

Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church

1723 E. Fairmount Avenue, Baltimore, MD. 21231
410-276-6171 www.HolyTrinityOrthodox.com



5th Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 4

July 8/21, 2019

Appearance of the "Kazan" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (1579); Holy Great-martyr Procopius of Caesarea in Palestine (303); Righteous Procopius, fool-for-Christ, wonderworker of Ustiug (Vologda) (1303); Righteous Procopius, fool-for-Christ of Usya (Vologda) (17th c.); Hieromartyrs Theodore and Nicholas, priests (1918); Miracle of the Annunciation Icon of the Mother of God at Ustiug (1290); Revered list of an "Kazan" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos: at Moscow (1612), Kazan (1579), Petersburg (1721), "Yaroslavl" (1588), "Viazniky" (1624), "Nizhnelomov" (1543), "Tobolsk" (1661), "Kaplunovka" (1689), "Tambov" (1695), "Penza" (1717), "Peschanka" (1754), "Chimeev" (1770), "Vysochinovsky" (18th c.), "Vyshensky" (1812); "Jacobshtad" Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos (17th c.).

Today's Scriptural Readings:

Romans 10: 1-10 / Mathew 8:28 – 9:1
Philippians 2: 5-11 / Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28

This Week's Liturgical Calendar	
Saturday, July 27 th – 6:00 PM	Vigil Service in the Chapel
Sunday, July 28 th – 10:00 AM <i>Private Confessions start at 9:15 AM</i>	Divine Liturgy in Church

Saints Peter & Paul Chapel
Holy Trinity Orthodox Cemetery at Cathedral Gardens
6480 Elibank Drive, Elkridge, MD. 21075

Divine Services at Holy Trinity are live-streamed at
<https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinitySermons>

Please Join us for Coffee Hour – Today after Services

Today's sponsors: Dr. Pat and Russ Disharoon

Russian Festival Meeting – July 21st

The Kick-Off Meeting of the 2019 Russian Festival will take place on Sunday, July 21st after Divine Liturgy. Everyone is asked to stay and offer your input to make this year's festival even better! Thank you.

Last Sunday's Picnic – *Thank you very much!*

All of us offer our thanks to Vadim Radchenko and Albert Blaszk for coordinating last week's Shashlik Picnic at Cathedral Gardens and to everyone who generously donated all kinds of dishes. We genuinely appreciate everyone who helped with cooking, serving and cleaning up...and of course everyone who attended. Because of all of you, the day was very enjoyable, and the food was great. Approximately 80 people attended. Thank you.

Parish Picnics at 'Cathedral Gardens' / Ray Zaitin Pavilion

On August 18th, Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at Sts. Peter & Paul Chapel located at Cathedral Gardens, our parish cemetery. Afterwards, we will conduct picnics at the Ray Zaitin Pavilion.

Sunday, August 18 – Liturgy at the Chapel (10:00 AM) and our Annual 'Spas' Fish Fry – An expanded menu of various grilled fish and fish kabobs will be offered. More information to come... To help contact Albert Blaszk 410-799-3226 or Vadim Radchenko 410-465-6172.

Brotherhood Crab Fest – Friday, August 16th – 6:30 PM

The St. Alexander Nevsky Brotherhood will sponsor a **Crab Fest on Friday, August 16th** beginning at 6:30 PM at Cathedral Gardens Ray Zaitin Pavilion. All-you-can-eat fresh steamed crabs, corn on the cob and soft drinks will be served. **Reservations are strongly recommended.** Price: \$30/person if RSVP by Wednesday, Aug. 14th; Price at the door: \$45/person. For reservations/ information, call Albert Blaszk: 410-799-3226.

Cleaning Group – Group #3 / Join a Group – Help your brothers and sisters

Group #3 will clean the week of **July 22-17**: Anca & Catalin Frujinoiu, Kyra Tsapkini, Tiberiu and Marie Christine Onuta. Please join a group. We always need more members. Thank you!

This week the cleaning group needs extra volunteers to move many items in church back to their places. Please contact Larisa Hidar 443-986-0047. Please help!

