

St. Irenaeus, Hieromartyr and Bishop of Lyons, in France

The Hieromartyr Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons, was born in the year 130 in the city of Smyrna (Asia Minor). His guide in the truths of the Christian Faith was a disciple of the Apostle John the Theologian, St Polycarp of Smyrna who baptized the youth, and afterwards ordained him presbyter and sent him to a city in Gaul then named Lugdunum [the present day Lyons in France] to the dying bishop Pothinus.

All the Christians in Lugdunum had been imprisoned while Irenaeus was away on a journey.

Soon after his return, after the martyric death of Bishop Pothinus, St Irenaeus was chosen a year later (in 178) as Bishop of Lugdunum. “During this time,” St Gregory of Tours writes concerning him, “by his preaching he transformed all Lugdunum into a Christian city!”

St. Irenaeus boldly taught against the heresies of the Gnostics, who believed,

among other things, that matter was evil and Christ therefore could not have been God.

In refuting the heresy of the gnostic Valentinus, St Irenaeus presents the Orthodox teaching of salvation. “The Word of God, Jesus Christ, through His inexplicable blessedness caused it to be, that we also, should be made that which He is ...,” “Jesus Christ the Son of God, through exceedingly great love for His creation, condescended to be born of a Virgin, having united mankind with God in His own Self.” In the refutation of another heretic, Marcian, who denied the divine origin of the Old Testament, the saint affirms the same divine inspiration of the Old and the New Testaments: “It is one and the same

Spirit of God Who proclaimed through the prophets the precise manner of the Lord’s coming.”

The successors of the Apostles have received from God the certain gift of truth, which St Irenaeus links to the succession of the episcopate (Adv. Haer. 4, 26, 2). “Anyone who desires to know the truth ought to turn to the Church, since through Her alone did the apostles expound the Divine Truth. She is the door to life.”

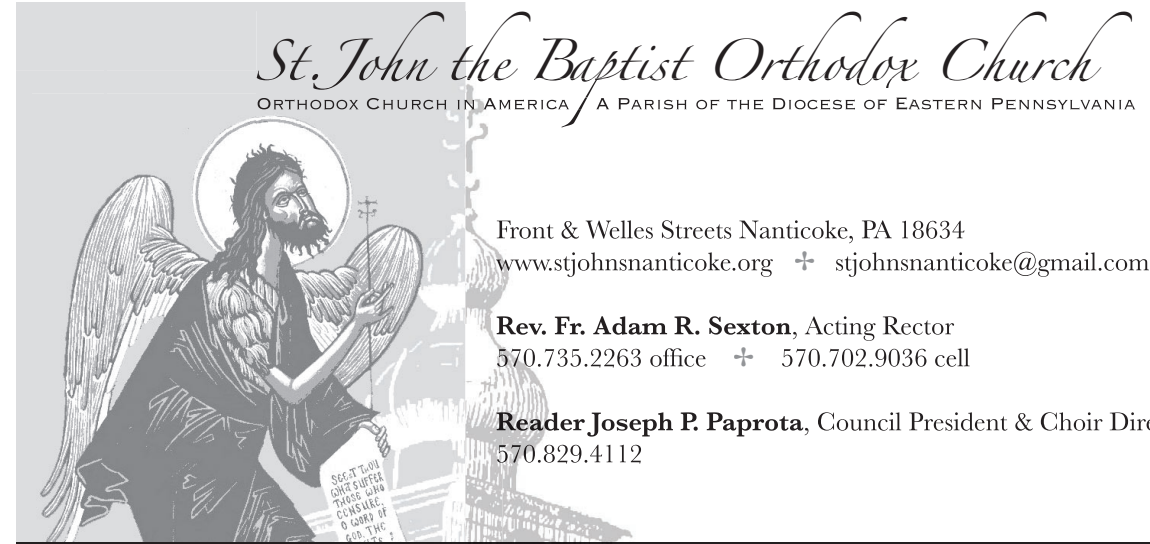
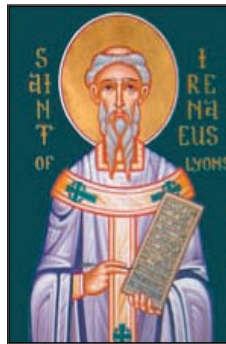
St Irenaeus also exerted a beneficial influence in a dispute about the proper date for the celebration of Pascha in the Church of Asia Minor, where there was some dispute with Rome which led to schism. St

Irenaeus wrote to Bishop Victor of Rome and others, urging them to make peace.

