



# “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**

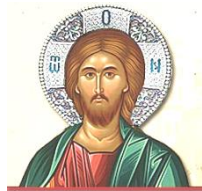
**St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)**

**Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY**

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

**St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE**

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



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## Great martyr Paraskeva of Iconium – October 28



The Great Martyr Paraskeva of Iconium lived during the third century in a rich and pious family. The parents of the saint especially revered Friday, the day of the Passion of the Lord, and therefore they called their daughter Paraskeva. This name, Paraskeva, also means Friday.

Young Paraskeva with all her heart loved purity and the loftiness of the virginal life, and she took a vow of celibacy. She wanted to devote all her life to God and to enlighten pagans with the light of Christ.

Because of her confession of the Orthodox Faith, the pagans seized her and brought her to the city prefect. They demanded that she offer unholy sacrifice to the pagan idols. With a steady heart, and trusting on God, the saint refused this demand. For this she underwent great torments: after stripping her, they tied her to a tree and beat her with rods. Then the torturers raked her pure body with iron claws. Finally, they threw her into prison, exhausted by the torture and wounded to the bone. But God did not forsake the holy sufferer, and miraculously healed her wounds. Not heeding

this divine miracle, the executioners continued with their torture of Saint Paraskeva, and finally, they killed her.

Saint Paraskeva has always enjoyed a special love and veneration among the Orthodox people. Many pious customs and observances are associated with her. In the ancient Rus accounts of the Saints’ Lives, the name of the Great Martyr is inscribed as: “Saint Paraskeva, also called Piatnitsa (that is, Friday).” Churches dedicated to Saint Paraskeva in antiquity were given the name Piatnitsa or, Petka.

Paraskeva-Pearl, this is how this name is very often transcribed into English here in the North America, as if highlighting the idea of the Saints being the pearls of the Church, attracting people to the same spiritual realm they used to live by the divine glory shining in their lives!

Icons of Saint Paraskeva were especially venerated and embellished by the faithful. The iconographers usually depicted the martyr as an austere ascetic, tall of stature, with a radiant crown upon her head. Icons of the saint guard pious Christian households. By the Church belief, Saint Paraskeva is the protectress of fields and cattle. Therefore, on her Feastday it was the custom to bring fruit to church to be blessed. These blessed objects were kept until the following year. Moreover, Saint Paraskeva is invoked for the protection of cattle from disease. She is also a healer of people from grievous illness of both body and soul.

**oca.org** (edited)

# Love in the World of Uncertainty



St. Isaac the Syrian said that only the tomb is the “land of certainty”. Writing to hermits living in the desert, St. Isaac wanted to free them from the delusion that they could be certain about anything in this world. I wonder if St. Isaac was reflecting on the words of St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 8: **“Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up. If anyone thinks he knows anything, he knows nothing as he ought to know it. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.”**

I have known a few scientists throughout my life, real scientists, people who make their living studying the minutiae of the physical world. One thing I have noticed about these people is that although they may be very arrogant regarding fields of general scientific knowledge, areas that are not their area of expertise, when it comes to the details of their particular field of study, they have much less certainty, much more humility. That is, **the more they know about something, the more they know that there is so much more that they do not know.**

Today we live in a time of uncertainty; but really, today is no more uncertain than yesterday nor the day or year or century before. Certainty is a kind of delusion. It is a delusion that conveniently forgets that there is much, much more going on in the world than we know and can see. How, then, can we live in peace when our life is enveloped in uncertainty? **How do we escape the fear of uncertainty?**

St. Isaac tells us that fear is actually the right place to start. If we do not experience a bit of fear at a frightening prospect, then we are already deluded and not in touch with reality. Fear is the right place to start. However, fear, St. Isaac tells us, can be “swallowed up” by faith. That is, beginning with a clear-eyed assessment of the fearful possibilities (as far as you can surmise them), then we turn our attention to God, who holds our lives in His hands. When we believe in God, then our fear can be swallowed up by faith, like a big fish swallowing a small one.



**Faith in God delivers us from fear. However, faith is still only the middle step. Faith itself can be swallowed up by love.** St. Isaac tells us that **faith opens a knowledge of God in which we begin to experience and know, know personally, the love of God.** And as we know the love of God, even faith takes a second seat. Love becomes the most important thing. Which is why, I think, St. Paul points out that love is much more important than knowledge about things, or even knowledge about faith. (The specific knowledge St. Paul is talking about in 1 Corinthians 8 is a knowledge related to faith: whether or not it is appropriate to eat meat sacrificed to idols.)

