

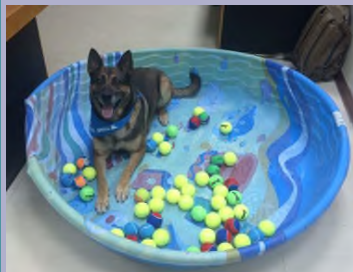
SS Peter & Paul Orthodox Church

Volume 16, Issue 9

September 2016

August Council Highlights

- ✘ There was no council meeting in August.
- ✘ Julie and her unit in Kuwait send their thanks for the care packages. Letter and pictures on pg. 4.



Ss. Peter & Paul Orthodox Church
 1614 E. Monte Vista Rd.
 Phoenix, AZ 85006
 602.253.9515

www.sspeterpaulaz.org
www.oca.org
www.orthodoxfellowship.org

The Right Reverend DANIEL
Bishop of Santa Rosa
Rector

480.287.0240 Mobile
 frdaniel@sspeterpaulaz.org

Protodeacon Alexis Washington

Andrew Evans
Council President
 480.948.7929

Barbara Harp
Choir Director
 bharp@vosymca.org

Stephanie A. Homyak
Church School Director
Newsletter Editor

623.869.0470
 Stephanie_Homyak@yahoo.com

Mike Wagner
Web Master

Mike@sspeterpaulaz.org

Barbara Peterson
Myrrhbearers Altar Society
 602.803.0280

The Greatest Conqueror is Conquered

September 14th is the Feast of the Exaltation (or Elevation) of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross.

There are two events in history to which this feast takes us, as Eugen J. Pentiuic writes in his book "The Old Testament in Eastern Orthodox Tradition" (Oxford University Press 2014). The first took place in the year 335, when the church built by Constantine over the traditional site of Christ's tomb was consecrated in Jerusalem. It was named the Church of the Resurrection; it is now known as the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

The second event occurred in 629, fifteen years after the Persians had sacked and looted the church, taking as part of their spoils a relic of the True Cross. In 629 the Byzantine emperor Heraclius was able to recover the relic, and to bring it to Constantinople. There he carried it into the great church of Hagia Sophia, and elevated it as a sign of victory.



Father Pentiuic notes that one of the readings for the Great Vespers of the feast is Exodus 15: 22-16: 1. This is the account of Moses leading the people of Israel on from the Red Sea, after the exodus from Egypt, into the wilderness of Shur. They come, thirsty and tired, to the waters of Marah, only to find that the water is too bitter to drink. As so often, the people complain and "murmur against" poor Moses.

He, in turn, cries out to God. The Lord shows him a tree, which he flings into the water. At once the water becomes sweet enough to drink. Soon the people come to Elim where they encamp under seventy palm trees, surrounded by twelve springs and buoyed by God's promise that if they will keep His statutes, He will spare them the diseases He has used to chastise the arrogant, heedless Egyptians.

Reading this passage reminds us that the Old Testament often prepares us for what happened to Jesus Christ. The tree at Marah is like the wood of the

Cross, which sweetens everything bitter because it gives us eternal life. The crucified Christ rises from the dead, "upon those in the tomb bestowing life."

One of the stikhera for the festal Great Vespers speaks about another tree: "Come, all you nations, let us worship the blessed Tree through which was wrought the everlasting righteousness. For he who by a tree beguiled our forefather Adam is himself ensnared by the Cross." Here the blessed Tree is the cross, but the tree with which Satan beguiled Adam is the tree in the Garden.

Saint John Chrysostom also makes reference to Satan, as the one who conquered Adam by tempting him to eat of the forbidden tree in Paradise. But the conqueror is conquered by the Resurrection, which robs Satan of his fatal power over humankind.

The tree in the Garden, the tree at Marah, and in fact the whole Old Testament, lead us to the Tree by which Jesus Christ will conquer death once and for all.

Message from Our Rector

Dear Brothers and Sister in the Lord,

"In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you." Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation. 2 Corinthians 6:2

Each September 1st, the Orthodox Church marks the beginning of the new Liturgical Year. The Liturgical Year, (the Ecclesiastical or Church Year), provides a beginning and an end to our annual observance



of the cycles of fasts and feasts through by which we are enabled and encouraged to commemorate and celebrate the history of salvation. While it may seem to some to be an artificial construct (it certainly doesn't coincide with the civil calendar's New Year; no, it's much older, really ancient), it does provide us with a marked-out schedule of feasts in order to allow us to reflect in an orderly manner on those great and saving moments in human history in which God brought about the salvation of mankind.

The first Great Feast we observe in the New Liturgical Year is the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God, September 8th. How natural it seems that we should begin the new cycle of feasts by celebrating a particularly key moment in the history of salvation, i.e. the moment in which the One chosen by God to bear His Son and our Savior was born and began her life of dedication and fidelity to the Will of God.

From the beginning of her life, the Ever-pure and Immaculate Virgin, born to Joachim and Anna, desired only one thing: to be obedient to the Will of God. By her prayers, may we also seek to do God's Will in our daily lives!

As we begin the Church Year, we also return to the usual, what might be called "routine" schedule of parish life. As with the liturgical year there is an ebb and flow of fasting and feasting, of the daily cycle of services and festal celebrations, so it is in parish

life. We, too, have our own ebb and flow of parish activities. As the long summer months are soon behind us, the scorching heat is replaced by cooler morning and shorter days, and annual family trips and vacations come to an end, so, too, our life as members of Saints Peter and Paul parish community returns to the normal activities we associate with our communal life service, education, worship, and fellowship. Please pay particular attention to the monthly newsletter and the monthly calendar (distributed in print at the beginning of each month and also published on our parish website: sspeterpaulaz.org).

As I write these few lines, our beloved



Protodeacon Alexis is in hospice care. After many years of dedicated service to Christ's Holy Church, particularly in the Church's life of worship, (almost 11 years here at Saints Peter and Paul Church!), Protodeacon Alexis is now being called by God from this earthly life to the fullness of life in the Kingdom. He has assured me that, especially throughout these past few months of failing health, he has felt your love and the support of your prayers in real and tangible ways. As we pray for him, he is also praying for us, uniting his own suffering to the suffering of Christ- that suffering which has reconciled the world to its Creator.

With love in the Christ,

+*Bishop Daniel*

From the Fathers

"Do not be surprised that you fall every day; do not give up, but stand your ground courageously. And assuredly the angel who guards you will honor your patience. While a wound is still fresh and warm it is easy to heal, but old, neglected and festering ones are hard to cure, and require for their care much treatment, cutting, plastering and cauterization. Many from long neglect become incurable. But with God all things are possible [Matthew 19:26]."

St. John Climacus, Ladder of Divine Ascent

What the Cross Reveals

Fr. Vladimir Berzonsky

“Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin” (John 19:19-20)

The common sense reason for having our Lord’s accusation written in three languages was to make certain whatever the nationality of the people in Jerusalem, they all would be able to understand why it was that Jesus Christ was condemned to the cruel execution of crucifixion as He wended His way to Calvary, the place of death. However, we know that everything in the Holy Bible, especially the most significant action re-



corded for our salvation is a source of contemplation; the holy fathers have meditated on the cross and find hidden meanings deeper than the obvious.

St. Maximos the Confessor, writing his *Chapters on Knowledge* (Second Century 96) explains that the title above our King and Lord points to ways of wisdom through ascetic, natural and theological meanings. Latin is the language of the Roman Empire. In the prophecy of Daniel, Rome symbolized the epitome of

all mighty empires. That being the case, Latin stands for all the ascetics who come to our Lord Jesus as the most powerful of His disciples, since they have spent their lives struggling against Satan in their bodies, souls and minds, enduring all demonic wiles and coming out victorious. At another place, he calls them angels on earth and inspirations for all Christians.

St. Maximus identifies Greeks with natural philosophy. Indeed, they as a nation have produced scholars and thinkers from the pre-Socratic times down through the centuries. See the way St. Paul thought to get their attention when he visited Athens and addressed the gathering as men naturally interested in theology. [Acts 17:21ff]

The Hebrews are our spiritual ancestors. Their sacred history contains the Revelation of the Holy Trinity to humanity, and we are their children and descendants. Regardless of the animosity between us and the role they played by rejecting Jesus as the true Messiah, causing His crucifixion, we acknowledge their significance in the story of our salvation.

The cross has been carried beyond Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria to all the far reaches of civilization. What are the con-

tributions to those whose languages convey the proclamation: KING OF THE JEWS? We Slavs pray or have prayed in Slavonic. Russia brings the gift of humility even to the extent of humiliation, expressing the kenotic aspect of our Lord’s condescension by His incarnation and death on the cross. Christ the foot washer, Jesus the friend of Lazarus who gave His own life so that Lazarus would have a few more years on earth expresses the Russian contribution.

Arab Christians who live among brethren bent on killing them, yet who demonstrate the joy of largesse, a people who take pride in the same hospitality shown by Abraham and Sarah, people of the desert would never desert the famished, thirsty or needy. They exhibit cordiality.

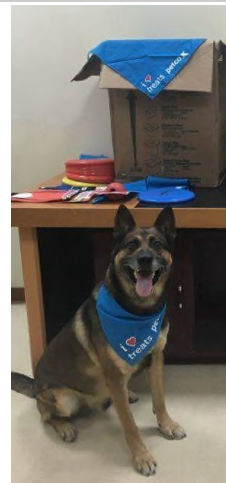
What of us Americans? English is our language that now is spoken globally. What gift do we bring to the risen Lord? Freedom most of all, the liberty to change oneself in ways that countries harnessed in generations of cultural, societal and economic rank have no means of escaping. With our freedom comes the opportunity to grow into the fullness of spiritual union with the Lord. Because of our potential we could be the shining light to inspire the entire world and lead them to God. It’s possible that America could become the Israel that failed to find and follow Jesus Christ the Messiah; but is that something that all our nation would aspire to, or are we to become another version of a Roman empire doomed to self-destruction and abandoned on the scrap heap of history?

Reprinted from the Orthodox Church in American web site, <https://oca.org/reflections/berzonsky/what-the-cross-reveals>*

Thank You from Kuwait

Dear Saints Peter and Paul Parishioners,

Thank you for all the care packages you sent to us. The time, effort and love you put into this project was evident and much appreciated. We were amazed at how many items came in the mail. Several boxes arrived over the course of a week. We couldn't believe our eyes! It was like Christmas in July, and no one was left short of gifts. Even our dogs were overjoyed to have toys and treats. We've included some pictures for you to see the happy faces. Unfortunately, our work spaces don't allow cameras. Most of the treats were kept and eaten in there so we couldn't take many pictures.



Although we are far from home, we are doing well over here.

The summer heat can be almost unbearable, but luckily we have air conditioning where we work (if it's not broken!). It's reassuring to know that people back home still think of us sweatin' it out here. Our jobs keep us busy. We are tasked with logistically and administratively supporting all Marines, Marine Corps units and equipment that transition into and through Kuwait headed to Iraq or other places within the Middle East. Kuwait is a fairly safe area; we are able to travel off base from time to time to visit local restaurants and shops. I enjoy seeing the caravan of camels lead by a

shepherd through the vast brown desert area. Camels must be able to live off of very little food, because there's not a lot of foliage to eat. Although, since the heat really kicked in, less camels are roaming around....probably more to do with the shepherd not being able to withstand the drastic temperatures for any length of time. I look forward to the fall, a marked change in season means time is passing and I will be home that much sooner!



Your support throughout my deployment shows just how incredible of a community you are. Your warmth, generosity, and kindness mean the world to me and my Marines, and we are truly grateful!

Your prayers are appreciated.

Semper Fidelis (Always Faithful),

Julie Schaffer

Col, USMC

Camp Arifjan, Kuwait



Church New Year: Curing the Summertime Blues!

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" [Isaiah 61:1-2; Luke 4:18-19].

Thursday, September 1, 2015, marks the beginning of the Church Year. This is an overlooked commemoration, but I do believe that with more attention, it can be an important day/date in our ecclesial lives, for the simple reason that it is a "beginning," and beginnings present us with the possibility of starting fresh, if not actually starting over. It can be the occasion for a genuine "reorientation"—an interesting word that literally means being "directed back towards the east"—the "orient"—the direction that the early Christians faced in prayer, symbolic of the light of Christ and, as such, is closely linked to repentance. If the summer was a time of being scattered here and there, both literally and figuratively, then the Church New Year is a time of being gathered together, soul and body, to redirect our lives toward Christ. Curiously, it is the time of year for some of the faithful to "get used to" coming to church with regularity again—as in "the 'vacation' from God and the Church is now over and it is time to get back to Church on a regular basis." Obviously, there are more than out-of-town vacation trips at work here. Thus, even though the song says, "there ain't no cure for the summertime blues," we can say with confidence that there indeed is—in the Church!

Be that as it may, September 1 prepares us for the annual liturgical cycle of feast days—or, rather, the rhythm of fasting and feasting that immerses us into the "counter-cultural" life of the Church that challenges the patterns, attitudes and emptiness of our surrounding secular culture. Instead of a hectic life based on competition and consumerism, we have

before us the grace-filled life of the Church based on cooperation and communion. The "world" offers us the Kingdom of Mammon; the Church offers us the Kingdom of God. Our inability to make a firm choice between the two is rather amazing when one contemplates the two choices. For, as another song says, you "can't get no satisfaction" from mammon. The fate of mammon is to be consumed by "moth and rust" [Matthew 6:19]. The gifts of the Kingdom are imperishable. So as to make sure that I am not sounding naive or simplistic, I openly acknowledge the evident tension we feel between the Church and "world" (here using the word in its more negative sense of a life directed toward the self and consumed with the passions), for the obvious reason that we are seeking the Kingdom while immersed in the (fallen) world. That often feels like being caught in a maze or labyrinth. We lose our way at times. We struggle with choices. It is a veritable "bungle in the jungle," as yet another song says. However, to sincerely embrace the vision of the Church directed toward Christ and His Kingdom, it gives us the opportunity of living out, to some degree hopefully, the familiar but meaningful phrase of "being in the world but not of the world."

Immersion in the life of the Church, to the extent that it is possible for us, is a sure way of clarifying our vision once and for all and of making an honest attempt to be Kingdom-oriented Christians. As Father Lev Gillet has written, "In the liturgical year we are called to relive the whole life of Christ: from Christmas to Pascha, from Pascha to Pentecost, we are exhorted to unite ourselves to Christ in his birth and in his growth, to Christ suffering, to Christ dying, to Christ in triumph and to Christ inspiring His Church. The liturgical year

forms Christ in us, from His birth to full stature of the perfect man."

With a bit of planning and prioritizing, we can make that immersion a greater reality in our lives. Instead of hanging up our church calendars as pious adornments or reminders of an archaic way of life, we can utilize them as a means of directing us toward the life in Christ. From feast days and daily commemorations to scriptural readings, our liturgical calendars are like maps, revealing the location of true treasure worth "digging for." Without exhausting ourselves in the process, we do not have to lose the "battle of the calendars." Life is made up of daily choices, and some of those choices can direct us toward the Church. It is certainly a path worth making some sacrifice for.

I am not advocating an artificial split between our "religious life" and our "secular life." The point is not to choose one and ignore the other. That would only be a form of compartmentalization that is quite foreign to the Gospel. Our whole life has been saved and redeemed. For the believing Christian there is only one life—the life "in Christ"—and that is the life we lead in obedience to the Lord and Master of our lives, Jesus Christ. Christianity is not a religion among religions, but a way of life that embraces Liturgy to work and everything else that sets us apart as human beings. Choosing the Gospel as "the one thing needful" will establish a hierarchy of values, however, in which all reality has its place. But I do believe that if we start with our ecclesial life in the Church, then that will all make more sense in the process.

"Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold now is the day of salvation" [2 Corinthians 6:2].

Reprinted from <https://oca.org/reflections/fr.-steven-kostoff/church-new-year-curing-the-summertime-blues>*

Saved for Greater Work

On September 28th the Church honors Saint Chariton the Confessor.

Saints who are given the title "Confessor" rather than "Martyr" are those who witnessed to the faith and often suffered for it, but were not put to death as the direct result of their witness. Chariton did undergo imprisonment and torture when he boldly professed his faith, but was not martyred. God saved him for greater work.

Born in about 254, Chariton belonged to a well-respected family in the city of Iconium (now Konya, in Turkey) which was also the home of another saint named Thecla, a young woman who for three solid days listened from her window to Saint Paul's preaching on his first missionary journey. She was so convinced by what she heard that she later became a missionary herself, preaching and teaching as a helper to Paul.

Thecla was an example to Chariton. He began to speak publicly and often about his dedication to Jesus Christ. Before long he was arrested by the governor, and told to

stop insulting the gods by claiming that only the one God of the Christians was real.

But the governor had no success with Chariton, who told him that the pagan gods were merely prideful demons who had been cast out of heaven into the depths of hell because they hated God and refused to worship Him.

At first the governor tried to talk Chariton out of his beliefs. But Chariton chose to challenge him, trying to make him examine his own beliefs and see their superficiality. Chariton said, "If your gods are truly worthy of worship, you shouldn't be letting me deride them and trying to reason with me. Why don't you defend them, and silence me once and for all?"

He went on, "Do your gods feel with their hands, or speak with their mouths, or see with their eyes? No, they do none of these things. They are dead idols, and they are nothing like the living God, Jesus Christ, and His Father in heaven."

The governor wasn't ready to hear any

more, or to test the truth of Chariton's words. He ordered that the outspoken Christian be beaten and put in prison, where he was routinely tortured.

Chariton did not die in prison, and when the harsh measures against Christians were lifted, he was released. Setting out for Jerusalem, he was waylaid by robbers. But once again, though hurt, he didn't lose his life. He gave up his plans to live in a city, and went into the desert.

The later years of Chariton's life were given to the establishment of two monasteries, the first in the wilderness of Pharan and the second near Jericho. Both became well-known for the holiness of the men who came to live in them, learning from the example of Saint Chariton.

We don't know why some saints died as martyrs and others, though tested and made to suffer, did not. But the martyred ones apparently had finished their work. Some, like Saint Chariton, were being saved for greater work still to be accomplished.

Around SS Peter & Paul

SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES

September 2 Sylvia Burns
Vickie Mendez
10 Boris Niegoda
12 Nick Enoch
16 Mary Kelemen
17 Luka Radjenovich
19 Alexander Enoch
20 Walter & Tania Booriakin

*Mongaya Leta!
Many Years!*

FOCA GIFTS OF LOVE

FOCA presents Bishop David with a check for \$10,000 to print Yupik language Orthodox Coloring Books for the children of Alaska. In many Alaskan villages, Yupik is the language spoken in the home while English is learned later in life. These books will help the Alaskan children learn about Christ in their native language.



PRAYER LIST

"I was sick and you visited me."

Matt 25:36

We offer prayers to all of our parishioners who are ill or unable to attend services:

Protodeacon Alexis

Ted Demos

Ann Carroll

Ann Garza

Rose Kurowski

Tillie (Tatiana) Kulek

Anna Michkofsky

If you know of anyone in need of our prayers, please contact Bishop Daniel.

Bits and Pieces

BEGINNING OF THE CHURCH SCHOOL YEAR

The official beginning of the school year – and our church school program – will be observed on Sunday, September 11. As is our custom, the school year will begin with the Blessing of Students and Teachers following the Divine Liturgy on September 11.

WELCOME



We welcome all visitors to SS Peter & Paul. We hope your visit was enriching and enlightening. Please join us in the Cultural Center, behind the church, for our Fellowship Hour. It's a chance to meet some of our members, other visitors, and enjoy some coffee and fellowship.

MYRRH BEARERS ALTAR SOCIETY

Even though the MBAS haven't met during the summer months we have been busy! This summer, our responsibilities have included hosting coffee hour in honor of Father's Day; changing the alter coverings and overseeing coffee hour on Sundays. Our first meeting of the new Church Year will be September 11, 2016. I would like to invite all women to join us.

Barbara Peterson

TEEN/YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE

On Sunday, September 18, we will have our first planning meeting for Project Mexico (summer 2017). This meeting will be held during coffee hour.

At this meeting we will discuss how many slots we have available, the cost, dates and our upcoming fundraising opportunities on the horizon.

This meeting is open to absolutely everyone who would like to participate in project Mexico. We will need a lot of people to help with fundraising so even if you can't come down to Mexico with us, we need your help here in Phoenix!! We will need to raise quite a bit of money in order to cover all the costs.

If you cannot make it to the meeting, please email Mara Hecht (Mara.hecht@Gmail.com) and information from the meeting will be forwarded to you.)

BOOKSTORE

Take a peek at the bookstore and you'll notice that the egg pendants are here on a permanent basis! All are handcrafted with love and make very thoughtful gifts.

ADULT EDUCATION

Adult Education/Faith Formation classes will resume on Wednesday, September 28. Classes will continue for nine weeks.

Do you want to want to take the next step in understanding the Holy Scriptures? Are you looking for guidance and tools to assist you in your personal Bible study, in keeping with our Orthodox Faith? Please join in this Fall's Faith Formation Class/Adult Education Class in which we will study the often overlooked Epistle of Jude. Jude has much to teach us about Holy Tradition, how to relate to people who oppose the fullness of Truth, and the essential role of prayer in knowing and defending our Faith.

In addition to the content of Jude, we will work on developing good habits for studying Scripture in general. The study will be led by Tikhon Olmstead, with the oversight and guidance of Bishop Daniel.

If you've answered "yes" to any of the above question, this Fall study is meant for you!



WORD SEARCH:

- APOSTLE
- BETHANY
- BETHLEHEM
- BIBLE
- BYZANTINE
- CHOIR
- CHRISTIAN
- CHURCH
- JESUS
- JOHN
- LAZARUS
- LOVE
- LUKE
- MARCUS
- MARTHA
- MARY
- MATTHEW
- MICAH
- OIL
- ORTHODOX

C	B	B	T	R	O	R	T	H	O	D	O	X	H	Y
C	N	Z	Y	H	C	R	U	H	C	A	E	H	T	M
M	E	I	Y	Z	M	N	A	B	N	M	Y	N	B	Y
C	R	L	Y	N	A	H	T	E	B	S	H	C	Y	N
N	T	I	S	N	A	N	H	Z	C	O	A	E	A	T
A	P	O	S	T	L	E	T	E	J	E	S	U	S	N
I	B	S	E	M	A	B	M	I	I	E	N	Y	I	B
T	R	C	W	A	Z	M	M	C	N	S	S	R	Z	T
S	N	H	E	R	A	A	E	T	Z	E	I	A	E	W
I	B	O	H	T	R	R	T	V	Y	K	H	M	H	Z
R	S	R	T	H	U	I	B	I	O	U	P	A	Y	E
H	Z	U	T	A	S	O	H	R	I	L	C	M	M	L
C	S	S	A	B	W	H	N	I	E	W	S	H	Z	B
E	W	R	M	A	R	C	U	S	R	Z	H	N	M	I
R	C	U	S	R	Z	H	N	M	I	C	A	H	T	S

September 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>We welcome all of our guests and visitors. Please join us in the Cultural Center for Fellowship Hour following Divine Liturgy each Sunday.</p>				1 Church New Year Chernigov-Gethsemane Icon	2 Kaluga Icon	3 5:00pm Vespers
4 Icon "The Unburnt Bush" 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy	5 Arapetskaya and Kiev-Bratsk Icons LABOR DAY	6	7 Forefeast Nativity of the Theotokos 6:00pm Vespers	8 Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos 9:00am Divine Liturgy	9 Afterfeast Nativity Theotokos	10 5:00pm Vespers
11 Sunday Before Elevation 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy <i>Blessing of Students and Teachers</i> MBAS Meeting	12 Leavetaking Nativity Theotokos	13 6:00pm Vespers and Bringing our of the Holy Cross 7:00pm Council Meeting	14 Exaltation of the Holy Cross 9:00am Divine Liturgy	15	16	17 Saturday after Elevation 5:00pm Vespers
18 Sunday After Elevation 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School Project Mexico Planning Meeting	19	20	21 Leavetaking Elevation	22	23 Conception of St. John the Baptist	24 Holy New Martyrs of Alaska 5:00pm Vespers
<p>Mark your calendars . . . Blessing of Students and Teachers – at the end of the Divine Liturgy on Sunday, September 11</p>						
25 Repose Venerable Sergius of Radonezh 8:30am Hours 9:00am Divine Liturgy Church School	26 Repose of St. John the Theologian	27	28	29	30	1 Protection of the Most-Holy Theotokos 5:00pm Vespers