



“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

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Holy Ascension - CALMAR

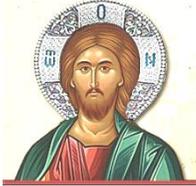
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

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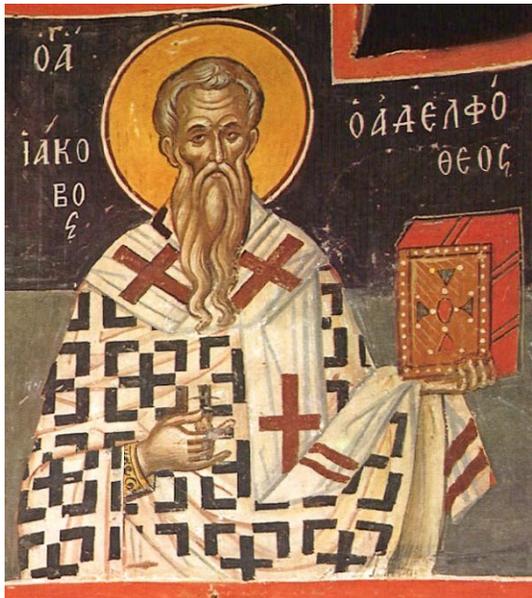
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November 2025

November 5 - Holy Apostle James, the brother of the Lord (63)



The Holy Apostle James was the son of the Righteous Joseph before he was betrothed to the Most Holy Birth-Giver of God. Holy Tradition says that Joseph had other sons with his first wife. Thus, James was called the Lord's brother. Saint James had been a Nazirite, a man consecrated to God for a period time, during which the Nazirites vowed to abstain from wine and ritual defilement, and could not cut their hair.

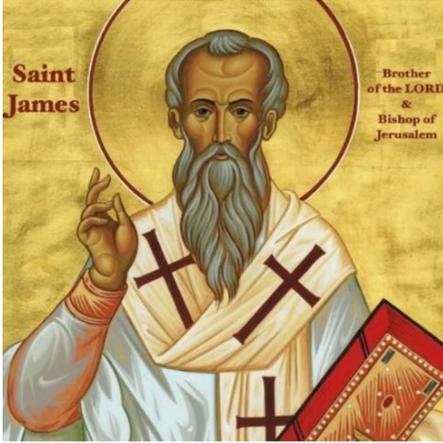
When the Savior began to proclaim the Kingdom of God, Saint James believed in Christ and became His Apostle. Later, he was chosen as the first Bishop of Jerusalem.

Saint James presided over the Council of Jerusalem, and his word was decisive (Acts 15). In his thirty years as bishop, Saint James converted many Jews. Angered by this, the Pharisees and the Scribes plotted together to kill the holy bishop. They led him up on the pinnacle of the Jerusalem Temple and asked him what he thought of Jesus. The holy Apostle bore witness that Christ is the Messiah. Enraged, the Jewish leaders threw him off the roof. He did not die at once, but gathering his final strength, he prayed to the Lord for his enemies while they were stoning him. Saint James' martyrdom occurred about 63 A.D.

The holy Apostle James composed the Divine Liturgy, which formed the basis of all the Liturgies; and an Epistle, one of the books of the New Testament. In it Saint James addresses “the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad”, and advises, but pure spiritual things without any partiality, that is, to both Jews and the whole world: “My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing...” (James 1: 2-4).

Holy Apostle James pray God for us!

About St. Apostle James, the brother of the Lord, and his message in the epistle



Following the Acts of the Apostles are seven epistles called "catholic" (or in ancient Greek "katholikos"). This name was first used by one of the first church historians, Eusebius of Caesarea, and since then it has been applied to seven letters, the authors of which are the apostles James, Peter, John, and Jude. Although the Catholic Epistles are small texts compared to the Gospels and the Book of Acts, they are so rich in content that brevity does not mean quick reading (indeed, any text of Holy Scripture should be read slowly and thoughtfully). The author of the first of the catholic epistles is considered to be St. Apostle James, whom the Apostle Paul, speaking of his visit to Jerusalem, calls the Lord's brother: "I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord's brother" (Gal. 1:19).

The Lord's Brother

The Lord's brothers are mentioned several times in the Gospel. After performing the miracle at Cana in Galilee, Jesus went to Capernaum: "He and His mother and His brothers and His disciples" (John 2:12); during the Lord's preaching in Galilee, His mother and brothers stood outside the house, wanting to speak with Him (Matt. 12:46; see also: Mark 3:31, Luke 8:19). The Jews, marveling at the words of wisdom and teaching of Jesus Christ, exclaimed: "Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, and aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us?" (Matt. 13:55-56; see: Mark 6:3). So, who are the Lord's brothers?