Fear, faith and love: all three are aspects of our life in Christ. Fear of God, which sometimes just means fear of the unknown, is swallowed up by faith in God—swallowed up, but never fully removed, at least not until the age to come. **And even faith itself, although always important and at hand, even faith can be swallowed up by love.**

**I do not know what will happen tomorrow, nor how the winds of government and society will shift and change. But both St. Paul in the New Testament and St. Isaac the Syrian in his Homilies tell us that if we love, love God and love our neighbour, then we will not go wrong no matter what the future will bring.**

Archpriest Michael Gillis  
Source: *Praying in the Rain*  
[www.pravmir.com](http://www.pravmir.com)

# THE JOYOUS FEAST OF THE PUMPKIN (HALLOWEEN)

It is that time of the year when the secular society in which we live is preparing for the festival of Halloween. Many do not know its spiritual roots and history, and why it contradicts the teachings of the Church. The feast of Halloween began in pre-Christian times among the Celtic peoples of Great Britain, Ireland, and northern France. These pagan people believed that life was born from death. Therefore, they celebrated the beginning of the "new year" in the fall (on the eve of October 31 and into the day of November 1) when, as they believed, the season of cold, darkness, decay and death began. A certain deity whom they called Samhain was believed by the Celts to be the Prince of Death and it was he whom they honored at their New Year's festival.



From an Orthodox Christian point of view, we can see many diabolical beliefs and practices associated with this feast, which have endured to this time. On the eve of the New Year's festival, the Druids, who were the priests of the Celtic cult, instructed their people to extinguish all hearth fires and lights. On the evening of the festival, a huge bonfire built from oak branches was ignited (oak was regarded by the Celts as sacred). Upon this fire sacrifices were burned as an offering, in order to appease and cajole Samhain, the Prince of Death. It was also believed that Samhain, being pleased by the offerings, allowed the souls of the dead to return to their homes for a festal visit on this day. It is from this belief that the practice of wandering about in the dark, dressed up in costumes imitating ghosts, witches, hobgoblins, fairies, etc. came about. The living entered into fellowship and communion with the dead by what was, and still is, a ritual act of imitation, through costume and the activity of wandering around in the dark of night, as the souls of the dead were believed to wander.

The dialogue of trick or treat is also an integral part of this system of beliefs and practices. It was believed that the souls of the dead who had entered into the world of darkness, decay and death, and therefore into total communion with and submission to Samhain, bore the affliction of great hunger on their festal visit. Out of this grew the practice of begging, which was also a ritual enactment and imitation of what the Celts believed to be the activities of the souls of the dead on their festal visit. Associated with this is the still further implication that if the souls of the dead and their imitators were not appeased with "treats," i.e., offerings, then the wrath and anger of Samhain would be unleashed through a system of "tricks," i.e., curses. Such is the true meaning of this pagan feast.

It is then evident that for an Orthodox Christian participation at any level is impossible and idolatrous, resulting in a genuine betrayal of God and Church. If we participate in the ritual activity of imitating the dead and wandering in the dark asking for treats or offering them to children, we then have willfully sought fellowship with the dead, whose Lord is not Samhain, but rather Satan. It is to Satan then that these treats are offered, not to children.

There are other practices associated with Halloween from which we must stay away, such as sorcery, fortune telling, divination, games of chance, witchcraft and the carving of an ugly face upon a pumpkin and then placing a lit candle within making it the infamous Jack O'Lantern. The pumpkin (in older days other vegetables were used) was carved by the Celts in imitation of the dead and used to convey the new light (from the sacred oak fire) to the home where the lantern was left burning through the night. This "holy lantern" is nothing more than an imitation of the truly holy votive light (lampada) offered before an icon of Christ and the saints. Even the use and display of the Jack O'Lantern involves participation in this "death" festival honoring Satan.

The Holy Fathers of the first millennium (a time when the Church was one and strictly Orthodox) counteracted this Celtic pagan feast by introducing the Feast of All Saints. It is from this that the term Halloween developed. The word Halloween has its roots in the Old English of All Hallow E'en, i.e., the Eve commemorating all those who were hallowed (sanctified). Unfortunately, either due to a lack of knowledge or understanding, the Celtic pagan feast being celebrated on the same day as the Christian feast of All Saints (in western Christendom) came to be known as Halloween.

