted his servant stay out and over the political complications and contradictions.

In 1911, half a century had passed since the young hieromonk Nicholas had first set foot on Japanese soil. At that time there were 33,017 Christians in 266 communities of the Japanese Orthodox Church, including 1 Archbishop, 1 bishop, 35 priests, 6 deacons, 14 singing instructors, and 116 catechists.

"A low table stands by the window of the room. Japanese manuscripts, an ink-bottle, and a brush are laid upon it, and before [his Eminence] is a Slavonic Triodion. [Paul] Nakai reads a Japanese translation [and] the archbishop follows his reading, looking into another notebook. At times they stop and insert a comma..." – this is how St. Nicholas spent the last days of his earthy life.

On February 3, 1912, Archbishop Nicholas departed peacefully to the Lord at the age of seventy-six.

Not only the Christians of other confessions expressed their condolences, but the Emperor of Japan [Meiji] himself sent a magnificent and colossal wreath of natural flowers for the archbishop's coffin.

The Holy Synod of the Russian Orthodox Church glorified him on April 10, 1970, since the saint had long been honored in Japan as a righteous man, and a prayerful intercessor before the Lord.

***Holy Hierarch Nicholas of Japan, pray to God for us!***

Although the Great Lent itself begins in March (the 7<sup>th</sup>), this month of February is marked by the first preparation Sundays for the fasting. And the first of them is as soon as February the 13<sup>th</sup>. So let us incline our spiritual ears to the words of our God-bearing father Ignatius (Brianchaninov), to the fragments of his homily dedicated to the Sunday

## An extract from the Homily for the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (by St. Ignatius Brianchaninov)



In today's Gospel, the prayer of the publican is shown drawing God's mercy to him. This prayer consisted of the following words: God be merciful to me a sinner (Lk. 18:13)...

Why didn't the publican choose some majestic and moving psalm by which to pour out his heart before God, but instead had recourse to such a brief prayer? Why did he repeat only it during the entire service? Our answer is according to that of the holy Fathers.

When true repentance begins to shudder in the soul, when humility and contrition of spirit arises there because one's eyes have been opened to the soul's sinfulness, then loquacity becomes unbearable, impossible. ...the soul begins to call out to God through some form of short, concise prayer...

"When you pray, do not permit yourself to use many words," says St. John Climacus, "so that your mind might not be distracted from considering the words. One word from the publican brought him God's mercy, and one faithful utterance saved the thief. Much speaking in prayer often brings the mind to distraction and dreaminess, while sparse

words usually gather the thoughts."

Because of the great benefit that brief, attentive, concentrated prayer brings, the Holy Church enjoins its children to timely learn some form of brief prayer. One who has learned such a prayer possesses a ready ability to pray in any place, at any time. While traveling, in the refectory, doing handiwork, or in the company of others, he can cry out to God. When it is not possible to pray with the lips, it is possible to pray with the mind....

This is what happened to the Pharisee mentioned today, who paid only superficial attention to the services, and was drawn into sinful thoughts. Sinful thoughts not only deprived his already weak prayer of any worth, but they also made it an excuse to judge a man who prayed...

Throughout the forty days fast, at all the Church services, the prayer, *God, have mercy on me, a sinner!* is repeated aloud to all who are present. Why is the same prayer repeated so often? So that we would learn to repeat it often. The short prayer, *Lord have mercy*, is also repeated often, and for the same reason...

What meaning do the verb phrases, have mercy, or be merciful contain in all these prayers? It is man's awareness that he is perishing; ...it is the rejection of our own self-opinion; it is a request for God's mercy, without which there is no hope of salvation for the one who is perishing. God's mercy is nothing other than the grace of the All-Holy Spirit, and we sinful ones should ceaselessly and unrelentingly ask it of God...

Give me a Spirit of meekness, so that I might refrain from anger and malice, that I might be continually filled with goodness toward my brother. Give me a Spirit of humility of mind, so that I would not be high-minded, or dream about myself, or seek praise and human glory; but that I might rather remember that I am earth and ashes, a fallen being, cast down to the earth for my unworthiness. I must be taken from this body and world by death, and appear

before Thy dread and impartial judgment. God, be merciful to me a sinner! Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me! Lord, have mercy!

