



“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

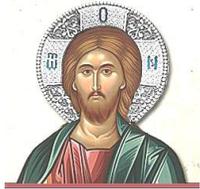
St. Onuphrius - FOAM LAKE (SK)

Whitsuntide (Holy Trinity) - THORSBY

Dormition of Theotokos -MACNUTT (SK)

St. John the Baptist - VEGREVILLE

Sts. Peter & Paul - INSINGER (SK)



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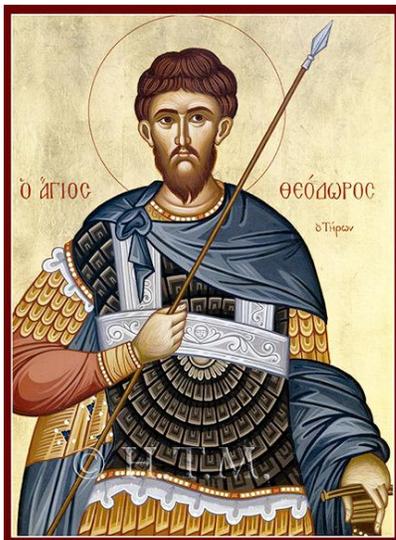
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Great Martyr Theodore the Tyro

The Holy Great Martyr Theodore the Tyro (the Recruit) was a soldier in the city of Amáseia in Pontus (Asia Minor) on the coast of the Black Sea. Saint Theodore was ordered to offer sacrifice to idols, but he proclaimed his faith in Christ the Savior in a loud voice. He was given a few days to think it over, during which time the Saint prayed. Theodore was accused of setting a pagan temple on fire and destroying the idol, and so he was thrown into prison to be starved to death. The Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him there, comforting and encouraging him. When he was brought before the Governor, Theodore boldly confessed his faith, for which he was subjected to new torments and condemned to be burnt alive. The Great Martyr Theodore mounted an enormous pyre, and after he made the Sign of the Cross, the Holy Spirit cooled the flames. Saint Theodore stood in the flames, praising and glorifying God. Then he gave his holy soul into God's hands, and the onlookers saw his soul ascending. This occurred in about the year 306 under the Roman Emperor Galerius (305-311). Unharmd by the fire, Saint Theodore's body was buried under a widow's house in the city of Eukháita, not far from Amáseia. Later, his relics were transferred to Constantinople, to the church which bears his name, and his head is in the city of Gaeto, Italy.

Fifty years after the Saint Theodore's martyrdom, Emperor Julian the Apostate (reigned 361-363), planned to commit an outrage upon the Christians during the first week of Great Lent. He ordered the city magistrate of Constantinople to sprinkle all the food in the marketplaces with blood which had been offered to idols. Saint Theodore appeared to Archbishop Eudoxios in a dream, and told him to inform all the Christians that no one should buy anything in the marketplaces, but to eat boiled wheat with honey (kolyva) instead.

In remembrance of this occurrence, the Orthodox Church commemorates the holy Great Martyr Theodore the Recruit each year on the first Saturday of Great Lent, which is the end of February this year of 2026. On Friday evening, at the Divine Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, after the prayer at the Ambo, the Canon to the Holy Great Martyr Theodore, composed by Saint John of Damascus, is sung. After this, kolyva is blessed and distributed to the faithful.

Holy Great Martyr Theodore, pray God for us!

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord

On Longevity, Expectation, and the Meaning of a Long Life



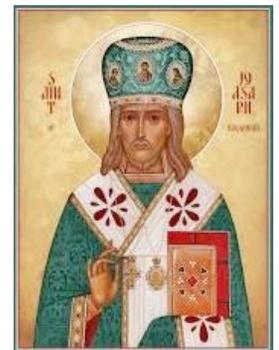
The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord (the Presentation of Christ in the Temple), celebrated on February 15, brings us the image of the righteous Elder Simeon — a man who had lived to an extraordinary old age, waiting faithfully for the fulfillment of God’s promise. According to Holy Tradition, Simeon lived for many years, even centuries, until he was granted to behold Christ the Savior and proclaim the words that have become so dear to the Church: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.”

For some, such extraordinary longevity may seem difficult to believe. Yet the lives of the saints — and even documented historical accounts — remind us that long life, in itself, is not unheard of, though its meaning and causes may differ greatly.

One striking example is found in the life of **St. Joasaph of Belgorod** (commemorated on December 23 / December 10 O.S.). During his archpastoral service, St. Joasaph was known for his tireless journeys throughout his vast diocese, undertaken despite his weak health. He did not seek comfort in the homes of the wealthy, but stayed in humble

peasant dwellings or modest homes of village priests. Nights were spent in prayer, and mornings in the celebration of the Divine Liturgy and pastoral instruction of the faithful.