Cleaning Groups Need More Volunteers...please help!

We need more volunteers for our cleaning groups. Only 38 individuals work in eight groups. With a new floor the cleaning responsibilities have changed. Please help you fellow brothers and sisters; join a group. Contact Larisa Hidar for more information: 443-986-0047.

Challenge Grant – Matching Donations

Three families in our parish have pledged to match all donations for the flooring and altar icons on a 1:1 ratio. For every dollar you donate, they will match one dollar, up to \$30,000, towards the Church Restoration Fund. Double the value of your donation: \$20 becomes \$40, \$50

becomes \$100, and \$100 becomes \$200! Special donation forms are on the candle stand in the vestibule of the church.

Water Park Trip – August 17

Again this summer we will conduct a Sunday School trip to Guppy Gulch <http://guppygulchcamp.com> a water park north of Bel Air on a **Saturday August 17th** from 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM. Everyone in the parish is invited. Please make your reservations (\$22 per person) by July 28th. Contact Olga Hansen 410-967-6738.

Convocation of the Patriarchal Parishes

The 14th Convocation of the Patriarchal Parishes is scheduled for September 30 – October 3, 2019 at Antiochian Village in Western PA. In addition to the parish clergy, one (1) lay delegate and one (1) alternate for each parish with up to 250 families/individuals shall participate in the convocation. Delegates are selected from the devout members of the parish. Active pledging members of our parish who are interested in participating in the convocation should submit their names to Victor Marinich 443-512-0985 who will then bring the list to the parish council at its regularly scheduled meeting in August for selection. Our registration must be received by Sept. 7th. Also, at this conference we will discuss plans for celebrating in 2020 the 50th Anniversary of the Patriarchal Parishes in the USA. All parishes are requested to present proposals on how best to mark this milestone. Please discuss your ideas with any member of the parish council. Contact Fr. John for more information.

Please join the WhatsApp group!

As many of you know, the Jerusalem pilgrimage group of 2019 created its WhatsApp group. It was a great decision promoting our Christian unity, human connections, allowing memories and information exchange, and simply bringing us a lot of joy. We stay in touch continuously to this day. During the Centennial celebration of our parish, the incredible feeling of unity of our church family gave birth to the idea- to create our own, independent, church WhatsApp group. We hope that this mode of communication will bring us all even closer together, and the multi-lingual beauty of our unique parish will continue to grow and blossom! Open this link to join the Holy Trinity WhatsApp Group: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/LCMO7XxsMgfBEDiwaHY13L> We sincerely thank Nikolai Shashev and Natalia Gerachenko for creating this for us! O Lord bless!

Birthday / Anniversary Celebrations: July 21-27

We offer our best wishes and birthday congratulations to Nikolai Sharshev (7/21), Anastasia Blazak (7/25) and Drew Pastor (7/27), Angel Day congratulations to Veronica Burbelo (7/25) and Wedding Anniversary congratulations to Nikolai Sharshev & Natalia Gerachenko (7/22) and to Donald-John & Yulia-Ksenia Griffith (07/24). May God bless them with health, prosperity and many years. To include your birthday /anniversary in the bulletin please call Fr. John.

Congratulations Kleo and John

All of us warmly congratulate Kleo and John Shipley on the birth of their daughter, Anna Frances born on July 9th. Both mom and baby are doing well. May God abundantly bless them all. Many years!

Congratulations Fr. Timothy!

We offer our sincere congratulations to Fr. Timothy Barkley who was ordained to the Holy Priesthood on July 19th and will be the rector of St. James Antiochian Orthodox Church in Westminster, MD. Axios! Many Years!

Vigil Candles: On the Altar and near St. Barbara

July 21-27: Candles offered by Tatiana Pearson for the health/salvation of the servants of God: Taisiya, Daniil, Sofia, Tatiana and Stephen. A \$15 donation will keep all three candles lit for one week. Please schedule your candle offering with Elena Loyko 443-537-8978.