According to the interpretations of the holy fathers of the Orthodox Church, it is believed that the Lord's brothers are the children of St. Joseph the Betrothed from his first marriage. According to the teaching of the Orthodox Church, the Most Holy Mother of God is Ever-Virgin, having conceived the Savior without participation of a husband, therefore the Nativity of the Lord is the mystery of God's action. St. Joseph the Betrothed did not enter into marital relations with the Most Holy Mother of God but lived with Her as the guardian of Her virginity.

Although the Evangelist John writes that the Lord's brothers did not believe in Him (John 7:5), in the Book of Acts and in the epistles of St. Apostle Paul, St. James appears as one of the pillars of the Jerusalem Church (see: Gal. 2:9), and his speech becomes the conclusion of the Apostolic Council (see: Acts 15:13-21). Apparently, the Apostle James went through a path of doubts and unbelief, but then became so firmly established in faith that he became a mentor and example of faith for others. According to tradition, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself appointed James as the first Bishop of Jerusalem. For the holiness of his life, Apostle James was called the Just, and even many Jews who had not accepted Christ treated him with great respect.

Trials and Temptations—What For?

"Why do I have such temptations?"—every believer has asked themselves this question at least once in their life. This question concerns not only modern Christians. The question "why?" can be called the eternal question of faith. The Epistle of the Apostle James begins with an answer to precisely this question, which means that the readers of his letter needed explanation and consolation.

Apostle James begins his answer with a call to joy: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds" (James 1:2). The first rule in overcoming temptations is joy. It is important to understand what kind of temptations St. Apostle James is talking about. First of all, these are trials and tests through persecutions (from the Book of Acts we already know that with the killing of Stephen began a long series of persecutions against Christ's disciples). Why should a Christian rejoice? Because "the testing of your faith produces perseverance" (James 1:3).

Perseverance... The Lord Himself connects perseverance and salvation: "But the one who stands firm to the end will be saved" (Matt. 24:13). Of course, this refers to perseverance during persecutions. But everyone will agree that perseverance is precisely that virtue which we so often lack in ordinary life. Simply learning to endure others is difficult. For "perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything" (James 1:4). Without perseverance one cannot become perfect.

Another necessary virtue, especially in temptations and trials, is wisdom: "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you" (James 1:5). These words of the apostle refer the reader to the distant times of King Solomon's reign, who asked the Lord for "a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong; and it pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked for this" (1 Kings 3:9-10). But wisdom requires faith: "But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind" (James 1:6).

It is precisely the wise and undoubting person who can realize the true cause of temptations: "When tempted, no one should say, 'God is tempting me.' For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each person is tempted when they are dragged away by their own evil desire and enticed" (James 1:13-14). The cause is not somewhere outside the person, and even less is the Lord God guilty of temptations. Each person is tempted by their own passions, which can only be overcome with the Lord's help.

Do Not Show Partiality (Favoritism)

"My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism" (James 2:1). All are equal before the face of God, therefore believers must without partiality fulfill "the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" (James 2:8). Love is incompatible with hypocrisy and partiality. Love is especially violated when "a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, 'Here's a good seat for you,' but say to the poor man, 'You stand there' or 'Sit on the floor by my feet'..." (James 2:2-3). Favoritism is overcome by mercy. Mercy is another virtue that a Christian must acquire along with perseverance and wisdom, because "judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful. Mercy triumphs over judgment" (James 2:13).

Love is manifested, first of all, in deeds. Apostle James asks the question: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them?" (James 2:14). Faith not confirmed by deeds will be like the faith of... demons: "You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder" (James 2:19). Just as evil spirits cannot perform good deeds, so the absence of good deeds in a person does not bring them closer to God. Faith and deeds must become one whole, just as a person consisting of soul and body is whole, because "as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead" (James 2:26).

What Does Perfection Consist Of?

"Those who are never at fault in what they say are perfect, able to keep their whole body in check" (James 3:2). What every person constantly sins with is words and thoughts. A Christian must not only refrain from sinful deeds but also not allow words of condemnation and evil thoughts. After all, Christ Himself said that not only the murderer is subject to condemnation, but also "anyone who is angry with a brother or sister"; whoever says "Raca" (empty person); whoever says "You fool!" (Matt. 5:22). And anyone who "looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" falls into the sin of adultery (Matt. 5:28).