It is believed that St Irenaeus was beheaded by the sword for his confession of faith in the year 202, during the reign of Severus.

The Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian, St Polycarp of Smyrna, and St Irenaeus of Lyons are three links in an unbroken chain of the grace of succession, which goes back to the Original Pastor, our

Lord Jesus Christ Himself. In his old age, St Irenaeus wrote to his old friend the priest Florinus: “When I was still a boy, I knew you... in Polycarp’s house.... I remember what happened in those days more clearly than what happens now.... I can describe for you the place where blessed Polycarp usually sat and conversed, the character of his life, the appearance of his body, and the discourses which he spoke to the people, how he spoke of the conversations which he had with John and others who had seen the Lord, how he remembered their words, and what he heard from them about the Lord ... I listened eagerly to these things, by the mercy of God, and wrote them, not on paper, but in my heart” (Eusebius, Hist. Eccles.).



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August 23, 2009

Epistle Reading:
1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Gospel Reading:
Matthew 18:23-35

Schedule of Services

Wednesday, August 26
Daily Vespers 6 pm

Friday, August 28
Great Vespers 6 pm Feast of
the Beheading of the Baptist

Saturday, August 29
Divine Liturgy, FEAST 9 am
Great Vespers 4 pm

Sunday, August 23
Divine Liturgy 9:30 am

MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS, SAVE US!

In the theology and piety of the Orthodox Church, a special place of honor is given to the Mother of God the Most-Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, who is revered by the Orthodox as being more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious, beyond compare, than the Seraphim. As Orthodox we style her as the most exalted among God’s creatures; but we do not regard her as some sort of goddess, the 4th Person of the Trinity, as some accuse us; nor do we render her the worship due God alone. Just as with the Holy Icons, the veneration due Mary is expressed in quite different words in the Greek writings of the Fathers than that due God.

The Virgin Mary is honored because she is Theotokos the Mother of God not of His divinity, but of His humanity, yet of God in that Jesus Christ was, in the theology of the Church, both God and Man, at one and the same time, in the Incarnation. Therefore, the honor given Mary is due to her relationship to Christ. And this honor, rather than taking away from that due God, makes us more aware of God’s majesty; for it is precisely on account of the Son (Himself God) that she is venerated. Of times, when men refuse to honor Mary, it is because they do not believe in the cause of her veneration the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity.

We also speak of the Theotokos as being Ever-Virgin, which was officially proclaimed at the 5th Ecumenical Council (Constantinople 553; the dogma concerning Mary as being Theotokos was proclaimed in 431 at the 3rd Ecumenical Council in Ephesus). This no-



✦ **POT LUCK FOR THE FEAST OF THE BEHEADING OF THE FORERUNNER:** On Saturday, August 29 we will celebrate the Divine Liturgy here at St. John's together with St. John's in Edwardsville, Holy Trinity and Holy Resurrection in Wilkes Barre, and possibly other parishes. It is possible that we will have the pleasure of Vladykha Tikhon's company as well. Please plan to attend Vespers on Friday at 6 pm and the Divine Liturgy on Saturday at 9 am. Fellowship potluck in the Church parlors following the Liturgy. Please bring a dish to share, that our fellowship may be magnified.

✦ **CATHERINE MCAULEY HOUSE UPDATE:** - We were able to collect \$100 toward the urgent request for assistance for the 5 children at the McAuley House! Five \$20 Wal-Mart gift cards have been purchased and will be delivered this week so that the children will have enough socks and underwear to start the school year. Thank you for giving generously to the 'Undy Fund'!

✦ **PARISH WEBSITE SPONSORS NEEDED:** - As difficult as it is to believe, nearly a year has passed since we established our presence in cyberspace. Our website has gotten a tremendous amount of very positive feedback and has been viewed across the country and around the world. It is time to request sponsors to cover the cost for this year. Your generosity has been swift and plentiful in the past. Please consider covering this expense or a portion of it in memory of a loved one. The cost is \$325 for the year.

