



# HOLY TRINITY

## ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

# CHURCH BULLETIN

Vol. 13 No. 26 \* Sunday June 21, 2020 \* Editor: V. Rev. Fr. Nicolai Buga

## All Romanian Saints Sunday

### Gospel Reading **Matthew 4: 18 - 23**

*At that time*, as Jesus walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon who is called Peter and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. And going on from there he saw two other brothers, James

the son of Zebedee and John his brother, in the boat with Zebedee their father, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left their boat and their father, and followed him. And he went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people.

### Apostle Reading **Romans 2: 10 - 16**

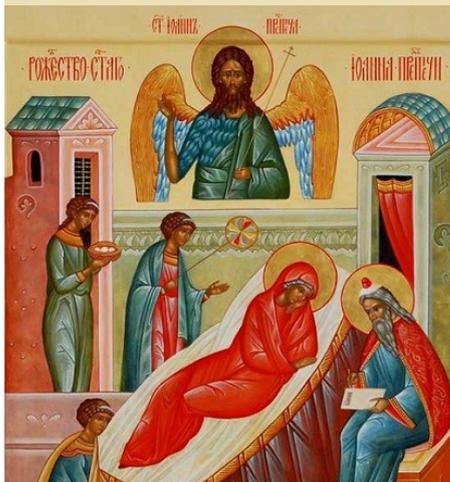
*Brethren*, glory and honour and peace for everyone who does good, the Jew first and also the Greek. For God shows no partiality. All who have sinned apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous in God's sight, but the doers of the law who will be justified. When Gentiles, who do not possess the law, do

instinctively what the law requires, these, though not having the law, are a law to themselves. They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, to which their own conscience also bears witness; and their conflicting thoughts will accuse or perhaps excuse them on the day when, according to my gospel, God, through Jesus Christ, will judge the secret thoughts of all.

**Synaxarion.** Sunday June 21, 2020 - All Romanian Saints Sunday (Second Sunday after Pentecost): Holy Martyr Julian of Tarsus; Holy Martyr Aphrodisius (fish allowed); Wednesday June 24 – Nativity of Saint John the Baptist: Translation of the Relics of St. John the New of Suceava (fish allowed)



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## The Sunday of the Romanian Saints

Romanian Christianity has given fruit to many and wonderful saints, even though, the humility characteristic to our nation, or other unfavorable historical circumstances in which they lived in, have not allowed our Church to canonize but a very few of them and only in 1955.

The Romanian saints were real and they have been recognized by popular piety, even though the Church has not formally canonized them and has not dedicated them certain calendar days; this is why their deeds have not been praised through special church hymns.

Actually, for the longest time, the saints have been revealed through the praise they gained through popular piety. Only in the later times the Church has started formal canonizations of the later saints, confirming their veneration by large circles of the faithful [...]

All saints, with the exception of the apostles and missionaries, have gained this quality by working for the faithful or becoming remarkable through their pure and sacrificial lives among the faithful of a special place or country. Their veneration started even during their lives, or after their death, among the faithful of that place, has extended step by step beyond those borders. The local saints became in this way universal saints. But they reached this veneration for their purity attained in a certain place, or for their martyrdom, or for their deeds towards the true faith confessed everywhere, so now they can be imitated by the faithful of any place. They have applied the teachings of the true universal faith in a certain place or country. They have served and demonstrated the universal faith in the place they have lived in.

In this way, all saints are local saints because they



contend in a certain place, but they are universal for the universal faith they serve in that specific place. From this point of view there are no local or universal saints. All are local for the people from a certain place, which they serve during their lives, through their deeds and example, but all are universal because this example is available for the faithful everywhere and contributes to the unity of all that want to know them. All are filled by the same Christ that shines through their beings and all are the bearers of the same Holy

Spirit, even though the Holy Spirit That communicated to them was shared to others in a different language. They all belong, through the Same Spirit, to the Universal Church, started at Pentecost and continued through the centuries, involving different nations (Acts 2:3). Their languages May be different, but their souls are filled by the Same Spirit and they feel the Same Christ.