Many pronounce these brief prayers with great haste, caring only to say the required number of them. By this manner of praying, they do not allow the prayers to penetrate the heart and produce their inherent effect, which is tender feeling. The holy Fathers justly note that whoever prays thus prays to the wind, and not to God. Why do we get bored in church? Because we have not felt the effect of prayer. Why do we rush to a lavish table? Because we know the meaning of material food from experience. Why do we not rush to church, but try to come a little later, when a significant portion of the Divine services are already over? Because we do not know from experience the meaning of prayer, which is food for the soul, and which imparts spiritual strength to the soul...

Mental attention at prayer is reflected in the heart by blessed grief over sins, which is that very repentance that God commands us to have. When the heart is filled with a feeling of repentance, it in turn draws the mind to increased attention. Once there is attention and tender feeling, all the gifts of the Holy Spirit enter into the soul, making it a temple of God.

Let us provide our prayer with two qualities: attention and repentance. Let it fly up to the heavens with them as upon two wings, then appear before the face of God, and intercede for us to gain His mercy. The blessed publican's prayer had these two qualities... His prayer was so effective and strong, that the sinner left the temple of God justified...

St. Ignatius (Brianchaninov)  
(Translated by Nun Cornelia (Rees))

## *In Memoriam*



***The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our deepest condolences and sympathies to the relatives and friends of the newly departed Edith Stachnik.***

***May God comfort you with His compassion, and may God settle Edith, where the light of His countenance shall visit!***

***The mercy of God, the Kingdom of Heaven!***

### **Edith Stachnik**

**February 28, 1929 – January 12, 2022**

It is with great sadness we announce the passing of Edith Stachnik of Devon, Alberta on January 12, 2022, at the age of 92 years.

Beloved mother, sister, Baba, great – Baba and friend will be sorely missed by her five children, Gloria (Neil), Daniel (Beverly), Timothy (Debbie), Jerney (Larissa), Christine (Gordon), 11 grandchildren, 13 great-grandchildren, one sister Vera, and numerous nieces and nephews.

Predeceased by her loving husband, Peter, March 16, 1998, her parents John Demkiw and Mary Goyan, her brother Victor Demkiw and her sister Mary Sewell.

Edith's joy in life was her faith and her family. She lived her faith everyday and was very active in St. Mary's Church.

She was a member of the Ladies Aide and sang in the choir and did a lot more for the Church and people.

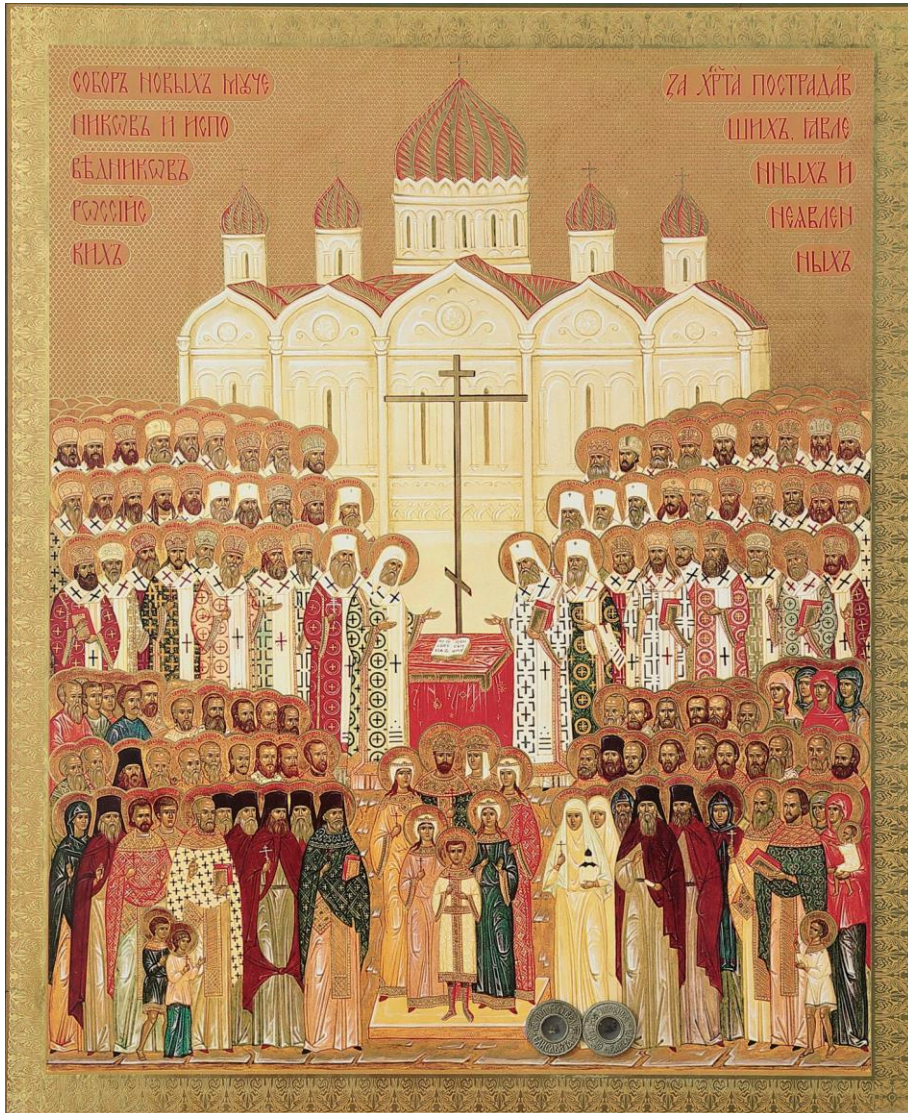
She loved bringing everyone together for Easter, Christmas, and special occasions where her amazing food was enjoyed by family and friends.