The people who remained pagan and therefore anti-Christian reacted to the Church's attempt to supplant their festival by celebrating this evening with increased fervor. Many of these practices involved desecration and mockery of the Church's reverence for Holy Relics. Holy things, such as crosses and the Reserved Sacrament, were stolen and used in

perverse and sacreligious ways. The practice of begging became a system of persecution designed to harass Christians who were, by their beliefs, unable to participate by making offerings to those who served the Lord of Death.

One can see in contemporary Western society that the Western Church's attempt to supplant this pagan festival with a Christian feast failed. How then did something that is so obviously contradictory to the Holy Orthodox faith gain such acceptance among Christian people?

The answer is spiritual apathy and listlessness, which are the spiritual roots of atheism and turning away from God. Today's society urges that Halloween and other such festivities, notwithstanding their apparent pagan and idolatrous origin, are nonetheless harmless and of no consequence. Upon closer consideration, these pagan festivals are the source of destruction of any kind of spiritual foundation and lead to disbelief and outright atheism.

Halloween undermines the very basis of the Church, which was founded on the blood of martyrs who had refused, by giving up their lives, to partake in any form of idolatry.

The holy Church must take a firm stand in counteracting any such (pagan) events. Christ taught us that God is the judge in all our actions and beliefs and that we are either FOR GOD or AGAINST GOD. There is no neutral or middle of the road approach.

Today we witness a revival of satanist cults; we hear of satanic services conducted on Halloween night. Children are kidnapped by satanists for their ritualistic sacrifices. Orthodox clergy are ritualistically killed, as has happened more than once in California. Everywhere Satan reaches out to ensnare as many innocent people as possible. The newsstands are filled with material on spiritualism, supernatural phenomena, seances, prophesies and all kinds of demonically inspired works. These works all serve Satan, for they are not the fruit of the Holy Spirit, but the fruit of the spirit of this world.

**Bishop Alexander (Mileant) †2005**

FatherAlexander.org

Missionary Leaflet # E62d

**His Eminence Alexander, Bishop of Buenos Aires and South America**, was born in 1938 in Odessa. After his father was



killed in the Second World War his family moved to Prague and from there to Rome. In 1948 the family moved again to Buenos Aires. From his youth Alexander strove to serve the Church, and later, under the influence of ever-memorable Athanasius (Martos), Archbishop of Buenos Aires, he started his thorough research of the lives of the saints and the works of the Holy Fathers. He wished to study them in the original for which he specially learned modern and ancient Greek.

In 1963, upon graduation from university, the future Bishop Alexander entered the Holy Trinity Theological Seminary in Jordanville which he completed in 1967. In the same year he was ordained a deacon and soon a priest (his ordination was celebrated by Metropolitan Philaret (Voznesensky), primate of ROCOR) and for 31 years served as rector of the Holy Protection parish in Los Angeles. During that time he obtained a Master's Degree and got a job at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), namely at Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), as a spaceship engineer.

In the 1980s he began writing and publishing booklets on Orthodoxy, not only for his parish, but also for spreading all over the world, particularly in Russia where there was an acute need for spiritual literature. He developed the complete course of the Law of God for parochial schools in whose work and activities he was involved throughout his pastoral and archpastoral ministry. These booklets were published in Russian, English, Spanish and Portuguese. The present collection comprises a considerable amount of material from his booklets once published in English.

In 1995 he was tonsured a monk at the Holy Trinity Monastery but kept his name Alexander in honor of the New Martyr Alexander of Kharkiv (his former patron-saint was the Right-Believing Holy Prince Alexander Nevsky).

On May 29, 1998, he was consecrated as Bishop of Buenos Aires and South America at the Synodal Cathedral of the Kursk-Root Icon of Our Lady of the Sign in New York.

Bishop Alexander shared his time between his pastoral care of the Holy Trinity parish in Oxnard, California, and South America. He also simultaneously continued his work as a space engineer as several years remained until his pension. At the end of his life Bishop Alexander was diagnosed with cancer which proved to be incurable and he reposed in the Lord on September 12, 2005, and was buried in the monastic graveyard at Holy Trinity Monastery.

## The traditional Fall Social Puschenia with Auction Event

**St. Mary's Parish Fall Social – Puschenia – will be held on Sunday November 19, 2023, at St. Mary Parish Hall after the service of the Liturgy (at about 11.30-12)**



We are excited to announce that we will once again be holding our traditional Fall Social - Puschenia, with the joy of spiritual and family communication, a good meal and our generous and friendly lottery (silent auction and raffle) for the benefits of our Church and the participants!

