



# “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**

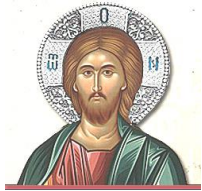
**St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)**

**Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY**

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

**St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE**

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



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**Volume 58, Issue 2**

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## The Feast of the Peace of the Knowledge of God

February 15 - the Meeting of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the Temple

The feast of the Meeting of the Lord tells us about an event that moves our souls—the aged elder Simeon holds in his arms the Divine Infant forty-days-old, and bids farewell to earthly life, raising the immortal hymn to God: Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace...”

From the lips of the elder we hear a word about peace. How harmonious this word is with the wondrous song of the angels: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace.” When the Son of God became incarnate, glad tidings were heard on earth; and the elder Simeon also speaks of the peace with which he is ready to move on to the next world. Christ brought us not only peace, but also the joy of the fulfillment of God’s promise to mankind. Therefore, when the elder Simeon received the Divine Child, the God-man, in his arms, peace and a feeling of ineffable joy, a feeling of the fulness of human happiness settled into his heart.



The choirs of the heavenly hosts heralded the most important, the most precious thing that God’s appearance in the flesh brings to mankind. And from the lips of the elder Simeon, we hear not a sigh of his soul’s relief as it casts off the heavy burden of waiting for the Messiah and finally gains the repose of death. No, from his lips sounds forth a hymn, a magnificent hymn of new life and joy proceeding from the knowledge of God born of a virgin. The elder, who has vast life experience—after all, he’s around three hundred years old—knows what the dearest and

most important thing in life is, and he preaches in this blessed moment the blessed state of his soul: Lettest now thy servant depart in peace.

**H**ow did this elder attain to those heights of blessedness, that he should be the only one of those born on earth to be vouchsafed to behold “the mystery hidden before the ages” and receive into his embrace “as an infant, the Lord of glory and salvation of the world”? The Gospel answers this question in brief words: He was just—in this word is expressed the elder’s love of neighbor; and devout—in this word is emphasized his love for God; waiting for the consolation of Israel—these words speak of his faith in the promised Messiah and Savior.

**Y**et there was something more about elder Simeon: And the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord’s Christ (Lk. 2:25–26). The expectation of this meeting had become the elder’s aim in life, as he outlived all his contemporaries. In the bodily infirmity of deep old age, he was strengthened by his holy faith and hope that he would meet on earth the promised Savior of the world, and only then would the path of his earthly life end. This faith never wavered in him. It grew in him and ruled all his thoughts, desires, and actions. Simeon’s living faith purified his heart beforehand so that he could see God with his physical eyes; it adorned him with the inner beauty of virtue, he became just and devout, and the Holy Spirit rested upon him. And just as all that is divine is revealed in man’s life suddenly and wondrously, simply and unexpectedly, so it was for elder Simeon. He came by inspiration to the temple and there met the awaited Messiah. He took Him into his arms, blessed God, and said, Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

**W**ho of us can describe the joy and gladness in that elderly soul, when his eyes beheld the Savior of the world? Death was no longer frightening—he would go without fear and dread to meet a new, eternal life! What was there to for him fear in death, when he held in his arms the Conqueror of death!

**M**y dear ones, in Christ each of us can share and experience elder Simeon’s joy. That grace-filled peace, which visited the soul of the God-Receiver, is not alien to us; it is near to us. The holy apostle Paul says, “Christ is our peace” (cf. Eph. 2:14); and we have an intimate and ineffable communication with Christ in our living faith, in works of love, in our striving toward righteousness and piety, in the holy sacrament of Communion.

**S**tanding by the doors of Great Lent and repentance that are opened before us, we now prepare ourselves for this great Mystery, hymning Christ the Son of God, Who has come to us and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh (Eph. 2:17). The Lord comes to those who love that peace, and dwells in their hearts. Amen.