Apostle James compares the human tongue—as an organ of speech—with "a bit we put into the mouth of horses" (James 3:3) and with a ship's rudder, by which "ships are steered wherever the pilot wants to go" (James 3:4). So too "the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts" (James 3:5), and surprisingly for us, "all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and sea creatures are being tamed and have been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison" (James 3:7-8). With the tongue we bless God and curse people, "but this should not be, my brothers and sisters. Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring?" (James 3:10-11).

What Should Be Done?

To acquire the virtues listed by Apostle James—perseverance, mercy, restraint in words and thoughts—first of all, one must "submit yourselves to God. Resist the devil" (see: James 4:7). Then "wash your hands, purify your hearts, grieve, mourn and wail, humble yourselves before the Lord... Do not slander one another" (see: James 4:7, 9-11). The amazing simplicity of the apostolic words. Just a few steps on the path to God—purity of deeds and thoughts, contrition and humility before the Lord.

And most importantly, what the apostle speaks of at the very end of the epistle—prayer: "Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise" (James 5:13). Apostle James suggests praying always—in sorrow and joy. It is easy to turn to God when joy and happiness overflow the heart. One must learn to do this in sorrow as well. The apostle gives the example of righteous Job, who glorified God in the most severe sufferings and losses. Therefore prayer is so necessary in illnesses, for illnesses are always connected with sorrow and suffering. The apostle advises the sick person to "call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven" (James 5:14-15).

Finally, the apostle calls on Christians to be an example for those who want to begin repentance. For this too is a manifestation of love and mercy toward neighbors: "whoever turns a sinner from the error of their way will save them from death and cover over a multitude of sins" (James 5:20).

If after reading the Epistle of Apostle James anyone has the question of why it was written, the answer will be very simple—the apostle gave us a brief guide to the main tasks of Christian life.

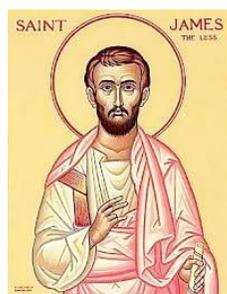
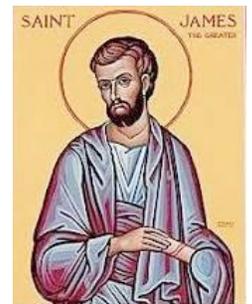
*adapted from
«Orthodox Faith» № 5 (505)
priest Vasilii Kutsenko*

The Apostles with the same name James (or Jacob)

In the Orthodox Christian tradition, there are two saints named James who are recognized as Apostles, both distinct from James the brother of the Lord.

Apostle James the brother of Saint John the Theologian (James the Greater)

Holy Apostle James the Greater, the elder brother of the Apostle John, was named the "Greater" to distinguish him from the other apostle, James the Less. He was the son of Zebedee, a Galilean fisherman, and Salome, who may have been the sister of Mary, the mother of Jesus (Mt 27:56; Mk 15:40). James, along with his brother John, was among the first disciples called by Jesus (Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11). Together with Peter and John, he belonged to the circle of Jesus' three closest disciples. Only they were witnesses to the raising of Jairus's daughter (Mk 5:37; Lk 8:51), saw the transfiguration of Jesus (Mt 17:1; Mk 9:2; Lk 9:28), and accompanied Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mt 26:37; Mk 14:33). James was the first of the apostles to be martyred: he was beheaded during the reign of Herod Agrippa I around 44 A.D. (Acts 12:2). His commemoration day is May 13.



Apostle James, son of Alphaeus (James the Less)

Holy Apostle James the son of Alphaeus one of the Twelve Apostles, was the brother of the holy Evangelist Matthew. He heard the Lord's words and witnessed His miracles. After the Descent of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle James Alphaeus and the Apostle Andrew the First-Called made missionary journeys preaching in Judea, Edessa, Gaza, Eleutheropolis, proclaiming the Gospel, healing all sorts of sickness and disease, and converting many to the path of salvation. Saint James finished his apostolic work in the Egyptian city of Ostrachina, where he was crucified by the pagans. His commemoration day is October 22.

The traditional Fall Social Puschenia and the Celebration of the 115 Years of the Parish, on November the 16th, 2025



Dear brothers and sisters, congratulations on the 115th Anniversary of St. Mary's Church! May God grant good health, peace from Above, and many good years to all our parishioners and friends, and remember in His Kingdom all our departed fathers and mothers – the builders and supporters of this piece of Heaven on earth – our St. Mary's Church!