Preparing for Holy Communion? *O Lord, Jesus Christ, before I partake of Thy most pure Body and Thy most precious Blood, I run to Thee in Confession to ask forgiveness and admit my fault because: I have angered others, been angry, impatient and resentful; I have not attended Sunday Divine Liturgy and missed other services; I have been harsh and judgmental toward others; I have been prideful, lustful, selfish and stubborn; I have neglected prayer, been lazy, ignored the fasts and have not been to Confession in several weeks... O Lord, help me to more worthily prepare to receive the Holy Mysteries...*

Special Petitions for the Unity of the Orthodox Church

Again we pray to the Lord and our Savior to preserve the Orthodox Church abiding in the whole world in unity and right belief, and to grant her peace and tranquility, love and consent, let us all say, Lord, hearken and have mercy.

Again we pray to look upon the Holy Orthodox Church with the goodness of heart and with mercy, and to preserve her from divisions and schisms, from hostility and disorder, so her unity will not be diminished or shaken, but Thine Thrice-Holy name be glorified in her, let us all say, Lord, hearken and have mercy.

Submit your 2019 Pledge

The mission of our parish is to spread the Word of God, to grow, to expand, to improve and not just to preserve our traditions. Our parish shouldn't become stale, but pursue holiness. We strive to fulfill the mission of our parish, through prayer, work and sacrifice. Prayer – because we are called to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17); work – because we are taught to increase the talents given to us (Matt. 25: 14-30); and sacrifice – because "everyone to whom much is given, from him will much be required" (Luke 12:48).

When you are generous, you are not bestowing a gift, but repaying a debt. Everything you possess materially comes from God, who created all things. And every spiritual and moral virtue you possess is through divine grace. Thus you owe everything to God. More than that, God has given you his Son, to show you how to live: how to use your material possessions, and how to grow in moral and spiritual virtue. St. John Chrysostom

Please Remember in Your Prayers...

Archpriest Michael Hatrak; **Deacon Michael** Bishop; **Mat. Myra** Kovalak; **Mat. Klavdiya** Burbelo; **Kh. Frederica** Mathewes-Green; **Nun Elizabeth**; **Nun Magdalena**; **Mat. Natalia** Kosich; **Priest Gregory** and **Mat. Diane** Winsky; **Mat. Catherine** Kowalchik; **Marie** Vass; **Charles** Snipes; **Arthur-Stephen** Lisowsky; **Yelena** Radchenko; **Lydia** Zorina; **Tatiana**; **Katherine** Plaskowitz; **Philip** Plaskowitz; **Bernadine** Borawick; **Julia** Aymold; **Lilli Ann** Hoffman; **Lara** Marinich; **Oleg** Marinich; **Ioann** and **Galina** Zernetkin; **Monika-Anastasia & Stephanie** Handley;

Blanche-Julia Stolkovich; **Ekaterina** Koroleva; **Nina** Lewis; **Maryann** Black; **Lyudmila, Anton & Aleksander** Karnup; **John Alexander** Bylen; **Katherine** Garrett; **Stephen** Kaminitsky; **John-Thomas** Planinshek; **Kenneth** Pukita; **William** and **Ann** Ferkile; **Irina** Kononova; **Petr** and **Lyudmila** Borodkin; **Anthony** Bakie; **Svetlana & Aleksey**; **Alla**; **Anna**; **Alla**; **Raisa, Zinaida**; **Joseph** Germano; **Pavel, Vladimir, Valentina, Nina, and Maria**; **Maria** Pappas; **Bonnie** Duke; **Joseph** Lacomy; **Diana** Radchenko; **Aleksey & Lidia** Potapov; **Oleg** and **Andrei**; **Vitaliy, Tatiana, Olena & Nicholas** Berchuk; **David, Selina-Sophia, John, Maryann, David, Joseph, Lisa Ann** Eichelberger; **Cynthia and Bill (Basil)** Popomaronis; **Andrei, Marina, Valentina and Vladimir**; **Archpriest** Cezar, **Mat. Christina, Cezara–Maria, Darius, Justina, Christian**; **Victoria** Lardiero; **Richard** Wright; **Valentina** Shultieva; **Shanna, Stephen, Trent-Michael, Grant-Alexander, Adalynn** Lisowsky; **Julie** Smith; **Tayisia** Solvieva; **Lubov** Pavuk; **Leonid and Zoya**; **Jayne** Sudol; **Rita** and **Richard** Herber, **Mary** Orzolek, **Shane-Michael** Sierakowski; **George** Matassov; **Janice** DesLauriers; **John** DesLauriers.