The word 'puschenia' means something like a leave-taking ('an act of saying goodbye') and is similar to the Pancake Sunday (the one before the Great Lent), but this one happening before the Christmas Lent, with the intention to have some joyous time and a good meal before the fasting period occurs, the period of some, especially spiritual, abstinence and temperance.

Dinner will be again provided by the church with donations greatly appreciated. Anyone joining is welcome to bring a special salad, side dish or dessert of yours! Thank you so much!


During the event we encourage you to join in on bidding on the silent auction items available.

All that proceeds from the silent auction and dinner donations will be going towards future improvements of the church. Including the painting of the bell tower, the north windows and more.

If you are so inclined, please feel free to donate an item to the silent auction. You can do so by messaging the Facebook page (see the link on the first page of the bulletin!) to get in contact with the organizer or approaching any board member.

Please share this event with friends and family. We look forward to seeing you and families there again!

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 *The Patriarchal Parishes express our gratitude to Starlit Restoration company (based in Toronto and Edmonton), and personally Marina, Aleksey and Ivan for graciously and professionally repairing the roof drains for the Bishop's residence of 108 Street, and all the roof drains cleaning and restoring!*

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### In Memoriam

***The parishioners of Orthodox IX Parishes extend our deepest condolences to the relatives of the departed servant of God Alex. May God comfort you, and may God settle His servant, where the light of His countenance shall visit!***

**MIHALCHEON, Alex  
May 14, 1954 – March 16, 2023**



On Thursday, March 16, 2023, Alex Mihalcheon of Vegreville, Alberta passed away peacefully at the age of 68 years.

Alex is survived by his loving family, his wife of 39 years, Beverly; daughters Janet Mihalcheon (Brian Lynch) along with their son John Eli Lynch-Pilon, and Charlene Mihalcheon; six brothers; three sisters; along with numerous nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

Alex was predeceased by his parents Mike and Mary Mihalcheon; parents in law Eli and Elizabeth Lastiwka; three brothers and four sisters.

**The mercy of God and Heavenly Kingdom!**

The Synaxis of the Archangel Michael and the Other Bodiless Powers is Commemorated by the Church on November 21.

From the event of the Annunciation of the Mother of God we get to know one of the chief angels, the Archangels of God - Gabriel. This is how it happened according to Gospel by St. Evangelist Luke:



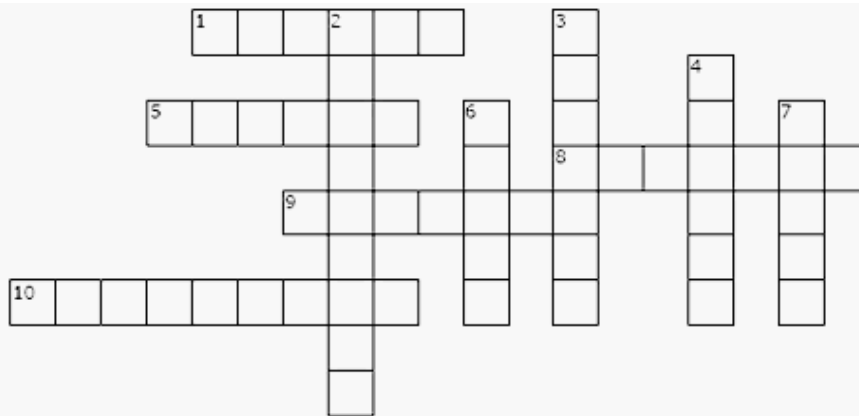
Six months after the appearance of the angel to [the Priest] Zacharias, the Archangel Gabriel was sent by God to the city of Nazareth to the Holy Virgin Mary, Who was engaged to be married to righteous Joseph, with the glorious news that the Lord had chosen Her to be the Mother of the Saviour of the world!

The Archangel appeared in the home of the righteous Joseph while Mary was reading the Holy Scriptures. He came to Her and said, «Rejoice, who are full of grace (that is, filled with the grace of God – the gift of the Holy Spirit), the Lord is with You: blessed are You among women!»

Mary was troubled by the words of the angel and thought: what manner of salutation could this be?

But the Archangel said to Her, «Do not be afraid, Mary; for You have found favour with God. You will be with Child, and give birth to a Son, and will call His name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest, and his Kingdom will never end! Thy cousin Elizabeth, she is also going to bear a son in her old age, though she was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible.»