**Bishop Mitrophan (Znosko-Borovsky)**

Translation by Nun Cornelia (Rees)

### **Mitrophan (Znosko-Borovsky) of Boston**



Mitrophan Znosko-Borovsky was born into the family of a parish priest on August 17 (August 4 O.S.), 1909, in the city of Brest-Litovsk (at that time a part of the Russian Empire). He studied at the Theological Faculty of Warsaw University, then transferred to the Theological Faculty of Belgrade University as a recipient of a scholarship from the Serbian Patriarch Varnava. Mitrophan was ordained to priesthood on June 12, 1936. Father Mitrophan saved many from death behind the walls of the NKVD during the Soviet occupation of Byelorussia. He also saved Jews, hiding them from fascist executioners and placing himself in mortal danger. Father Mitrophan’s consecration to bishop took place in Montreal on November 24 (November 11 O.S.), 1992. He was the vicar of the Eastern American Diocese with the title of Bishop of Boston the last nine years of his life. On the morning of February 15, 2002, on the feast of the Meeting of the Lord (O.S.), Bishop Mitrophan reposed following a short illness.

## February 22 – Uncovering of the relics (1992) of New Hiero-confessor Tikhon, Enlightener of North America, patriarch of Moscow and all Russia (1917-†25)

*In his popular book, “Everyday Saints and Other Stories”, Bishop Tikhon (Shevkunov) tells the amazing story of how the relics of Patriarch Tikhon were discovered in Donskoy Monastery, Moscow, where he was living as yet a hieromonk at the time. On this day (February 22) we commemorate that epic event, and present an excerpt from the chapter, “The Relics of Patriarch Tikhon”.*



One of the many mysteries of ecclesiastical life in Soviet times was what had happened to the remains of the Holy Patriarch Tikhon, who had been buried in 1925 in the Small Cathedral of Moscow’s Donskoy Monastery. In 1946 during his funeral, Metropolitan Nicholas (Yarushevich) of Krutitsa and Kolomna sadly pronounced: “We have just prayed over the grave of His Holiness. But his body is not here.”

There was every reason to be certain of this. It would not have been surprising to anyone if the remains of Patriarch Tikhon had been destroyed. For if Orthodox believers revered the deceased head of the Russian Orthodox Church as a saint, the hatred felt for him by the Bolsheviks was exceptional, even against the background of hysterical anti-religious Soviet persecution. In a “list of enemies of Soviet authority” published back then by the newspaper Izvestiya, Patriarch Tikhon was listed as number one.

The rumor was that in 1927, after the Donskoy Monastery had been closed, Soviet authorities, fearing that his remains might become an object of reverence, removed his coffin from his grave and burned it in a crematorium. There were other reports that the remains of His Holiness had been secretly spirited out and reburied in the German cemetery in Lefortovo. A third version was that the monks, fearing that the authorities would desecrate the remains of the Patriarch, secretly reburied him in a hidden necropolis somewhere in the Donskoy Monastery. All these theories grew into a real conviction that was solidified when in 1932 the leader of the Soviet-supported group of ecclesiastical renovationists, the self-styled Metropolitan Alexander Vvedensky, appeared before his supporters in the vestments of the Patriarch himself. Muscovites immediately recognized these garments as having been sewed specifically for Patriarch Tikhon in the famous factory of the Olovyanishnikov merchant brothers. And Patriarch Tikhon had been buried in these vestments.

And yet hope lingered that the remains of this Patriarch beloved by the entire Church would one day be found.

\* \* \*

It was the evening of the feast of the Meeting of the Lord. We started by saying prayers by the grave of the Patriarch Tikhon, and then began our excavation. Very few people even knew about this: His Holiness Patriarch Alexiy II, several monks, Archimandrite Cyril from the Holy Trinity Monastery, Archimandrite John from the Pskov Caves Monastery, and those whose help we had asked for: Vyacheslav Mikhailovich Klykov and several of his stonemasons and assistants, and also the artist Alexey Valeryevich Artemyev. Our group leader was the learned archaeologist Sergei Alexeyevich Belyayev. He had been responsible for the location of the remains of St. Ambrose of Optina, and had also carried out excavations in the Monastery of Diveyevo and in the Chersonese peninsula, where there used to be Scythians, as well as ancient Greek colonies.

We began by removing the gravestone. After the fire its marble had become practically brown. As we got about thirty centimeters deeper we found a massive marble slab inscribed: "His Holiness Tikhon, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia."



That was precisely the title of the Russian Orthodox Patriarchs at the beginning of the twentieth century. This find inspired us, as we began to dig deeper, and as we reached one meter more in depth we saw what we had been looking for: the stone vault of a hidden crypt. But as we reached again to remove several stones from the vault of the crypt, I cautiously inserted a burning candle into the cavity that had been formed and glanced inside. The crypt was empty. All the candlelight was able to reveal were the dusty remains of an old spider web.