Next Council Meeting: Tuesday, July 23rd – 7:00 PM in the Church Hall

Fr. John Vass, Rector 443-527-7067	Fr. Deacon Michael Bishop: 410-563-0472
Victor Marinich, <i>Council President</i> : 443-512-0985	Vadim Radchenko, <i>Vice President</i> : 410-465-6172
Andrei Burbelo, <i>Recording Secretary</i> : 443-567-6031	Albert Blaszak, <i>Treasurer</i> : 410-799-3226
Oxana Chumak-Strianese, <i>Stewardship Chair</i> : 831-673-1937	Anna-Zumrat Shkurba <i>Member-At-Large</i> : 443-857-8541
Natallia Makarava <i>Sisterhood President</i> : 443-625-8470	Michael Mickel, <i>Cemetery Manager</i> : 410-666-2870

The Appearance of the Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God in the City of Kazan (1579)

The Appearance of the Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God in the City of Kazan (1579): On 1 October 1552, on the feast day of the Pokrov-Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God, at night, tsar Ivan IV in heading the Russian forces made ready for a decisive assault against the Tatar city of Kazan, and suddenly he heard the peeling of the Moscow bells. The tsar realised that this was a sign of the mercy of God: that through the prayers of the mighty commander-in-chief, the Lord deigned that the Kazan people should be converted to Him.

The surrender of Kazan on the feast of the Pokrov-Protection of the Most Holy Mother of God completed a course of events, initiated way back centuries earlier in the year 1164 by holy Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky (+ 1174, Comm. 4 July), against the Moslem Volga Bulgars. With the taking of Kazan, the Volga – the chief waterway route of the land, became finally a Russian river. And from Tatar servitude were liberated 60,000 Russian people. The enlightenment of the Tatars with the light of the Gospel truth was started. There were the first martyrs – Saints Peter and Stephen (Comm. 24 March). The newly established Kazan diocese entered into the complex of the Russian Church and was soon illustrious in its own archbishops: Saint Gurii (+ 1563, Comm. 5 December) and Saint German (+ 1567, Comm. 6 November).

But the advance of Orthodoxy was especially enabled amongst the Volga Mahometans by the appearance, on 8 July 1579, of the wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God in the city of Kazan. Preaching the Gospel had been a difficult matter in this conquered kingdom amongst the incorrigible Moslems and pagans. The Most Holy Mother of God, Mediatrix of preachers of the Word of God, Who even during Her earthly life shared in the evangelic work of the holy Apostles, – in looking down upon the efforts of the Russian missionaries, She did not hesitate to send them Heavenly help, manifest through Her wonderworking Icon.

On 28 June 1579 there occurred a terrible blaze which had started around the church of Saint Nikolai of Tula. This fire destroyed part of the city and turned to ashes half of the Kazan Kremlin. The adherents of Mahomet gloated, supposing, that God had become angered against the Christians. "The faith of Christ, – says the chronicler, – is rendered a fable and an outrage". But the fire at Kazan was the foreboding of the ultimate fall of Islam and affirmation of Orthodoxy throughout all the land of the Golden Horde, the future East portion of the Russian realm.