(Luke 1:26-38)



ACROSS

- 1. The man to whom Mary was engaged to be married
- 5. A pure or unmarried woman; a maiden
- 8. The name of the angel who appeared to Mary
- 9. To be joined together as husband and wife
- 10. A heavenly being; a chief messenger for God

DOWN

- 2. Relative of Mary who was the mother of John the Baptist
- 3. A nation or territory ruled by a king or queen
- 4. To be filled with fear
- 6. A very young person especially between infancy and youth
- 7. The son who was born to Mary

|           |         |        |         |       |
|-----------|---------|--------|---------|-------|
| ELIZABETH | GABRIEL | VIRGIN | KINGDOM | JESUS |
| MARRIED   | AFRAID  | CHILD  | JOSEPH  | ANGEL |

*Children's Corner: Drop in with your children and great & grand children!*

Why do we meet only Archangel Gabriel in the Gospel?

The book of Gospel - Good News - is the book of God's love and mercy to man.

And the Archangel Gabriel is the living symbol of this: first of all - by his service at the very beginning of Gospel, of which you can read in the previous page, above the crossword.

The story of the meeting of Archangel Gabriel and St. Mary – the Annunciation – is also called in old language as the Good News, even the same as the Holy Gospel itself!


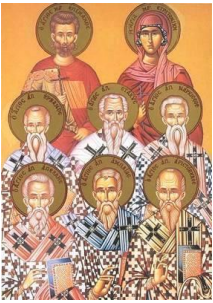


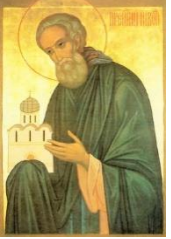
We did not know this Archangel before – He was like a black-and-white picture for us, just like this one that you can now see in front of you.

And here he comes, the one who on behalf and by the command of God is announcing this Joyful News for us, the messenger of God's Love and Mercy for all of us!

So, let us color his picture – the wings and the clothes of the Archangel – with as many different bright and joyous colors as possible!



# November 2023

| SUN   | MON   | TUE   | WED  | THU  | FRI  | SAT   |
|---|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| <p><u>5</u><br/><b>10:00 a.m. –<br/>Divine Liturgy –<br/>NISKU</b></p> <p><i>Daylight Saving<br/>Time Ends: 2:00<br/>a.m. clocks are<br/>turned backward<br/>1 hour</i></p> | <p><u>6</u><br/>Icon of the<br/>Theotokos<br/>“The Joy of All<br/>Who Sorrow”</p>  | <p><u>7</u></p>   | <p><u>8</u><br/>Martyr<br/>Lupus, slave<br/>of St.<br/>Demetrius<br/>(306)</p>  | <p><u>9</u></p>  | <p><u>10</u><br/>St. Job, abbot<br/>and<br/>wonderwork<br/>er of Pochaev</p>  |  <p>REMEMBRANCE DAY<br/><i>Let's Not Forget</i></p>  |
| <p><u>12</u><br/><b>10:00 a.m. –<br/>Divine Liturgy –<br/>St. Barbara<br/>Cathedral</b></p>   | <p><u>13</u><br/>Apostles of the<br/>Seventy (1st c.)</p>                         | <p><u>14</u></p>  | <p><u>15</u><br/>Martyrs of<br/>Persia (341)</p>                               | <p><u>16</u></p>   | <p><u>17</u><br/>St. Ioannicius<br/>the Great, of<br/>Bithynia (846)</p>     | <p><u>18</u></p>  |
| <p><u>19</u><br/><b>10:00 a.m. –<br/>Divine Liturgy –<br/>NISKU</b></p> <p><b>Fall Social /<br/>Puschenia after<br/>the Service in<br/>the Parish Hall</b></p>              | <p><u>20</u></p>  | <p><u>21</u><br/><b>Archangel<br/>Michael and<br/>all the Bodiless<br/>Powers</b></p>  | <p><u>22</u></p>   | <p><u>23</u><br/>Martyr Orest<br/>the Physician,<br/>of Cappadocia<br/>(304)</p>                     | <p><u>24</u></p>   | <p><u>25</u><br/>St. John the<br/>Merciful,<br/>patriarch of<br/>Alexandria<br/>(616-620)</p>  |
| <p><u>26</u><br/><b>10:00 a.m. –<br/>Divine Liturgy –<br/>St. Barbara<br/>Cathedral</b></p>   | <p><u>27</u></p>  | <p><u>28</u><br/>Beginning of<br/>the Nativity<br/>Fasting</p> <p><b>LENT</b></p>      | <p><u>29</u></p>   | <p><u>30</u><br/>St. Nikon,<br/>abbot, of<br/>Radonezh,<br/>disciple of St.<br/>Sergius. (1426)</p>  |  |   |