So the Romanian Saints, be they martyrs of the faith in the fourth century, or in the eighteenth century, be they hierarchs that illumined the people with their word or helped them with their deeds, be they ascetics that reached the highest spiritual stage in God, through prayer for themselves and for the people, they have all elevated the character of the true faith and the image of man that lives the faith seriously to a step that urges the faithful everywhere, when they get to know them, to live their faith with more conviction and follow their example.

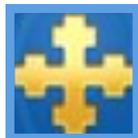
The more the saints make themselves known through their exceptional lives in the place they live in, the more their faces radiate with even more power in the Universal Church. But the unity between their local and universal service can also be made known in a different way.

A saint, even though he elevates at the highest level the characteristics of a certain nation, the height that he attains makes him embrace with an all-encompassing love all the people. There is no individual selfishness or national exclusivism in the saints. That's why they are true bridges of brotherhood among people and nations. Through the saints, more than through all the faithful, the catholicity of the Church is deepened, even though this does not imply the erasing of the differences among the nations they belong to her. Through them the catholicity of the Church is deepened, as the faithful from different nations get to know them. This is because these faithful are asking for their intercessions with conviction and these saints truly intercede for them. This is why it would be good if the various Orthodox Churches would recognize, through official documents, known to their respective people, the canonizations made by each sister Church, to contribute even more to the unity of their people in their piety dedicated, in reciprocity, to their saints.

It would be good for the faithful everywhere to know the saints from all places, because each saint brings through his deeds in other circumstances a model of deeds for any circumstances in their lives. The lives of the saints and their lives permeated by the presence of God in them, surpass their local determinations, being elevated to what could be a universal model and a reassurance for the faithful of any place. This is why it would be recommended that the lives of the saints from any nation would be made known through translations in the languages of the other orthodox people. Through this it would be accomplished what has been done in the oldest centuries of the Church, reaching the universalization and the unification of the piety of all the orthodox people around all the saints. It would be a practical way for the Church to reach even more fraternity among the people in her midst. [...]

**Fr. Dumitru Stăniloae**

[Source: [dialogues.stjohndfw.info/2014/06/the-sunday-of-the-romanian-saints/](http://dialogues.stjohndfw.info/2014/06/the-sunday-of-the-romanian-saints/)]



## **HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from June 21 to June 29, 2020**

**Sunday June 21  
(Second Sunday  
after Pentecost -  
fish allowed):**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

**Wednesday June 24 –  
Nativity of St John the  
Baptist (fish allowed):**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

**Sunday June 28  
(Third Sunday after  
Pentecost -  
fish allowed):**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy

**Monday June 24 –  
Synaxis of the Holy  
Apostles Peter and Paul  
(fish allowed):**

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Holy Liturgy



## “Follow Me” Applies to Us All

In some ways, we may envy Peter, Andrew, James, and John for the clarity of their call. On the day that Jesus Christ called them to leave everything behind and follow Him, there was no question what He wanted them to do. The message was clear and they did as they were told.

Of course, that was only the beginning of their ministry as disciples and apostles. As we know from reading the rest of the gospels, these men did not have a clear understanding of who Christ really was until after His resurrection. Nothing in their background had prepared them for this unusual kind of Messiah or for the great sacrifices that following Him would require. But on the day that the Lord called His first disciples, He did not require perfect understanding. He asked only that they leave behind the life that they had known and take the first steps in following Him.

That was not a small thing, of course. Imagine how hard it would be if Christ made very clear to you that He wanted you to give up the only occupation you had ever known, leave your family behind, and literally follow Him as He went around teaching, preaching, and healing the sick. On that particular day, despite the enormity of this calling and their less than full understanding of it, these men did as they were told and became “fishers of men” for the Kingdom of God. They were clearly chosen to be Christ’s disciples, but they certainly did not have it easy in any way for the rest of their lives.

It is a blessing and a challenge to have a strong and clear sense of what God wants you to do in life. How many holy people—from the very first Christians until this very day—die as martyrs or suffer abuse and persecution for their faithfulness to Christ? To take even small steps toward a holy life requires struggle, persistence, and a willingness to endure tension within our own souls and usually with other people. To lead a righteous life requires loving God with every ounce of our being and



our neighbors as ourselves. Try to do that seriously and you will find yourself fighting many battles, especially in your own soul.