The city began quickly to rise up from its ruins. Together with others who had been burned out, and not far from where the blaze had started, – was built the house of the musketeer Daniil Onuchin. The Mother of God appeared in a dream to his nine-year-old daughter Matrona and commanded her to find Her icon, hidden in the ground by secret confessors of Orthodoxy way back still in the time of Moslem rule. But to the words of a mere girl they paid no attention. Thrice the Mother of God appeared and pointed out the spot, where the wonderworking icon had been concealed. Finally, Matrona with her mother began to dig in the indicated place and they found the sacred icon. To this place of the miraculous discovery there came archbishop Jeremii at the head of his clergy and transported the holy image into a church of Saint Nicholas situated nearby. From there, after a molieben, amidst a church procession they transferred it to the Annunciation cathedral – the first Orthodox temple in the city of Kazan, erected by tsar Ivan the Terrible. During the time of the procession there occurred the healing of two blind men – Iosif and Nikita.

A copy of the Icon, which had appeared at Kazan, together with an account of the circumstances of its discovery and descriptions of the miracles was dispatched in 1579 to Moscow. Tsar Ivan the Terrible gave orders to build at the place of its appearance a temple in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, to install therein the holy icon, and to found there also a women's monastery. Matrona and her mother, instrumental in finding the sacred icon, accepted monastic tonsure at this monastery.

At the St Nicholas church, where the first molieben had been made before the Kazan Icon, was serving at this time as priest the future Saint Ermogen, Patriarch of Moscow (+ 1612, Comm. 17 February). Fifteen years later, in 1594, now as Metropolitan of Kazan, he compiled a report of the holy events to which he had been an eyewitness and participant: "Account and Miracles of the Most Pure Mother of God from Her Venerable and Gloriously Manifest Image at Kazan". In this account are descriptions with great factual precision regarding many an instance of healing, from the wonderworking Icon through the prayers of believers. The "Account" manuscript – written by His Holiness Patriarch Ermogen – was in its entirety reproduced: "Report about the Wonderworking Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God", with an introduction by A. I. Sobolevsky, Moscow 1912.

The not-large Icon, discovered by the girl Matrona in the then recently annexed foreign frontier of the Russian realm, soon became a national sacred item, a sign of the Heavenly protection of the Mother of God, manifest for all the Russian Church, since the soul of the Orthodox nation sensed the special participation of the All-Pure Lady Mother of God in the historical destiny of its "Rodina" native-land. Not by mere chance was the Kazan Image a copy of the ancient Blakhernae Icon (Comm. 7 July) written by the holy Evangelist Luke and considered in its iconographic type to be of icons named "Hodegetria" ("Putevoditel'nitsa", "Way-Guide"). Many a time the "Kazan

Mother" showed the way to victory for Russian Orthodox soldiers in the fulfilling of their sacred duty for God and Country.

In the year of its appearance at Kazan (in other sources two years afterwards) there began the remarkable onward march "Beyond Kazan" (beyond the Ural Mountains) envisioned by Blessed German (+ 1567, Comm. 6 November), and taken by the Cossack ataman Ermak Timofeevich Povol'sky (+ 1584), an effort crowned finally with the annexation of Siberia. With a graced energy and coursing about in miraculous manner it proved sufficient, that for some several decades Russian explorer-missionaries should proceed to the East, "to meet the sun", going many thousands of kilometers. On the feast day of the Pokrov (Protection, 1 October) in 1639 they sailed out on their first voyage along the Pacific Ocean, preaching salvation to the surrounding peoples.

Orthodox soldiers and missionaries went east, while apostates fled to the West. Jesuits seemingly attempted to drown Rus' at the beginning XVII Century with tumultuous waves of sovereign-imposters and "rapacious people". It was indeed through Divine Providence, during the period of the Polish Occupation (1605-1612), which the nation termed the "Time of Troubles", that the Russian Church was headed by a great confessor of Orthodoxy – the Priest Martyr Ermogen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', who had been among those first to venerate the Kazan Icon of the Most Holy Mother of God, becoming the author of the "Account" about it and the Service to it.