St. Mary's Parish Fall Social – Puschenia - will be held on Sunday November 16, 2025, at St. Mary's Parish Hall in Nisku after the Liturgy. Dinner will be provided by the church with donations greatly appreciated. Anyone joining is welcome to bring a salad, side dish or dessert.

During the event we encourage you to join in on bidding on the silent auction items available. All proceeding from the silent auction, ruffle lottery, and dinner donations will be going towards future improvements of the church!

If you are so inclined, please feel free to donate an item to the silent auction and ruffle. You can do so by messaging the Facebook page to get in contact with the organizer or approaching any board member, or just bring it with you.

Let us have a good and profitable time before the Christmas

Lent, with the joy of communication, a good meal and our generous and friendly lottery!

Please share this event with friends and family. And we look forward to seeing you there!

The Nativity Fast/Christmas Lent

Begins November 28th and ends January 7th with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy at the Nativity of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ. This 40-day fast is given to us to prepare for the Great Celebration of the Lord's birth in the flesh.

During this period, in addition to abstaining from certain types of food, we should also seek to free ourselves from sins by taking part in the Confession/the Sacrament of Repentance and try to frequently receive the Holy Communion.

Thank you so much from father Evgeniy and the family!

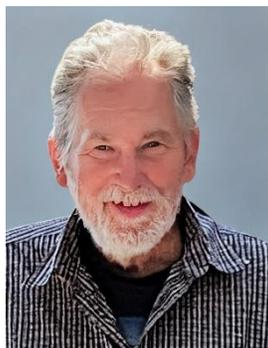


It's been 7 years since we pray together, and my family and I would like to heartfully thank all of you again – the Parish Councils and the parishioners – for being so kind to me; for all your assistance and care, prayers and songs, arranging and decorating the services, supplying the Liturgy with everything we need; for caring about the house and the vehicle, and carrying all my burdens; for kind and reassuring words and deeds; smiles, compassions and wishes! May God bless you all and vouchsafe you peace and good health!

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

Robert Weslie Dobko

Febr. 28, 1954 – Oct. 12, 2025



On October 12th, 2025, Robert Dobko passed away peacefully at the University of Alberta Hospital at the age of 71.

Robert was a lifelong farmer who took great pride in his work and the land he tended. He was able to take part in the activities he loved right until the end of his life, including his daily crop-checking tours in all weather, and he was blessed to combine his last crop of the 2025 season. Beyond the farm, Robert was a historian who held a wealth of knowledge and shared it generously with others.

Robert was an active and devout member of Holy Ascension Russo Greek Orthodox Church at Calmar, serving faithfully as secretary-treasurer and reader. For many years, he labored alongside the church president for the upkeep and operation of both the church and the church cemetery. Together they ensured that everything necessary for the Liturgy and other services was provided for the priest and the people. Robert participated in every Liturgy, reading the Epistle with humility, diligence, and piety. He was present at every commemoration service and every burial.

When the church suffered an intrusion by thieves and sacred items—the holy cup and plate, candle holders, old crosses, and other shrines—were stolen, Robert and the president worked tirelessly to recover them. Through God's mercy, they were blessed to retrieve the majority of the stolen holy items and replenished what could not be recovered.

Robert's dedication to his faith was evident until his final days. At the last Liturgy he attended at Holy Ascension Church on October 5th, he shared, as it turned out, a heartfelt Thanksgiving prayer for his entire life and read the Epistle with exceptional devotion.

Those who knew Robert will remember his warm presence at the café gatherings following services, where his love of conversation and genuine fellowship with others always shone through.

Robert is survived by his siblings, Brian, Jeffery (Kimi), Colleen (James), and Randall (Katharine); nieces and nephews, Tyson (Lily), Gary (Laura), Jordan, Mykala (Conor), and Shelby (Devon).

He was predeceased by his brother, Dennis, and his parents of blessed memory, Steve and Alexandra.

May the Lord grant Robert rest in His heavenly mansions, where there is no sickness, sorrow, or sighing, but life everlasting. Kingdom of Heaven to the newly departed Robert! Memory eternal!

Donations in Robert's memory may be made to the Holy Ascension Russo Greek Orthodox Church at PO Box 799, Calmar, AB, T0C 0V0.

Prayer for the departed

O God of spirits and of all flesh, Who hast trampled down death and overthrown the Devil, and given life to Thy world, do Thou, the same Lord, give rest to the souls of Thy departed servant Robert in a place of brightness, a place of refreshment, a place of repose, where all sickness, sighing, and sorrow have fled away. Pardon every transgression which he has committed, whether by word or deed or thought. For Thou art a good God and lovest mankind; because there is no man who lives yet does not sin, for Thou only art without sin, Thy righteousness is to all eternity, and Thy word is truth. Amen.