On one such occasion, St. Joasaph gathered priests from Belgorod and the surrounding churches. Among them was a remarkably aged priest — **one hundred and thirty years old**. His extreme age drew the saint’s attention, and with pastoral love St. Joasaph encouraged the elderly priest to examine his conscience and speak openly.



The priest then confessed a grave event from his past: once, out of fear of a powerful landowner, he had dared to celebrate a second Divine Liturgy on the same day, despite a mysterious warning voice urging him to stop. Disregarding the warning, he proceeded — and later understood that he had spoken against an Angel of God, the guardian of that holy place. St. Joasaph revealed that this unresolved spiritual bond was the reason for the priest’s unnatural longevity.

Through prayer, repentance, and reconciliation, the priest was finally released. After celebrating the Divine Liturgy once more and reading the prayer “Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace,” he peacefully gave up his soul to God, having at last completed his earthly journey.

This account shows that **long life itself is not automatically a blessing**, nor is it always a sign of righteousness. Longevity may have very different causes — spiritual, natural, or even corrective — and finds its true meaning only when a person lives in repentance, faith, and readiness to meet Christ.

There are also historical records that remind us how unusual ages were sometimes carefully noted. Around 2005, while working with church archival documents in Izmail (Odesa region), I personally encountered statistical records of the clergy of the Kishinev Diocese, which mentioned an exceptionally elderly priest — a Bulgarian by origin — who was recorded as being **at least 140 years old**, and who was still serving even at that age.

Such examples may help us better understand why the Church does not focus on the number of years lived, but on **how** those years are lived. The righteous Simeon's long life had meaning because it was lived in expectation of Christ. Outside of such expectation, even great longevity may become a burden rather than a blessing.

Thus, the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord reminds us that a truly blessed life — whether long or short — is one lived godly, in faith, humility, and watchfulness, awaiting the Second Coming of Christ and the life of the age to come.

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Our gratitude! – May God bless you!

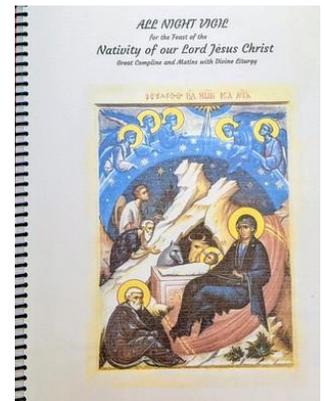


St. Mary's Parish expresses its **profound gratitude to Darcy Doblanko** for clearing the church yard of an exceptionally large amount of snow prior to the Christmas service.

Due to unforeseen scheduling and communication difficulties, municipal snow-clearing services were unable to access the church property in time. Darcy's timely help ensured safe access for parishioners and greatly supported the celebration of the Nativity.

St. Mary's Parish, together with all parishioners, expresses **heartfelt gratitude to our choir director, Cathy Krawchuk**, for preparing and compiling a complete booklet with the full text of the Christmas service (All Night Vigil and Divine Liturgy).

The booklet was carefully updated in 2024–2025 with corrections and additions, and presented in a clear, beautifully organized, booklet-style format. These new printouts were easy to follow and greatly helped both the choir and the congregation during the Christmas services.



The parishioners of St. John's Horen Church (near Tomahawk) and the Orthodox IX Parishes extend their **profound gratitude to Bill Hadzariga, Peter Yakimchuk, Randy Panchuk, and Alexander Panchuk**, for their dedicated efforts in restoring the main cross on the central dome of the church, which had been brought down by strong winds.

Despite the complexity of the task, the group did not lose heart, placing their trust in God. By God's providence, a local company working in the area in late October — contractors servicing nearby power lines — was approached, and through this cooperation the cross was successfully returned to its rightful place atop the church dome.

Continuing the good and righteous tradition of the Baptismal House Blessings, on January 19 we once again traveled from town to town and from house to house, sharing the grace of the Holy Theophany. In each dwelling, the traditional short service was offered: the Troparion was sung, the homes were sprinkled with Holy Water, prayers were read, and the hymn "Many Years" was joyfully proclaimed.