St. Paul was a Jewish convert to Christianity who knew that God had called the Hebrews for a unique role in the salvation of the world. The Jews certainly had an advantage over the Gentiles because of all that God had revealed to them through Moses and the prophets. But St. Paul also knew that God shows no partiality. Hearing the Law without obeying it was of

no benefit at all, even as Christ’s disciples would have gained nothing by ignoring Christ’s call to follow Him. What matters is actually doing what God requires of us.

St. Paul knew that God had not abandoned the Gentiles, for He gave everyone a conscience, a knowledge of right and wrong engraved in our hearts; that is an important part of what it means to be a human being in God’s image and likeness. So whether Jew or Gentile, whether according to the law of Moses or the dictates of conscience, St. Paul teaches that God holds us all accountable to the truth that we have received. The question for every human being, then, is whether we obey the Lord according to what we know of His purposes for us.

He was under no illusion that the Jews had perfectly obeyed the Law or that the Gentiles had lived fully in accordance with conscience. St. Paul taught that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. No one is in the position to boast of a privileged status before the Lord or to judge another, for both Jew and Gentile (namely, all human beings) stand in need of grace and mercy to the depths of our souls. Everyone is in need of a Savior Who conquers sin and death and brings us into the eternal life of God.

That was certainly true our Lord's disciples, who failed with some frequency to obey or even understand what Christ expected of them. They largely abandoned Him at His arrest and crucifixion, and it was not until He appeared to them after His resurrection and gave them a measure of the Holy Spirit that their eyes were truly opened. It was not until the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost that they boldly and effectively became "fishers of men" whose preaching and miracle-working ministry brought multitudes into the life of Christ. As a consequence of their apostolic ministry, they took up their crosses in suffering persecution, hardships of all kinds, and even death as martyrs. The Lord did not call them to an easy life of special privilege, but to an extremely demanding one of sacrifice for the sake of the Kingdom.

At the end of the day, He does the same with us all. Of course, the details will be different. We are not fishermen in first-century Palestine or the very pillars of the Church in the sense that they were. St. Paul surely did not have us in mind when he wrote to the Romans about Jews and Gentiles. It is possible to get so caught up in the particular callings and circumstances of others such that we miss the larger point. To be perfectly clear, the larger point is that we are all fully responsible for hearing and responding to God's calling in our lives, no matter how imperfectly we understand it or how difficult it is to obey.

In many ways, we have much less of an excuse than Christ's first disciples, for we have the benefit of their example and of so many generations of faithful people who have gone before us in following Jesus Christ. As Orthodox Christians, we have received the fullness of God's revelation in the ongoing life of the Church by the power of the Holy Spirit. But instead of patting ourselves on the back and simply taking pride in these great blessings, we must humbly accept the great responsibility that they give us. Like the Jews of old, we must remember that it is no great thing to be a recipient of God's requirements if we do not actually do what He requires. Like the Gentiles mentioned by St. Paul, we must remember that it is no accomplishment to have a conscience that leads us in the right direction if we do not actually follow it. And our participation in the Church will be of no benefit to us if we ourselves do not become living witnesses of our Savior's victory over sin and death in our daily lives.

In this season of the Apostles Fast, we want to become more like those blessed men who left everything behind in response to the Savior's call, even though they often fell short. Their understanding was imperfect and the same was true of their actions on many occasions. But the Lord did not abandon or reject them, even when they abandoned Him. He is merciful and calls us all to accept His mercy when we realize that we have not been doers of His will and have disregarded His calling. Like the apostles, we do not yet have perfect faith and obedience; but just like them, we are responsible to respond to the calling we have received as best we can. To do so will never be easy or without sacrifice; we will often stumble along the path of discipleship. But if we continue the journey with humble repentance, we will grow each step of the way in hearing Christ's calling more clearly and in gaining the strength to obey Him more fully.

As hard as it is to believe, Jesus Christ calls each of us with the urgency that He called those first disciples and apostles. We are every bit as responsible for obeying Him as they were, indeed even more responsible because we have the benefit of their example. They had to wait three years for Christ's resurrection and the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, while we do not. Far more than the Jews of the Old Testament or the ancient Gentiles, God has opened the eyes of our souls to know what He requires of us. He has given us a great calling to share personally in His eternal and holy life. There is no question about that. The only question is how we will respond to the One Who says to each and every one of us: "Follow Me."

**Fr. Philip LeMasters**