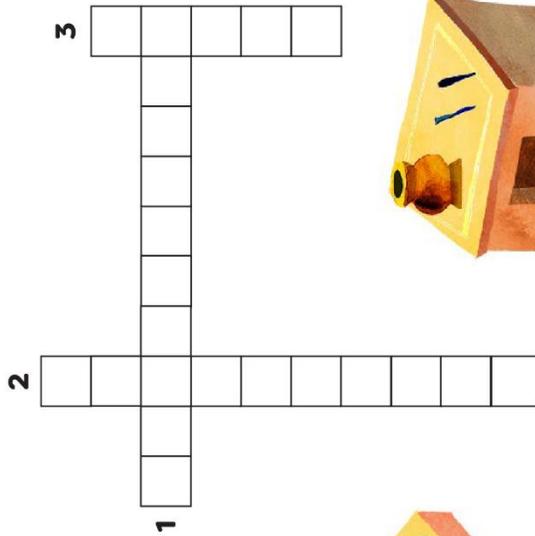
November 21st is the feast of the Synaxis of the Archangels Michael and the Other Bodiless Powers. And among thousands of angels and archangels, there is our guardian *angel*, given to us from the birth and baptism, who cares about us and saves us. How to have this angel closer to us? By doing the commandments of the Gospel – *Evangelion* from the Greek language – which is read at the Church and explained by a priest at every Liturgy! Why are the words so similar? Because *angel* comes from the Greek word ἄγγελος (angelos), which means "messenger". *Evangelion* comes from the Greek word εὐαγγέλιον (euangelion), which means "good message" (or good news).



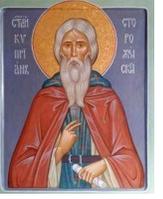
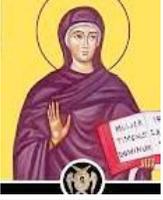
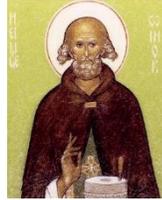
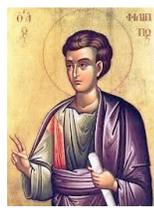
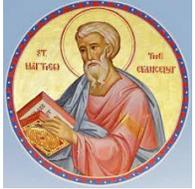
Fill in the crossword puzzle using the following words:

STAND - EVANGELION - EVANGELIST

1. The Saint who wrote a Gospel Book is called an _____.
2. Another word for "Gospel" is _____.
3. When we hear the Gospel at church, we should _____.



November 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><u>2</u> Daylight Saving Time Ends: 2:00 a.m. clocks are turned backward 1 hour 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Barbara Cathedral</p>	<p><u>3</u> St. Hilarion the Great, of Gaza (371-372)</p> 	<p><u>4</u></p>	<p><u>5</u> St. Elisha of Lavrishovo, Belorussia (1250)</p> 	<p><u>6</u></p>	<p><u>7</u> St. Tabitha, the widow resurrected by Apostle Peter</p> 	<p><u>8</u></p>
<p><u>9</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Barbara Cathedral</p>	<p><u>10</u></p>	<p><u>11</u></p> 	<p><u>12</u></p>	<p><u>13</u> Sts. Spyridon and Nicodemus the Prospora bakers, of the Kiev Caves</p> 	<p><u>14</u></p>	<p><u>15</u> Blessed Cyprian of Storozhev, former outlaw</p> 
<p><u>16</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU <i>Fall Social / Puschenia after the Service in the Parish Hall, with a luncheon and silent auction!</i></p>	<p><u>17</u> St. Sylvia, mother of St. Gregory the Dialogist (6th)</p> 	<p><u>18</u></p>	<p><u>19</u> St. Winnoc, abbot, of Flanders (716)</p> 	<p><u>20</u></p>	<p><u>21</u> Synaxis of the Bodiless Powers</p> 	<p><u>22</u></p>
<p><u>23</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – NISKU</p>	<p><u>24</u></p>	<p><u>25</u> Icon of the Mother of God “the Merciful”</p> 	<p><u>26</u></p>	<p><u>27</u> Holy and All-Praised Apostle Philip (ca. 96)</p> 	<p><u>28</u> Beginning of the Nativity Fasting LENT PRAY FAST GIVE</p> 	<p><u>29</u> Holy Apostle and Evangelist Matthew (60)</p> 
<p><u>30</u> 10:00 a.m. – Divine Liturgy – St. Barbara Cathedral</p>						