When I told my friends this, everyone was let down with exhaustion, and for a while we just sat there silently. Then one after another they raced to check whether what I had told them was really true. Had I perhaps made a mistake? Perhaps in the quite roomy crypt there were a few relics or remains of the former remains that had survived the violation of the grave of the Patriarch? But there was absolutely nothing there at all. Our worst fears had been confirmed.

As we calmed down, we decided to document the size and condition of the crypt. But as we were measuring its length, the measuring rod, which was two meters long, unexpectedly quivered to the right and the left. The same thing happened with a rod that was eight meters long. We hurried to investigate this underground structure and soon understood that we had found not a crypt, but a portion of the heating system of the church, containing stone pipes placed under the floor through which the hot air from the stove was conducted. The heater was significantly wider in the area by the Patriarch's grave, so that it truly did resemble a crypt. Or perhaps the grave was even deeper? Perhaps what we had found was actually a false crypt, specially built this way to deceive the Bolsheviks into believing that the coffin with the body of the Patriarch had already been stolen and buried somewhere else?

Then suddenly Father Daniel brought us a very old man, who asserted that he supposedly knew for sure that the holy prelate Tikhon had been buried exactly five meters to the east of what had been marked as his grave. Our opinions were split after this, and so the next morning we went to visit His Holiness, to ask for his blessing and advice on what to do next. Having listened to all we had to say, the Patriarch blessed our continuing efforts in searches in the same place.

At last by nightfall we finally found the real burial vault of the Patriarch. There could be no doubt about it. It was a very powerful structure covered by an enormous slab, which to our great fortune had not remained whole but was made up of several massive stone sections. We were able to lift up one of them. I lay on my stomach and inserted a candle inside. I remember how I was suddenly struck by a smell of spring freshness emerging from this underground crypt. Everyone gathered round. In front of me was a thin oak coffin of extremely refined carving, whose description I already knew very well. On it there was a marble inscription. By the flickering light of the candle I read: "The Patriarch of Moscow and of all Russia, Tikhon."

We could not believe how lucky we were. Father Agathadorus immediately left to call Patriarch Alexiy. It was already quite late, near midnight, but the sessions of the Holy Synod had only just finished. Twenty minutes later

His Holiness came to Donskoy Monastery. By the time he arrived we had lifted up the other slabs above the vault, and greeted the Patriarch with the sound of bells ringing in celebration. It was midnight, and sounded almost like Pascha.

It is difficult to convey our feelings that night as we stood by the open rediscovered grave of the Patriarch Tikhon. We could not believe that it was all over and that his relics were really there in front of us. I am sure that Patriarch Alexiy felt the same way. But then he said to me: “Nonetheless we had better look—are those truly his relics?”

**Bishop Tikhon (Shevkunov), 2/24/2018**

*(to be continued in the next bulletin)*

## If the church of our parents and grandparents is worth \$1.00 a day



The St. Mary's Church Board continues to encourage everyone to please continue sending in donations and the yearly membership fees. Membership for 2024 is \$325.00 and can be paid in the following ways: in person at any service or the AGM; mail - St. Mary's Church 25437 Hwy 19, Leduc County T9G 0A8; e-transfer: [kwasiluk@shaw.ca](mailto:kwasiluk@shaw.ca) or 780-902-4082

The church expenses are getting higher (taxes, utilities, insurance, etc.), and we do not have the substantial help we used to have from the Ladies Aid. The number of paying members has been declining year after year. Most

maintenance and upkeep are completed by members: meaning significant work continues to be completed by spread over very a few members and volunteers. So, most of St. Mary's operating costs of the church are paid by the memberships and plate donations.

That is why we are addressing you again in regard to this very important aspect of our Church life.

At the same time, we would like to express our gratitude to those who listen and respond in due time and help us not just to exist but continue the vital Church activities. May God bless you generously!

Please, do not forget to leave your tax receipt information with your donations, and may God keep you for many years!

## Baptismal houses blessing in 2024



Only once a year – during the Baptismal Festivity – water is sanctified by the special rite (order), for at this time we try to mystically participate at the Lord's Baptism in the river of Jordan.

And once again, we kept this blessed tradition to extend the Holiday to every house.

Right after the Baptismal Liturgy and the Great Water Blessing we departed in our joyous travel to visit the houses of our parishioners, and had this short service singing the Troparion, sprinkling the dwellings with the Holy Water, reading the prayer, and singing 'Many Years'!