During the difficult days when Moscow was occupied by the Polish, and discord and disorder having spread throughout all the land, this resolute sufferer for the Holy Faith and Fatherland was held under guard, and he managed secretly to send off to Nizhni Novgorod an appeal: "Write to Kazan to metropolitan Emphrem, and let there be sent a document of direction to the regiments for the boyars and to the Cossack forces, that they should rise up in force for the faith, put an end to the plundering and preserve brotherhood, and should vow to pledge their souls for the house of the All-Pure and the wonderworkers and for the faith, let there be done. And in every city... write thus in my name". The Nizhni Novgorod people responded to the appeal of the archpastor. Prince Dimitrii Mikhailovich Pozharsky headed the gathered militia.

The Kazan forces, joining in with the militia, brought with them a copy of the wonderworking Kazan Icon, which they gave to prince Dimitrii at Yaroslavl'. The Most Holy Lady Mother of God took the militia under Her protection, and by Her intercession Russia was saved. The Russian forces experienced tremendous difficulties: inward hostilities, and insufficient armament and supplies. In the bad weather of autumn, the Russian army moved on to storm Moscow, situated in the hands of the Polish.

A three-day fast and fervent prayer before the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God inclined the Lord to mercy. Within the besieged Kremlin at this time was held captive the Hellas Archbishop Arsenios (Arsenii, afterwards Suzdal' archbishop, + 1626, 13 April), who had arrived from Greece and was grievously ill from his journeying and being shaken about. By night the cell of Saint Arsenii was suddenly lit up by a Divine light, and he beheld the Monk Sergei of Radonezh (Comm. 5 July and 25 September), who said: "Arsenii, our prayers are heard; through the intercession of the Mother of God the Divine judgement of the Fatherland is changed to mercy; on the morrow Moscow wilt be in the hands of its besiegers and Russia saved".

As though in proof of the veracity of this prophecy, the archbishop received healing from his sickness, and then this joyful occurrence became known to the Russian forces. On the following day, 22 October 1612, Russian forces, inspired by the vision, seized a sweeping victory and took the Chinese-quarter, and 2 days later – the Kremlin itself.

On Sunday, 25 October, Russian forces triumphantly in church procession made entry into the Kremlin, bearing the Kazan Icon. At the Skull-Place ("Lobnoe mesto", i.e. the public execution spot), the church procession was met by Archbishop Arsenii emerging from the Kremlin, bearing the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, saved by him in his captivity. Moved by the effect of the meeting of the two wonder-working icons of the Mother of God, the people with tears made prayer to the Heavenly Mediatrix.

With the expulsion of the Polish from Moscow, – according to the Nikonov chronicle, prince Dimitrii Pozharsky had the holy Kazan Icon placed in his own parish church of the Entry in the Temple of the Most Holy Mother of God, at Lubyanka in Moscow. Afterwards, at the expense of the prince-patriot, there was erected the Kazan cathedral on Red Square. The holy icon, which had been with the armies of Pozharsky during the liberation of Moscow, was transferred in 1636 into the newly constructed temple, the Kazan cathedral. At present, this holy image is situated in the Patriarch's Theophany cathedral in Moscow.

In commemoration of the liberation of Moscow from the Polish, a special feast day in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God was established under 22 October. At first this celebration was made only at Moscow, but from 1649 it became an all-Russian celebration.

In 1709, before the Poltava Battle, Peter the Great prayed with his soldiery in front an icon of the Kazan Mother of God (that from the village of Kaplunovka). In 1721 Peter transferred one of the copies of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God from Moscow to Peterburg, where at first the icon was placed in a chapel, then at the Alexandro-Nevisky Lavra monastery, and from 1737 it was in the church of the Nativity of the Mother of God on Nevsky Prospekt. In 1811, before the Fatherland War, the holy icon of the Heavenly Mediatrix was transferred into the newly constructed Kazan cathedral.

In 1812 the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God provided blessing for Russian soldiers in repulsing the French invasion. On the feast of the Kazan Icon, 22 October 1812, Russian detachments under the command of Miloradovich and Platov destroyed the Davu rearguard. This was the first outstanding blow against the French after their departure from Moscow, and in which the enemy lost seven thousand men. And on this day snow fell, bitter frosts began, and the army that had subdued Europe began to falter.