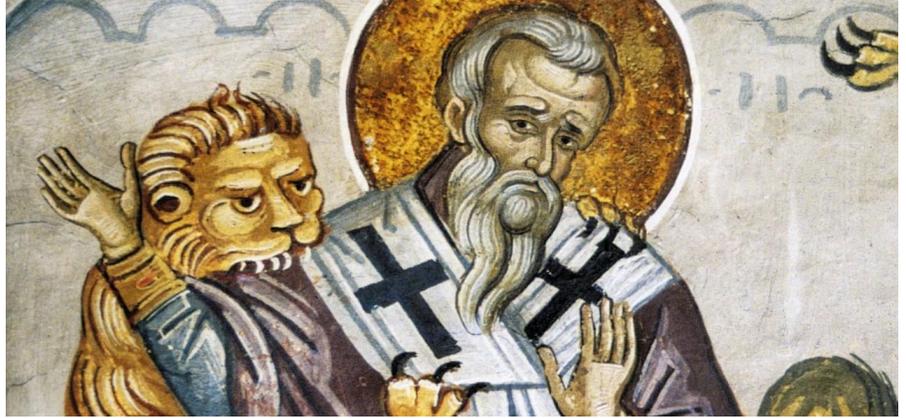
We extend our **sincere thanks to all who welcomed us into their homes, as well as for the reliable guidance of our Parish President, David Borys**, along country and township roads, for the necessary resources, and for the prayers that accompanied this blessed journey.



Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer

Commemoration - February, the 11th

St. Ignatius the God-bearer is of particular importance to us, for he was close to the Apostles, heard the teachings of the Gospel from them directly, and was an eyewitness to the spread and development of the first Christian communities. In his seven Epistles, he provided us with an impression of the Apostolic era.



St. Ignatius was born in Syria, toward the end of the Savior's earthly life. We learn from the account of St. Ignatius' life that he had been that youth whom the Lord took into his arms and said "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." (Matthew 18:3) He is known as «God-bearer» because, with his profound love for the Lord, it was as if he was carrying Him in his heart. St. Ignatius was a disciple of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian. From St. Ignatius' Epistle to the Smyrnians, it is evident that he was particularly close to the Holy Apostle Peter, accompanying him on a number of his apostolic journeys. Shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 72 AD, Evod, one of the 70 Apostles of Christ, reposed, and Ignatius took his place as bishop of Antioch, the capital city of Syria.

St. Ignatius administered the Church of Antioch for 40 years (67-107 AD). In a vision, he was made worthy to witness Divine Services in Heaven, and to hear Angelic chant. Following the example he had witnessed in the Angelic world, he introduced into the Divine Services antiphonal chant, in which two choirs sing in turn, as if calling to one another. From Syria, this type of chant quickly spread throughout the early Church.

In the year 107, during a campaign against the Armenians, Emperor Trajan was passing through Antioch. He was told that Holy Hierarch St. Ignatius was of the Christian confession, that he taught disdain for wealth, observance of celibacy, and not offering sacrifice to the Roman gods. The Emperor summoned the Holy Hierarch and demanded that he cease to preach about Christ. When the Elder refused, he was sent in shackles to Rome, where he was sent to the Coliseum to be torn apart by wild beasts for the amusement of the crowd. On the way to Rome, he wrote the seven Epistles that have survived to our days. In his Epistle [to the Romans], St. Ignatius asks Christians not to try to save him from death. «I entreat you, do not unseasonably befriend me. Suffer me to belong to the wild beasts, through whom I may attain unto God. I am God's grain, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts, that I may be found pure bread.» Upon hearing of the Holy Hierarch's courage, Trajan put an end to persecuting Christians. St. Ignatius' relics were translated to Antioch, but later were returned to Rome and placed in the Church of Hieromartyr St. Clement, Pope of Rome.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians, St. Ignatius writes, «...they who profess to be Christ's shall be apparent by their deeds....» He states, «...hold fast perfectly your faith and love in Jesus Christ, for these are the beginning and the end of life. The beginning is faith, the end is love. And the two blending in unity are of God, and all else follows on these, ending in perfect goodness. No man who professes faith lives in sin, nor if he possesses love, does he live in hatred.»

February 15 is the Greatest Feast of the Meeting of the Lord

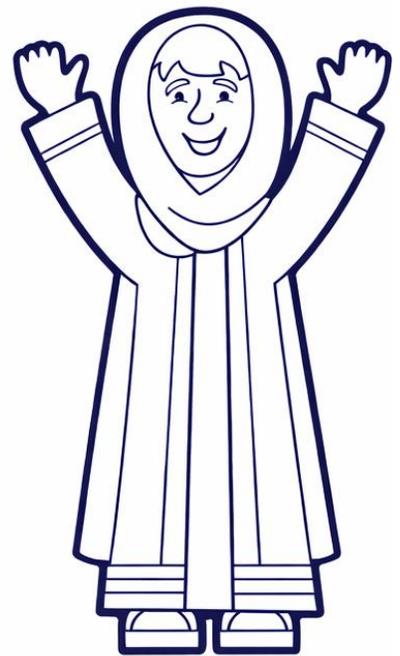


When Jesus was a very little baby, only **40 days old**, Mary and Joseph took Him to the **Temple in Jerusalem**. The Temple was the most important church for the Jewish people. Mary and Joseph brought two small birds as an offering to thank God for the Child, as was the custom at that time. In Jerusalem there lived a **very old and kind man** named **Simeon**. God had promised Simeon that he would not die before he saw the **Savior**, the Son of God. Simeon waited for a very long time and

