

Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church

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



6th Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 5

July 15/28, 2019

Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Six Councils; Martyrs Cyricus (Quiricus) and his mother Julitta of Tarsus (305); **Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir (in holy baptism Basil), enlightener of the Russian Land (1015)**; Synaxis of the Kievan Saints; Martyr Abudimus of the isle of Tenedos (4th c.); Hieromartyr Peter, deacon (1938).

Today's Scriptural Readings:

Romans 12: 6-14 / Matthew 9: 1-8
Hebrews 13: 7-16 / John 17: 1-13
Galatians 1: 11-19 / John 10: 1-9

We magnify thee, O holy Prince Vladimir, equal of the apostles, and we honor the memory of thee who trampled the idols underfoot and has enlightened the whole land of Rus' with holy baptism.

This Week's Liturgical Calendar	
Saturday, August 3 rd – 6:00 PM	Vigil Service in the Chapel
Sunday, August 4 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: Larisa Hidar, Ludmila Maltseva and Elena Shultieva

Panikhida Today

Today we will serve a panikhida for +Ekaterina and +Vitaliy, the parents of Ludmila Maltseva.
Memory Eternal.

New Flooring Installed

The last phase of our church renovations – new tile and carpeted flooring – has been completed. New porcelain tile was installed in the altar, the main aisle, the front of the church and in the vestibule. And new carpeting installed under the pews, along the sides and in the back of the church. We sincerely thank Fazlidin and Larisa Hidar for their workmanship on the tile. They worked hard to ensure that the subflooring and tile installation were of high quality. And we thank Michael Mickel for his overall coordination of the work and monitoring of the carpet installation. Also, we thank everyone who helped with cleaning and moving items back and forth over the last several weeks. We sincerely appreciate everyone's dedication, hard work and generous donations. God bless you!

Challenge Grant – Matching Donations – Will soon close...make your 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.

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

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.

Brotherhood Crab Fest – Friday, August 23rd – 6:30 PM

The St. Alexander Nevsky Brotherhood will sponsor a **Crab Fest on Friday, August 23rd** 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. 21st; Price at the door: \$45/person. For reservations/ information, call Albert Blaszk: 410-799-3226

Cleaning Group – Group #4 / Join a Group – Help your brothers and sisters
Group #4 will clean the week of **July 29 – Aug. 3**: Natallia Makarava, Mikhail Merzliakov, Olga Hansen, Brian and Katherine Cardell. Please join a group. We always need more members. Thank you!

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. Please contact Larisa Hidar for more information: 443-986-0047.

Russian Festival 2019 – October 18, 19, 20

www.russfest.org

Plan your vacations accordingly so you have the time to help your parish during these important days.

On the following days we will prepare food for the Russian Festival in the hall.

Saturday, Aug. 31 st	<i>Bread Baking</i>	Saturday, Sept. 28 th	<i>Bread Baking</i>
Saturday, Sept. 7 th	<i>Bread Baking</i>	Sunday, Sept. 29 th	<i>Goluptsi (Stuffed cabbage)</i>
Sunday, Sept. 8 th	<i>Chicken Kotlety</i>	Saturday, Oct. 5 th	<i>Bread Baking</i>
Saturday, Sept. 14 th	<i>Bread Baking</i>	Sunday, Oct. 6 th	<i>Baking Desserts</i>
Sunday, Sept. 15 th	<i>Vareniki</i>	Saturday, Oct. 12 th	<i>Bread Baking</i>
Sunday, Sept. 22 nd	<i>Vareniki</i>	Sunday, Oct. 13 th	<i>Baking Tea Balls</i>
<i>For details contact Albert Blaszak alb42@verizon.net 410-799-3226 We need everyone's help.</i>			

1. Soda / Water Donation Drive Underway ! Please help us reduce our Festival expenses...buy a few cases of soft drinks (12 oz. cans) and bottled water (½ liter) over the next several weeks as they go on sale in area supermarkets. We need Coke, Pepsi, Diet Coke, Diet Pepsi, Sprite, Fanta (**no generics**). Water: Deer Park, Aquafina, etc. Thank you for your generosity !!!

2. Festival Desserts Table **We need a Desserts Chairperson**, someone who will coordinate donations of desserts to supply our desserts table. And, we ask your help to increase both the quantity and variety of items. Please contact Art Lisowsky for more information: 410-206-0073.

3. Artwork needed for this year's Festival program book cover. Past covers are found at: <http://www.russfest.org/programbook.htm>. **Rough sketches are due August 25th. Final drawings are due September 7th.** Russian themed artwork in any form – water color, charcoal or pencil drawings – are welcomed. The winning picture will be used for the cover of the program book. The original artwork submissions will be framed and sold at the festival in support of the church. Contact Michael Mickel for info: 410-666-2870.

4. Russian Festival Meeting – Wednesday, July 31st at 7:00 PM. All are welcome. Please help!

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.

Vigil Candles: On the Altar and near St. Barbara

July 28 – Aug. 3: Candles offered by Maltsev Family for the health/salvation of the servant of God: Katerina Pyatova. A \$15 donation will keep all three candles lit for one week. Please schedule your candle offering with Elena Loyko 443-537-8978.

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: Thursday, August 29th – 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

Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Great Prince Vladimir

Few names in the annals of history can compare in significance with the name of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, the Baptiser of Rus', who stands forever at the onset of the foreordained spiritual destiny of the Russian Church and the Russian Orthodox people. Vladimir was the grandson of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Olga, and he was the son of Svyatoslav (+ 972). His mother, Malusha (+ 1001) – was the daughter of Malk Liubechanin, whom historians identify with Mal, prince of the Drevlyani. Having subdued an uprising of the Drevlyani and conquered their cities, Princess Olga gave orders to execute prince Mal, for his attempt to marry her after his murder of her husband Igor, and she took to herself the children of Mal, Dobrynya and Malusha. Dobrynya grew up to be a valiant brave warrior, endowed with a mind for state affairs, and he was later on an excellent help to his nephew Vladimir in matters of military and state administration.

The "capable girl" Malusha became a Christian (together with Great Princess Olga at Tsar'grad), but she preserved in herself a bit of the mysterious darkness of the pagan Drevlyani forests. And thus she fell in love with the austere warrior Svyatoslav, who against the will of his mother Olga made her his wife. The enraged Olga, reckoning as unseemly the marriage of her "housekeeper" and captive servant with her son Svyatoslav, heir to the Great Kiev principality, sent Malusha away to her own native region not far off from Vybut'. And there in about the year 960 was born the boy, called with the Russian pagan name – Volodimir, meaning peaceful ruler, ruling with a special talent for peace.

In the year 970 Svyatoslav set out on a campaign from which he was fated not to return. He had divided the Russian Land amongst his three sons. At Kiev Yaropolk was prince; at Ovrucha, the centre of the Drevlyani lands, there was Oleg; at Novgorod there was Vladimir. His first years as prince we see Vladimir as a fierce pagan. He heads a campaign, in which the whole of pagan Rus' is sympathetic to him, against Yaropolk the Christian, or in any case, according to

the chronicles, "having given great freedom to the Christians", on 11 July 978 he enters into Kiev, having become the "sole ruler" of the Kiev realm, "having subdued the surrounding lands, some – by peaceful means, and the unsubmitive ones – by the sword".

Young Vladimir indulged himself in a wild sensuous life, though far from being the libertine that they sometimes portray him. He "shepherded his land with truth, valor and reason", as a good and diligent master, of necessity he extended and defended its boundaries by force of arms, and in returning from military campaign, he made for his companions and for all Kiev liberal and merry feastings.

But the Lord prepared him for another task. Where sin increases, there – in the words of the Apostle, – grace abounds. "And upon him did come visitation of the Most High, and the All-Merciful eye of the Good God didst gaze upon him, and shine forth the thought in his heart, of understanding the vanity of idolous delusion, and of appealing to the One God, Creator of all things both visible and invisible". The matter of the acceptance of Baptism was facilitated through external circumstances. The Byzantine empire was in upheaval under the blows of the mutinous regiments of Bardas Skliros and Bardas Phokas, each of which sought to gain the imperial throne. In these difficult circumstances the emperors – the co-regent brothers Basil the Bulgar-Slayer and Constantine, turned for help to Vladimir.

Events unfolded quickly. In August 987 Bardas Phokas proclaimed himself emperor and moved against Constantinople, and in Autumn of that same year the emissaries of emperor Basil were at Kiev. "And having exhausted his (Basil's) wealth, it compelled him to enter into an alliance with the emperor of the Russes. They were his enemies, but he besought their help, – writes one of the Arab chronicles of events in the 980's. – And the emperor of the Russes did consent to this, and did make common cause with him".

In reward for his military help, Vladimir besought the hand of the emperors' sister Anna, which for the Byzantines was an unheard of audacity. Princesses of the imperial lineage did not go off to marry "barbarian" rulers, even though they be Christian. At this same time the emperor Otto the Great was seeking the hand of this Anna for his son, and he was refused, but herein regarding Vladimir Constantinople was obliged to consent.

An agreement was concluded, according to which Vladimir had to send in aid to the emperors six thousand Varangians, to accept holy Baptism, and under these conditions he would receive the hand of the imperial daughter Anna. Thus in the strife of human events the will of God directed the entering of Rus' into the graced bosom of the Ecumenical Church. Great Prince Vladimir accepted Baptism and dispatched the military assistance to Byzantium. With the aid of the Russians, the mutineers were destroyed and Bardas Phokas killed. But the Greeks, gladdened by their unexpected deliverance, were in no hurry to fulfill their part of the agreement.

Vexed at the Greek duplicity, Prince Vladimir "hastened to collect his forces" and he moved "against Korsun, the Greek city", the ancient Chersonesus. The "impenetrable" rampart of the Byzantine realm on the Black Sea fell, and it was one of the vitally important hubs of the economic and mercantile links of the empire. This blow was so much felt, that its echo resounded throughout all the regions of Byzantium.

Vladimir again had the upper hand. His emissaries, the vovoda-commanders Oleg and Sjnbern soon arrived in Tsar'grad for the imperial daughter. Eight days passed in Anna's preparation, during which time her brothers consoled her, stressing the significance of the opportunity before her: to enable the enlightening of the Russian realm and its lands, and to make them forever friends of the Romano-Byzantine realm. At Taurida Saint Vladimir awaited her, and to his titles there was added a new one – Caesar (tsar', emperor). It required the haughty rulers of Constantinople to accede also in this – to bestow upon their new brother-in-law the Caesar (i.e. imperial) insignia. In certain of the Greek historians, Saint Vladimir is termed from these times as a "mighty basileios-king", he coins money in the Byzantine style and is depicted on it with the symbols of imperial might: in imperial attire, and on his head – the imperial crown, and in his right hand – the sceptre with cross.

Together with the empress Anna, there arrived for the Russian cathedra-seat metropolitan Michael – ordained by holy Patriarch Nicholas II Chrysobergos, and he came with his retinue and clergy, and many holy relics and other holy things. In ancient Chersonesus, where each stone brings to mind Saint Andrew the First-Called, there took place the marriage-crowning of Saint Vladimir and Blessed Anna, both reminiscent and likewise affirming the oneness of the Gospel good-news of Christ in Rus' and in Byzantium. Korsun, the "empress dowry", was returned to Byzantium. In the Spring of 988 the great prince with his spouse set out through the Crimea, Taman' and the Azov lands, which had come into the complexion of his vast realm, on the trip of return to Kiev. Leading the great princely cortege with frequent moliebens and incessant priestly singing they carried crosses, icons and holy relics. It seemed, that the Ecumenical Holy Church was moving into the spacious Russian land, and renewed in the font of Baptism, Holy Rus' came forth to meet Christ and His Church.

There ensued the unforgettable and quite singular event in Russian history: the morning of the Baptism of the Kievans in the waters of the River Dneipr. On the evening beforehand, Saint Vladimir declared throughout the city: "If anyone on the morrow goeth not into the river – be they rich or poor, beggar or slave – that one be mine enemy". The sacred wish of the holy prince was fulfilled without a murmur: "all our land all at the same time did glorify Christ with the Father and the Holy Spirit".

It is difficult to overestimate the deep spiritual transformation – effected by the prayers of Saint Vladimir, affected within the Russian people, in all the entirety of its life and world-outlook. In the pure Kievan waters, as in a "bath of regeneration", there was realized a mystic transfiguration of the Russian spiritual element, the spiritual birth of the nation, called by God to yet unforeseen deeds of Christian service to mankind. – "Then did the darkness of the idols begin to lift from us, and the dawn of Orthodoxy appear, and the Sun of the Gospel didst illumine our land". In memory of this sacred event, the renewal of Rus' by water and the Spirit, there was established within the Russian Church the custom of an annual church procession "to the water" on 1 August, combined afterwards with the feast day of the Bring-Forth of the Venerable Wood of the Life-Creating Cross of the Lord, in common with the Greek Church, and likewise the Russian Church feast day of the All-Merciful Savior and the Most Holy Mother of God (established by Saint Andrei Bogoliubsky in the year 1164). In this combination of feasts there is found a precise expression of the Russian theological consciousness, for which both Baptism and the Cross are inseparable.

Everywhere throughout Holy Rus', from the ancient cities to the far outposts, Saint Vladimir gave orders to tumble down the pagan sanctuaries, to flog the idols, and in their place to chop along the hilly woods for churches, in which to consecrate altars for the Bloodless Sacrifice. Churches of God grew up along the face of the earth, at high elevated places, and at the bends of the rivers, along the ancient trail "from the Variangians to the Greeks" – figuratively as road signs, and lamps of national holiness. As regards the famed church-building activity of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, the Kiev Metropolitan Saint Ilarion (author of the "Word about the Law and Grace") exclaimed: "They demolished the pagan temples, and built up churches, they destroyed the idols and produced holy icons, the demons are fled, and the Cross hath sanctified the cities". From the early centuries of Christianity it was the custom to raise up churches upon the ruins of pagan sanctuaries or upon the blood of the holy martyrs. Following this practice, Saint Vladimir built the church of Saint Basil the Great upon an hill, where a sanctuary of Perun had been located, and he situated the stone church of the Uspenie-Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God (Desyatinnaya) on the place of the martyrdom of the holy Varangian-Martyrs (Comm. 12 July). The magnificent temple intended to become the place of serving for the Metropolitan of Kiev and All Rus' – and hence the primal-altar of the Russian Church, was built in five years: it was richly adorned with wall-fresco painting, crosses, icons and sacred vessels, brought from Korsun. The day of the consecration of the church of the Most Holy Mother of God, 12 May (in some manuscripts 11 May), was ordered by Saint Vladimir to be inserted as an annual celebration in the Church-calendar lists. This event was tied in with other previous happenings for the celebration of 11 May, and it provided the new Church a twofold sense of succession. Under this day in the Saints is noted the churchly "renewal of Tsar'grad" – dedicated by the holy emperor Saint Constantine as the new capital of the Roman Empire, the Constantine-city Constantinople, dedicated to the Most Holy Mother of God (330). And on this same day of 11 May, under holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Olga, there had been consecrated at Kiev the church of Sophia – the Wisdom of God (in the year 960). Saint Vladimir, having had the cathedral church consecrated to the Most Holy Mother of God, followed the example of Saint Constantine in dedicating the capital city of the Russian Land, Kiev, to the Queen of Heaven.

And then there was bestowed on the Church a tithe or tenth; and since this church had become the centre of the All-Russian gathering of churchly tithes, they called it the Desyatinnaya (Tithe) church. The most ancient text of the deed-grant document, or churchly ustav-rule by holy Prince Vladimir spoke thusly: "For I do bestow this church of the Holy Mother of God a tenth of all mine principality, and likewise throughout all the Russian Land from all the princely jurisdiction a tithe of squirrel-pelts, and from the merchant – a tithe of the week, and from households each year – a tenth of every herd and every livelihood, to the wondrous Mother of God and the wondrous Savior". The ustav likewise specified "church people" as being free from the jurisdictional power of the prince and his "tiuni"-officials, and placed them under the jurisdiction of the metropolitan.