On January 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> St. Mary's Church gratefully brought together all that love Edith and was loved by her to ask God to remember His faithful servant in His Kingdom, and bring His consolation on the family and friends.



# Message of Patriarch KIRILL of Moscow and All Russia dedicated to the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the feat of the New Martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church during the seizure of Church valuables

Beloved in the Lord archpastors, all-honourable presbyters and deacons, God-loving monks and nuns, dear brothers and sisters!



These days, when we prayerfully recall the feat of the New Martyrs and confessors of the Russian Church, revealed by our glorious predecessors in the year of fierce trials, I address all of you with the words of apostolic greeting: *May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Christ Jesus our Lord* (2 Pet. 1,2).

A hundred years ago, in the whirlwind of post-revolutionary changes, the theomachists found, as it seemed to them, a suitable reason to launch a powerful anti-religious campaign: under the pretext of raising funds for the needs of the starving Volga region and other regions of the country, the forcible seizure of church values began, accompanied by repression of clergy, monastics and laity. Lawlessness and arbitrariness, trampling and desecration of shrines soon became widespread.

In the conditions of the most severe persecution in February 1922, St. Tikhon, Patriarch of All Russia, addressed to all the faithful children of the Russian Orthodox

Church with a special message, in which he testified about the active efforts that the Church is making to support the people suffering from hunger. In addition to appeals to the heads of individual Christian denominations to help with money and food, with the blessing of St. Tikhon, a special church committee was founded, and donations were collected in all churches.

Moreover, taking into account the scale of the disaster, the Patriarch allowed "*to donate precious church decorations and objects that do not have liturgical use to the needs of the starving.*" The only thing the Hierarch could not agree with was the removal from churches of "*sacred objects, the use of which for non-liturgical purposes is prohibited by the canons of the Universal Church and is punished as sacrilege*" (Patriarch Tikhon's Message on helping the hungry and the seizure of church valuables, February 15/28, 1922).

However, despite Patriarch Tikhon's clearly stated and justified position, the forcible seizures continued. Suffice it to mention the events that took place in March 1922 in Shuya to understand what the new government really had

to do with the Church. Machine-gun fire was opened on the crowd of people who stood up to defend the trampled shrines. The persecution of believers, alas, did not end with this atrocity.

The theomachists did not hide that they saw their main goal as the final and speedy reprisal of the Russian Orthodox Church. And today, a hundred years later, it is impossible to read the terrible lines of the directive without a shudder: "*The greater the number of representatives of the reactionary clergy ... we manage to shoot on this occasion, the better ... so that for several decades they would not dare to think about any resistance.*" It was not concern for starving people, but infernal malice and hatred to the Church that moved the godless builders of the new Russia.

During the campaign to seize church valuables in the first half of 1922 alone, the Bolsheviks provoked more than 1,400 cases of bloody clashes, which were accompanied by arrests, show trials, shootings, imprisonment and exile.