trusted God. On that day, God told Simeon to go to the Temple. When he saw Mary and Joseph bringing the baby Jesus, Simeon understood that this Child was the Savior. He took Jesus in his arms and thanked God, saying that now he could depart in peace, because his eyes had seen God's salvation. There was also a faithful old woman named **Anna** in the Temple. **She praised God** and told everyone that Jesus was the Christ whom the people had been waiting for. This feast is called the **Meeting of the Lord**, because on this day the Savior met the faithful people who were waiting for Him.

Match the Names + Color the Clothes

1) Who is who? Read about the event we celebrate, look at the picture, and write the correct name (or names) under each character (or characters) in the picture.



2) Color the Clothes

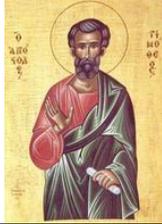
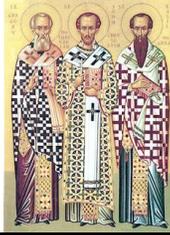
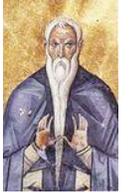
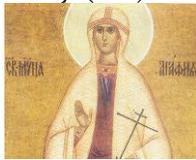
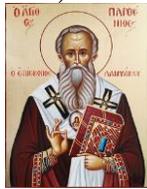
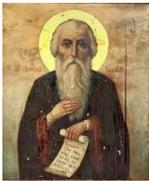
(You can follow the ideas or choose your own!)

- **Mary:** soft colors (often **blue**)
- **Joseph:** **brown** or **green**
- **Simeon:** warm neutral colors (**beige / light brown**)
- **Anna:** joyful colors (**purple / yellow / bright colors**)
- **Jesus:** **light** or **white** swaddle (gentle pastel is OK)

Extra questions (circle or say the answer)

- Who is **the youngest**?
- Who is **the oldest**?
- Who is **praising God**?

February 2026

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
<p><u>1: Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee</u></p> <p>10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's Church at Nisku</p>	<p><u>2</u></p> <p>St. Euthymius the Great (473)</p> 	<p><u>3</u></p>	<p><u>4</u></p> <p>Apostle Timothy of the Seventy (ca. 97)</p> 	<p><u>5</u></p>	<p><u>6</u></p> <p>St. Xenia of St. Petersburg, fool-for-Christ (19th c.)</p> 	<p><u>7</u></p>
<p><u>8: Sunday of the Prodigal Son</u></p> <p>10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara</p>	<p><u>9</u></p>	<p><u>10</u></p> <p>St. Ephraim the Syrian (373-379)</p> 	<p><u>11</u></p>	<p><u>12</u></p> <p>The Three Hierarchs</p> 	<p><u>13</u></p>	<p><u>14</u></p> <p>St. Peter of Galatia, hermit near Antioch</p> 
<p><u>15: <i>The Meeting of the Lord</i></u></p> <p>10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Mary's, Nisku & Blessing of candles Meatfare</p>	<p><u>16</u></p> <p>Holy and Righteous Symeon the God-receiver and Anna the Prophetess, 1 c.</p> 	<p><u>17</u></p>	<p><u>18</u></p> <p>Holy Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily (251)</p> 	<p><u>19</u></p>	<p><u>20</u></p> <p>St. Parthenius, bishop of Lampsacus on the Hellespont (4th c.)</p> 	<p><u>21</u></p>
<p><u>22: Sunday of Forgiveness</u></p> <p>10:00 a.m. - Divine Liturgy at St. Barbara</p>	<p><u>23</u></p>	<p><u>24</u></p> <p>St. Cassian "the Barefoot," of Volokolamsk</p> 	<p><u>25</u></p>	<p><u>26</u></p> <p>Sts. Zoe of Bethlehem; the virgin Photina</p> 	<p><u>27</u></p>	<p><u>28</u></p> <p>Apostle Onesimus of the Seventy</p> 

The dates and time of the upcoming Church Annual Meetings (AGM) in March:

March 7. Saturday – 10:00 am – The Annual “Orthodox IX” Parishes meeting will be held at St. Mary Parish Hall, Nisku.

March 28. Saturday – 1:00 pm – The Annual St. Mary's Parish meeting will be held at Parish Hall, Nisku.