✦ **HOLY CROSS, WILLIAMSPORT CONCERT:** 'Lyra' professional choral ensemble from St. Petersburg, Russia is back again after drawing a large crowd last year. Thursday, September 17, 7 pm, followed by fellowship - Free-will offering. 1725 Holy Cross Ln, Williamsport, 570-322-3020

✦ **ST. MICHAEL'S, JERMYN CONCERT:** Featuring the 'Sprit of Orthodoxy Choir' in their return engagement, under the direction of Prof. Aleksei Shipovalnikov! Celebrating the New Century in Jermyn, Sunday, September 20, at 5:30 pm, 308 Walnut St. Jermyn. Reception to follow. Tickets \$10 ea. Call Diana - 570-646-8261

✦ A litiya for the dead will be served for the newly departed John "Jackie" Brezna immediately following the veneration of the cross. VECHNAYA PAMIAT!

✦ Fellowship Coffee Hour today is provided by Olga Sulewski. Thank you, Olga!

✦ Candle Offerings ✦

CROSS VIGIL

✦ In Memory of John Staniorski

ETERNAL LIGHT

✦ For the Health of Mary Staniorski

ALL OTHER VIGILS

✦ For the Health of Mary Staniorski
Robert Hawkins

✦ In Memory of Anna Fedock,
John Staniorski,
the mother of James Oram

✦ Intercessory Prayer ✦

THE LIVING

- ✦ All of our shut-ins and those in nursing homes:

Mary Staniorski	MaryAnn Kremenic
John Kremenic	Mary Ruduski
Mary Zaleta	Margaret Mesh
Helen Kasian	Mary Zupko
- ✦ Those who lie in sickness:

John Lipinski	Margie Sokol
Daria Yackimowicz	John Zelinski
Matushka Olga	Michael Calabro
Melanie Hoats Smith	Karen Schinski
Cheryl Connaghan	Helen Dargiewicz
Mary Zupko	Susan Shiposki
- ✦ For the Health of Helen Connor's Family
Helen Elena
- ✦ Those who have asked for our prayers:
Staff, volunteers, and residents of the Birchwood and the Catherine McAuley House,
Missionary Christina, Rev. Deacon Daniel & Rachael

NEWLY DEPARTED

- ✦ Irene Miszczuk ✦ John Brezna
- ✦ Vera Campbell

THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED

- ✦ August 27 Michael Pihanich (1980)
- August 29 Anna Story (1973)
- Stephen Pendle (1993)

PREPARING FOR ILLUMINATION

- ✦ Allen Uhas, Jr.

FOR OUR COLLEGE STUDENTS

- ✦ Justin Cunard Jessica Yackimowicz
- Charlotte Ebert Devon Wolfkiel

BIRTHDAYS

- ✦ August 27 Daniel Klein (year?)
- Matushka Angie (1977)

tion does not actually contradict Holy Scripture, as some would think. "And His mother and His brothers came; and standing outside they sent to Him and called Him" (Mark 3:31). Here the use of the word brothers in the original Greek can mean half-brother, cousin, or near relative, in addition to brothers in the strict sense. The Orthodox Church has always seen brothers here as referring to His half-brothers.

If Mary is honored as Theotokos, so too, she is honored because she is Panagia All-Holy. She is the supreme example of the cooperation between God and Man; for God, Who always respects human freedom, did not become incarnate without her free consent which, as Holy Scripture tells us, was freely given: Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word (Luke 1:38). Thus Mary is seen by the Church as the New Eve (as Christ is the New Adam) whose perfect obedience contrasted the disobedience of the First Mother, Eve, in Paradise. As St. Irenaeus says, the knot of Eve's disobedience was loosed through the obedience of Mary; for what Eve, a virgin, bound by her unbelief, that Mary, a virgin, unloosed by her faith [Against the Heresies, III, xxii, 4]

As All-Holy and Most-Pure, Mary was free from actual sin, but, in the opinion of most Orthodox theologians, although not dogmatized by the Church, she did fall under the curse of Adam's sin as does all mankind. For this reason by virtue of her solidarity with all humanity the Theotokos died a bodily death. Yet, in her case, the resurrection of the body had been anticipated; and she was assumed body and soul into Heaven; and her tomb was found empty an event celebrated in the Feast of the Falling-Asleep (or Dormition) of the Most-Holy Theotokos. (Aug. 15). Thus, as the hymns of that Feast proclaim, she has passed from earth to heaven, beyond death and judgment, living already in the age to come. She enjoys now the same bodily glory all of us hope to share one day. (from *These Truths We Hold*, STS Press)

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, Save Us!