Numerous wonderworking copies of the Kazan Icon in Rus' glorify the All-Pure Mother of God, Protectress of the Orthodox Russian people. Of the plethora of icons of the Mother of God venerated in the Russian Orthodox Church, none is more widespread in number than the Kazan Icon. For all Orthodox Rus' it is esteemed as holy, and to it oftenest of all do they turn their gaze in misfortunes and illnesses, crying out: "O fervent Mediatrix, Mother of the Lord Most-High, for all pray Thine Son Christ our God... with everything grant benefit and save all, O Virgin Birth giver of God, and be Thou the Divine protection for Thine servant".

With blessings of grace are dispersed icons of the All-Pure Mother of God throughout the extent of the Russian land, truly imaging the Heavenly protection, with Her constant intercession sent down by Her Divine Son, having offered Himself in sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. The ancient Vladimir holy Image of the Mother of God preserves and blesses the Northern bounds, the Smolensk and Pochaev Icons guard the West, and in the East, to the ends of the land shine the rays of the inexhaustible grace of the wonderworking Kazan Image of our All-Pure Mother.

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The Holy Great Martyr Procopius

The Holy Great Martyr Procopius, in the world Neanius, a native of Jerusalem, lived and suffered during the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305). His father, an eminent Roman by the name of Christopher, was a Christian, but the mother of the saint, Theodosia, remained a pagan. He was early deprived of his father, and the young lad was raised by his mother. Having received an excellent secular education, he was introduced to Diocletian in the very first year of the emperor's accession to the throne, and he quickly advanced in government service. Towards the year 303, when open persecution against Christians was enacted, Neanius was dispatched as a proconsul to Alexandria with orders to mercilessly persecute the Church of God. But on the way to Egypt, near the Syrian city of Apameia, Neanius had a vision of the Lord Jesus, just as once formerly had happened with Saul on the road to Damascus. A Divine voice exclaimed: "Neanius, why persecutest thou Me?" Neanius asked: "Who art Thou, Lord?" – "I am the crucified Jesus, the Son of God". And at this moment in the air appeared a radiant cross. Neanius sensed in his heart an inexpressible joy and spiritual happiness and he was transformed from being a persecutor into instead a zealous follower of Christ. From this point in time Neanius became fondly disposed towards Christians and struggled victoriously only against the barbarian pagans.

But for the saint there transpired the words of the Savior, that "the enemies for a man – are of his own household" (Mt. 10: 36). His mother, a pagan herself went to the emperor with a complaint against her son, of not reverencing the ancestral gods. Neanius was summoned to the procurator Judaeus Justus, where he was solemnly handed the missive of Diocletian. Having read through the missive filled with its blasphemies, Neanius quietly before the eyes of everyone tore it up. This itself was already a crime, which the Romans regarded as an "insult to authority". Neanius was held under guard and in chains sent off to Caesarea Palestine, where the Apostle Paul once languished. After terrible torments they threw the saint into a dank prison. By night in the prison room there shone a light, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, having come with luminous Angels, made Baptism for the suffering confessor, and gave him the name Procopius.

Repeatedly they led Saint Procopius to the courtroom, demanding him to renounce Christ and anew they subjected him to tortures. The stolidity of the martyr and his fiery faith brought down God's abundant grace viewing the execution. Inspired by the deed of Procopius, beneath the sword of the executioner went many of the holy prisoner's former guards and Roman soldiers together with their tribunes Nicostrates and Antiochus. And with martyr's crowns was sealed the

faith of 12 Christian Women, having themselves come to the gates of the Caesarea Praetorium. Struck by the great faith of the Christians and their courage and having seen the firmness of her son in bearing terrible sufferings, Theodosia became repentant and stood amidst the line of confessors and was executed. Finally, the new procurator, Flavian, convinced of the uselessness of the tortures, sentenced the holy Great Martyr Procopius to beheading by the sword. By night Christians took up the much-tortured body, and having wrapped it in grave-clothes, with tears and prayers they committed it to earth (+ 303). © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos.