

Aggias then woke up the other guards, took off his uniform and said to them, "I too am a Christian," and he joined the martyrs. Standing in the water he prayed, "Lord God, I believe in You, in Whom these soldiers believe. Add me to their number, and make me worthy to suffer with Your servants." Then a fortieth crown appeared over his head.

In the morning, the torturers saw with surprise that the martyrs were still alive, and their guard Aggias was glorifying Christ together with them. They led the soldiers out of the water and broke their legs. During this horrible execution the mother of the youngest of the soldiers, Meliton, pleaded with her son to persevere until death.

They put the bodies of the martyrs on a cart and committed them to fire. Young Meliton was still breathing, and they left him on the ground. His mother then picked up her son, and on her own shoulders she carried him behind the cart. When Meliton drew his last breath, his mother put him on the cart with the bodies of his fellow sufferers. The bodies of the saints were tossed in the fire, and their charred bones were thrown into the water, so that Christians would not gather them up.

Three days later the martyrs appeared in a dream to Saint Peter, Bishop of Sebaste, and commanded him to bury their remains. The bishop together with several clergy gathered up the relics of the glorious martyrs by night and buried them with honor.

This example of constancy in the Christian faith became famous all over the East, and is still had in remembrance to this day in the Orthodox wedding ceremony. In the Order of Marriage Crowning, the second prayer spoken by the priest contains this phrase: "Remember them, O Lord our God, As Thou didst remember thy forty holy martyrs sending down upon them crowns from heaven." This is a prayer that the man and woman about to be united in marriage may be constant and faithful to each other and to Christ all the days of their life, and even unto the end.

There is a pious custom of baking "skylarks" (pastries shaped like skylarks) on this day, because people believed that birds sing at this time to announce the arrival of spring. Forty "skylarks" are prepared in honor of the Forty Martyrs.

**Memory Eternal for the servant of God
John Bicko
who reposed in the Lord last evening.
Services will be announced.**

UPCOMING SERVICES AND EVENTS

--Church School Today--

Today --Parish Council Meeting following Coffee Hour

Wed. Mar. 14th Akathist to the Divine Passion of Christ 6:00pm

Fri. Mar. 16th Presanctified Liturgy 6:00pm

NO DIVINE LITURGY ON SATURDAY MAR. 17TH

(Retreat at Holy Transfiguration Monastery 8am-3pm)

THIS MONTH—

- See Lenten Calendar for service details-

- Altar Servers - see schedule

- - In Home Meals are available from Lizzy's Catering. See flyers in the hall.

--Ladies Altar Meeting – Sunday Mar. 18th

--Men's Fellowship Meeting- Sunday Mar. 25th

MISSIONS TEAM

Anyone wishing to serve as a missionary for a summer trip may inquire of the missions team. Also, OCMC sponsors various trips around the world. See the poster in the Hall. *Please support our Kenyan Orthodox children. Please contact Marilyn Filipos. Thank you for your donations to the Kenyan children.

Missions Team will help the Clayton family move to their new place on Mar. 24th from 10am – 2pm

--sponsoring Coffee Hour on April 1st

Please Remember all of our suffering members: Karen

Raydo, Steve and Marilyn Filipos, Claudia Sukel, Mary Gall,

John MaGuire, Kathleen Ferra, Teresa Jouver, the Bicko

Family.

"Rejoice" scripture verse for the week:

Trust in the Lord with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths.

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev.

Fr. Daniel Mathewson – *Rector* **Lord's Day – Mar 11th**

, **2018** Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on the

Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face

book: Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church



GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT — Tone 7. Veneration of the Cross. St. Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem (638-644). St. Euthymius, Bishop of Novgorod (1458). Hieromartyr Pionius of Smyrna and those with him: Asclepiades, Macedonia, Linus, and Sabina (250). Translation of the Relics of Martyr Epimachus of Pelusium. St. Sophronius, Bishop of Vracha (Bulgaria—1813). Ven. Sophronii, Recluse, of the Kiev Caves (Far Caves—13th c.).

PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN YOUR DAILY PRAYERS: Those in need –Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Mat. Pirsilla, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas, Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Melissa, Meghan, Pearl, Karen, John, Mary, Stavros, Marilyn, Theona, Sara, Eugene, Ann, Thomas, Catherine, Timothy, Jeremiah, Mary, Renee, Delani, Emily, The Homebound..., Tanya, Richard, Helen, Irene, Ruth, Josephine, William, Claudia... Travelers... ...Catechumens – Rick, Samuel and Christian ...Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military servers...Greg ...Departed Orthodox...Newly Departed – John Bicko, John Sekel, Ann, Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul, Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian, Paul, Daleen, Penni, James, Sean, Liam, Susan, James, Joel, Jen, Roger, Jasmine, Cassandra, Raquel, Zera

Today's Hymns Tone 7 Troparion (*Resurrection*)

By Thy Cross Thou didst destroy death.
To the thief Thou didst open Paradise.
For the Myrrhbearers Thou didst change weeping into joy,
and Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God,
to proclaim that Thou art risen,//
granting the world great mercy.

Tone 1 Troparion (for the Cross)

**O Lord, save Thy people,
and bless Thine inheritance!
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Thy Cross, //
preserve Thy habitation!**

Tone 7 Kontakion (for the Cross)

**Now the flaming sword no longer guards the gates of Eden;
it has been mysteriously quenched by the wood of the Cross.
The sting of death and the victory of hell have been vanquished;
for Thou, O my Savior, hast come and cried to those in hell://
“Enter again into Paradise!”**

(In place of the Trisagion, we sing:)

**Before Thy Cross, we bow down in worship, O Master,
and Thy holy Resurrection, we glorify.**

Tone 6 Prokeimenon (Cross)

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance! (Ps 27/28:9))

v: To Thee, O Lord, will I call. O my God, be not silent to me! (Ps 27/28:1)

Tone 8 *
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*v: Remember Thy congregation, which Thou hast purchased of old!
(Ps 73/74:2)*

*v: God is our King before the ages; He has worked salvation in the
midst of the earth! (Ps 73/74:12)*

Today's Scripture Readings:

Hebrews 4:14-5:6 (Epistle)

Seeing then that we have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come

boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

For every high priest taken from among men is appointed for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins. He can have compassion on those who are ignorant and going astray, since he himself is also subject to weakness. Because of this he is required as for the people, so also for himself, to offer sacrifices for sins. And no man takes this honor to himself, but he who is called by God, just as Aaron was. So also Christ did not glorify Himself to become High Priest, but it was He who said to Him: “You are My Son, today I have begotten You.”

As He also says in another place: “You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek”;

Mark 8:34-9:1 (Gospel)

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel’s will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels.” And He said to them, “Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.”

40 Martyrs of Sebaste

In the year 313 Saint Constantine the Great issued an edict granting Christians religious freedom, and officially recognizing Christianity as equal with paganism under the law. But his co-ruler Licinius was a pagan, and he decided to stamp out Christianity in his part of the Empire. As Licinius prepared his army to fight Constantine, he decided to remove Christians from his army, fearing mutiny.

One of the military commanders of that time in the Armenian city of Sebaste was Agricola, a zealous champion of

idolatry. Under his command was a company of forty Cappadocians, brave soldiers who had distinguished themselves in many battles. When these Christian soldiers refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods, Agricola locked them up in prison. The soldiers occupied themselves with prayer and psalmody, and during the night they heard a voice saying, “Persevere until the end, then you shall be saved.”

On the following morning, the soldiers were again taken to Agricola. This time the pagan tried flattery. He began to praise their valor, their youth and strength, and once more he urged them to renounce Christ and thereby win themselves the respect and favor of their emperor.

Seven days later, the renowned judge Licius arrived at Sebaste and put the soldiers on trial. The saints steadfastly answered, “Take not only our military insignia, but also our lives, since nothing is more precious to us than Christ God.” Licius then ordered his servants to stone the holy martyrs. But the stones missed the saints and returned to strike those who had thrown them. One stone thrown by Licius hit Agricola in the face, smashing his teeth. The torturers realized that the saints were guarded by some invisible power. In prison, the soldiers spent the night in prayer and again they heard the voice of the Lord comforting them: “He who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live (John 11:25). Be brave and fear not, for you shall obtain imperishable crowns.”

On the following day the judge repeated the interrogation in front of the torturer, but the soldiers remained unyielding.

It was winter, and there was a severe frost. They lined up the holy soldiers, threw them into a lake near the city, and set a guard to prevent them from coming out of the water. In order to break the will of the martyrs, a warm bath-house was set up on the shore. During the first hour of the night, when the cold had become unbearable, one of the soldiers made a dash for the bath-house, but no sooner had he stepped over the threshold, than he fell down dead.

During the third hour of the night, the Lord sent consolation to the martyrs. Suddenly there was light, the ice melted away, and the water in the lake became warm. All the guards were asleep, except for Agladius, who was keeping watch. Looking at the lake he saw that a radiant crown had appeared over the head of each martyr. Agladius counted thirty-nine crowns and realized that the soldier who fled had lost his crown.