And, as the prayer goes, *may this water become a gift of sanctification, a deliverance from sins, for healing of soul and body, and the water springing up to eternal life to all our parishioners!*

## *In Memoriam*

***The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our deepest condolences to Horen St. John the Baptist parish, and to the relatives of the newly departed Alex Hadzariga. May God comfort you with His compassion, and may God settle His servant, where the light of His countenance shall visit!***



It is with profound sorrow that we announce the passing of Alex Hadzariga of Edmonton, AB on Monday, January 1, 2024, at the age of 49 years.



Alex is survived by his wife, Kyla; son, Grayson of Edmonton, mother, Olga (Victor) Genovey; father, Bill Hadzariga; siblings, Lori (Wes) with their children, Brayden and Tyran Johnston; grandmother, Annie Hadzariga; father and mother-in-law, Lorne and Katie Jasper; brothers-in-law, Jeremy (Caroline) Jasper, Sean (Katelyn) with their children, Brodie, Logan and Emerson Jasper; sister-in-law, Jessica (Jason) with their children, Harper, Blake and Sawyer Farough; cousins, extended relatives and dear friends.

May God comfort the Family with His Grace the way only He knows!

Alex was predeceased by his grandparents of the blessed memory, Roman Hadzariga and Mary and Steve Myschuk.

Beside being the heart and life of his family, Alex was helping his father and grandmother tend over St. John's Church of the Horen region. And, through the pain of parting with him, we can state that, he was granted the last right (the Holy Confession and Communion) before departing this life to go where his righteous ancestors went.

May God remember His servant in His Kingdom!

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

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***The parishioners of Orthodox IX extend our condolences to our parishioner Harry Nazarenko and to all the Family on departing this life of his sister Pearl Marbel Warshawski! May God have mercy and settle her where the light of His countenance shall visit!***



Warshawski, Pearl Mabel  
July 24, 1926 - December 29, 2023

Pearl passed away peacefully at Touchmark, her home for the past 18 years. She was a beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, aunt and friend to so many.

Pearl was born in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan to John and Elizabeth Nazarenko. Life was hard through the depression, but she and her brother got to school each day riding the family's only horse.

Pearl left Maple Creek in order to get a higher education and graduated from the Edmonton General Hospital School of Nursing. It was while working there that she met the love of her life, Dr. Stanley J. Warshawski. Together they raised their family in Toronto then Edmonton, where they settled.



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

## **On February the 15th we celebrate the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord**

On the fortieth day after the birth of Jesus, the Mother of God, Joseph and the Divine Infant went to Jerusalem. According to the law of Moses, mothers on the fortieth day came with their babies to the temple and offered a sacrifice to God. The sacrifice of the Virgin Mary and Joseph, as poor people, were two young pigeons.

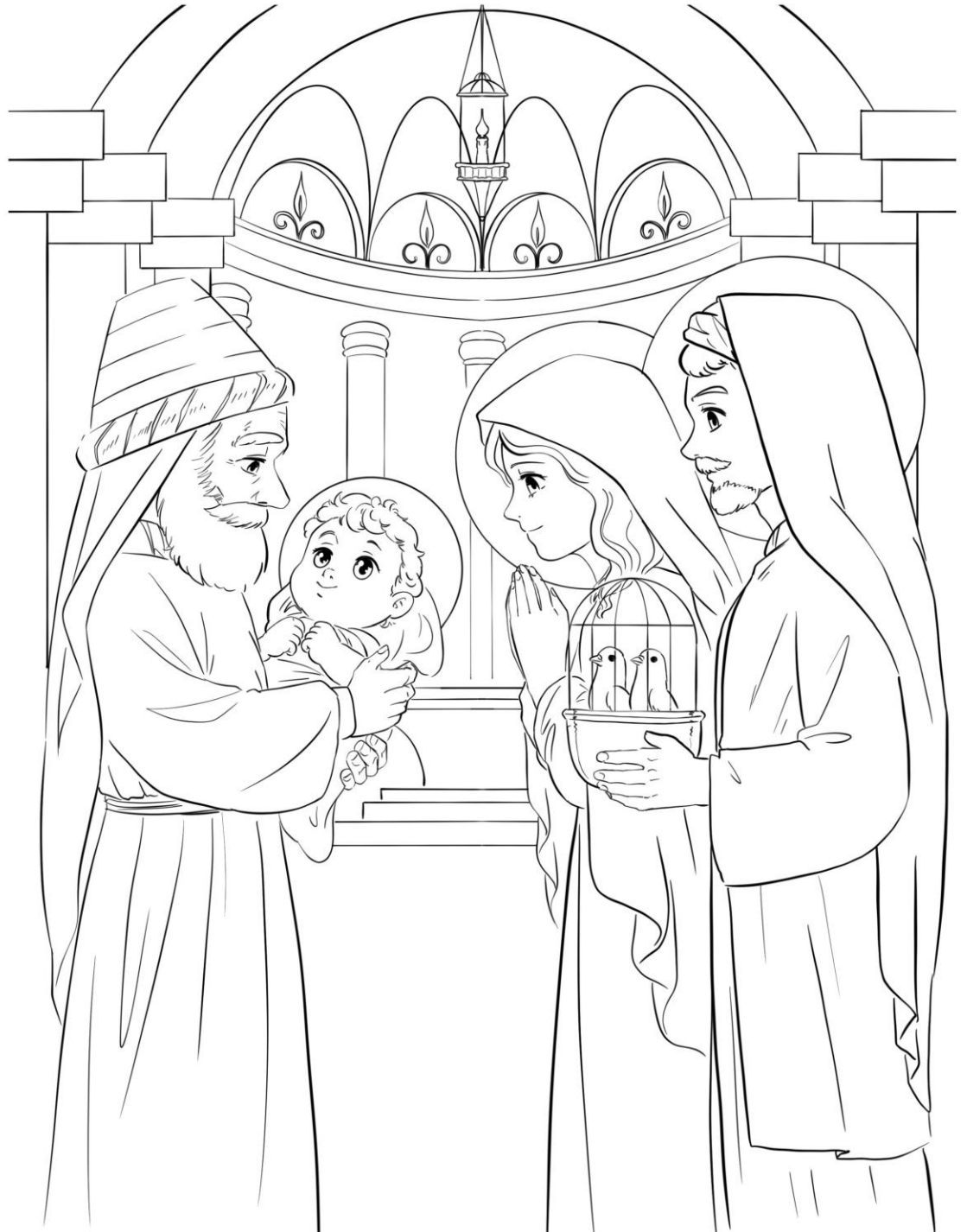
At that time, the righteous elder Simeon lived in Jerusalem. He was promised by God that he would not die until he saw the Savior. For many years Simeon waited for a joyful meeting with the Savior, and finally the Holy Spirit revealed to him that the Infant Jesus brought to the temple was the promised Savior.

Great was Simeon's joy! He

approached the Blessed Virgin, took the Infant Jesus in His arms and exclaimed: "Now you are releasing Your servant, My Lord, according to Your word in peace. I have seen with my eyes the salvation that You have prepared for all nations."

And another good person the prophetess Anna, who spent all her life in fasting and prayer, confirmed, that this Child is the Christ that people were waiting, and their Saviour.

That's how the meeting took place, which is the meeting of mankind in the person of Elders Simeon and Anna with God, and also the meeting of the Old and New Testaments.



# February 2024

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				<u>1</u> Virgin-martyr Euphrasia of Nicomedia, 303 	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u> Virgin-martyr Agnes of Rome (ca. 305) 
<u>4</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's Church at Nisku	<u>5</u> St. Paulinus the Merciful, bishop of Nola 	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u> Icons of the Theotokos "Assuage My Sorrow" 	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u> St. John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople 	<u>10</u>
<u>11</u> 10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara	<u>12</u> Synaxis of the Three Hierarchs 	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u> <b>The Meeting of the Lord</b> 	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u> St. Isidore of Pelusium, monk (ca. 436-440) 
<u>18</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's, Nisku <i>(Blessing of candles)</i>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u> St. Boniface, abbot, of Feofania (Kiev) 	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u> St. Innocent, bishop of Irkutsk (1805) 	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u> St. Cassian "the Barefoot," of Volokolamsk 
<u>25</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>29</u>	<p><b>The dates and time of the upcoming church annual meetings in March:</b></p> <p><b>March 2.</b> Saturday – 10:00 am – The Annual "Orthodox IX" Parishes meeting will be held at St. Mary Parish Hall, Nisku.</p> <p><b>March 9.</b> Saturday – 1:00 pm – The Annual St. Mary's Parish meeting will be held at Parish Hall, Nisku.</p>	