The chronicle has preserved a prayer of Saint Vladimir, with which he turned to the Almighty at the consecration of the Uspensky Desyatin-Tithe church: "O Lord God, look Thou down from Heaven and behold, and visit Thine vineyard, which Thy right-hand hath planted. And make this new people, whom Thou hast converted in heart and mind – to know Thee, the True God. And look down upon this Thine church, which Thy unworthy servant hath built in the name of the Mother Who hath given birth to Thee, She the Ever-Virgin Mother of God. And whosoever

doth pray in this church, let his prayer then be heard, on account of the prayers to the All-Pure Mother of God".

In the year 1007 Saint Vladimir transferred the relics of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Ol'ga to the Desyatin-Tithe church. And four years later, in 1011, there was also buried there his spouse and companion in many of his undertakings, the Blessed Empress Anna. After her death the prince entered into a new marriage – with the young daughter of the German Graf Kuno von Enningen, grand-daughter of the emperor Otto the Great.

The era of Saint Vladimir was a crucial initial period for the state formation of Orthodox Rus'. The unification of the Slavic lands and the formation of state boundaries under the domain of the Riurikovichi resulted from a strenuous spiritual and political struggle with neighboring tribes and states. The Baptism of Rus' by Orthodox Byzantium was a most important step in its state self-definition. The chief enemy of Vladimir became Boleslav the Brave, whose plans included the extensive unification of the West-Slavic and East-Slavic tribes under the aegis of Catholic Poland. This rivalry arose still back in the times, when Vladimir was still a pagan: "In the year 6489 (981). Volodimir went against the Lakhs and took their cities, Peremyshl', Cherven', and other cities, which be under Rus'". The final years of the X Century are likewise filled with the wars of Vladimir and Boleslav.

The name and deeds of holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, whom the people called the Splendid Sun, is interwoven with all the successive history of the Russian Church. "Through him we too have come to worship and to know Christ, the True Life, – testified Saint Ilarion. His deeds were continued by his sons, and grandsons and descendants – rulers of the Russian land over the course of almost six centuries: from Yaroslav the Wise with the taking of the first steps towards the independent existence of the Russian Church – down to the last of the Riurikovichi, tsar Feodor Ioannovich, under whom (in 1589) the Russian Orthodox Church became the fifth independent Patriarchate in the dyptich-lists of Orthodox Autocephalous Churches.

The feast day celebration to holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir was established under Saint Alexander Nevsky, in memory of the intercession of Saint Vladimir on 15 May 1240, for his help in gaining the renown victory by Nevsky over Swedish crusaders.

But the first reverencing of the holy prince began in Rus' rather earlier. The Metropolitan of Kiev Saint Ilarion (+ 1053), in his "Word on Law and Grace", spoken on the day of memory of Saint Vladimir at the saint's crypt in the Desyatin-Tithe church, calls him "an apostolic sovereign", "like" Saint Constantine, and he compares his apostolic evangelization of the Russian Land to that of the evangelization by the holy Apostles. © 1996-2001 by translator Fr. S. Janos

The Lord forgives the sins of the man sick of the palsy. One should rejoice; but the evil mind of the learned scribes says: *This man blasphemeth* (Matt. 9:3). After the miracle of the healing of the man sick of the palsy – a confirmation of the comforting truth that *the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins* (Matt.9:6) – the people glorified God. But nothing is said about the scribes, probably because they continued to weave their deceitful questions even after such a miracle. The

mind without faith is a schemer; it constantly hammers out its evil suspicions and weaves blasphemy against the whole realm of faith. As for miracles – it either does not believe in them, or it demands a tangible one. But when a miracle is given that would obligate one to submit to the Faith, this mind is not ashamed to turn away from it, distorting or slandering the miraculous works of God. It treats irrefutable evidence of God’s truth in the same way. Such a mind is sufficiently and cogently presented with both experiential and intellectual proof, but it covers even this with doubt. Sort out all that it produces, and you will see that in this there is only deceit, although its own language calls it cleverness, and you are unwillingly led to the conclusion that cleverness and deceit are one and the same. In the realm of faith, the Apostle says, *We have the mind Christ* (1 Cor. 2:16). Whose mind is outside of the realm of faith? The evil one’s. That is why deceit has become his distinguishing characteristic. **St. Theophan the Recluse**