In these persecutions and sufferings for the name of Christ, thousands of church children showed an example of strong faith and spiritual fortitude, patience and courage, accepted martyrdom and *unfading crowns of glory* (1 Pet. 5, 4). Now they stand before the Throne of the Almighty, offering prayers for the Russian Church, for our earthly Fatherland, for countries and peoples belonging to the Orthodox tradition.

Reflecting on the causes of the tragic events of the XX century, we testify: all attempts to build a bright future without God are doomed to failure, and therefore cannot give people the much-desired happiness and well-being. Truly, *if the Lord does not build a house, those who build it work in vain; if the Lord does not guard the city, the guardian watches in vain* (Ps. 126, 1). One must be blind not to see this main lesson of the past century.

Remembering the past, performing a saving mission in the present, the Church awaits the glorious Second Coming of Christ, when, according to the word of the Holy Scripture, *God will be all in all* (1 Cor. 15, 28), when *will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away* (Rev. 21, 4).

In the meantime, staying on earth and humbly *running with endurance the race that is set before us* (Heb. 12, 1), we will strive to live according to the Gospel commandments, pray diligently and work hard, *avoid evil and do good* (Ps. 33, 15), *keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace* (Eph. 4, 3).

*Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (Rom. 15, 5-6). Amen.



PATRIARCH OF MOSCOW AND ALL RUSSIA

## **The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord that we celebrate on February the 15<sup>th</sup>**

All Hebrew parents were to bring their first-born son on the fortieth day after birth to the Temple to bring a sacrifice in thanksgiving to God. To give thanks for the salvation of the Hebrews from Egypt — when the first-born children were saved from death.

The Mother of God with Joseph brought the baby Jesus to the Temple in Jerusalem and brought for the sacrifice two little doves.

At this time in Jerusalem, there lived an old man by the name of Simeon. He was a kind, good man, and he was waiting for the coming of the Messiah, the Christ and Son of God. It was promised to him by the Holy Spirit that he was not going to die before the Savior come into this world. Simeon waited for a very long time. Probably he lived about 300 years.

Then, one day, the Holy Spirit called him to the Temple. When Mary with Joseph brought the infant Jesus, Simeon met the Child, took Him in his arms, and glorifying God said, "Now You let your servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation..., a Light for all the nations, and the Glory of Your people Israel."

Simeon blessed Joseph and the Mother of God; but he was the first who told that the salvation will be painful for the Holy Family; and people who will love Jesus and suffer with Him will be saved from this world, and this world will hate Jesus, the Lord.

And another good person Anna, an eighty-four-year-old woman, confirmed, that is, said the same things about Jesus, that He is the Christ that people were waiting, and their Saviour.



# February 2022

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		<u>1</u> St. Macarius the Great of Egypt (390-391) 	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> St. Maximus the Greek (1556) 	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u> St. Paulinus the Merciful, bishop of Nola (431) 
<u>6</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's Church at Nisku	<u>7</u> St. Gregory the Theologian 	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> St. John Chrysostom 	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer 	<u>12</u>
<u>13</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> <b>The Meeting of the Lord</b> 	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> St. Isidore of Pelusium (436-440) 	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u> St. Bucolus, bishop of Smyrna (100) 
<u>20</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's, Nisku (Blessing of candles)	<u>21</u> Prophet Zachariah ( 520 b.c.) 	<u>22</u>	<u>23</u> St. Prochorus of the Kiev Caves (1107) 	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u> St. Meletius, archbishop of Antioch (381) 	<u>26</u>
<u>27</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy	<u>28</u>	Provided the social gatherings are allowed, or/and in the legal boundaries of the members present, here are the dates and time of the upcoming church meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ February 26. Saturday – 10:00 am – Divine Liturgy; 11:30 am – <b>The Annual Diocese meeting</b> – at St. Barbara's Cathedral - TBC.</li> <li>○ March 5. Saturday – 10:00 am – The Annual <b>“Orthodox IX” Parishes meeting</b> will be held at St. Mary Parish Hall, Nisku.</li> <li>○ March 12. Saturday – 1:00 pm – The Annual <b>St. Mary's Parish meeting</b> will be held at Parish Hall, Nisku.</li> </ul>				