



HOLY TRINITY

ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH



723 N BODINE ST PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

CHURCH BULLETIN

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The 21st Sunday after Pentecost

HOLY TRINITY

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Gospel Reading Luke 8: 5-15

The Lord said this parable: "A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold." And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path are those who have

heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience." As he said these things, he cried out "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Apostle Reading Galatians 2: 16-20

Brethren, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law no flesh shall be justified. "But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is Christ therefore a minister of sin? Certainly

not! For if I build again those things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law died to the law that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

Synaxarion. Sunday October 11 (The 21st Sunday after Pentecost – Sunday of the 7th Ecumenical Council): Holy Apostle Philip the Deacon. Wednesday October 14: Holy Righteous Paraskeva the New of Iași



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The Parable of the Sower

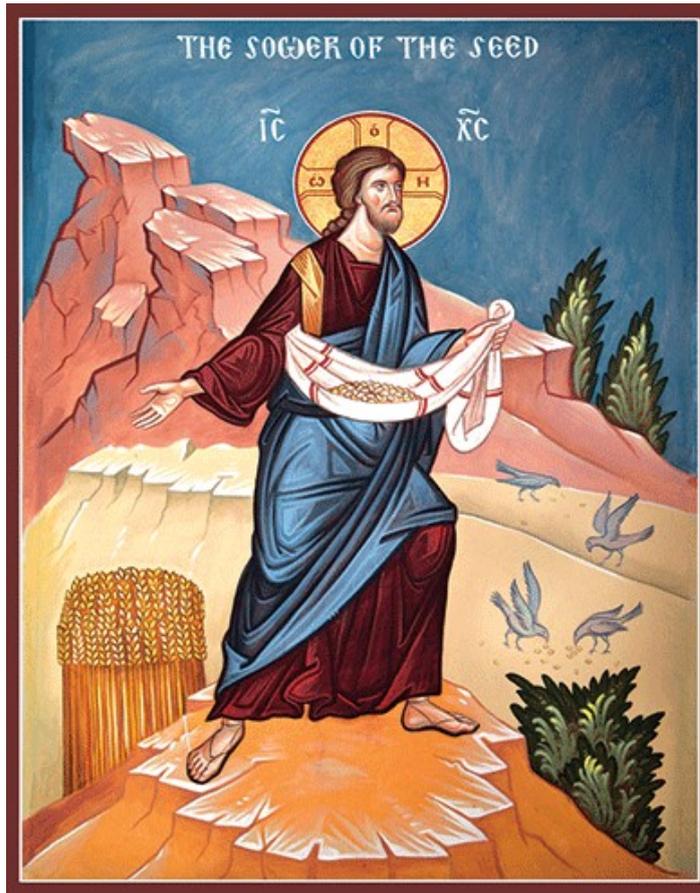
In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen. Today is the Twenty First Sunday after Pentecost, and it is also the day that we remember the Holy Fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council. This council established permanently what the church had always known concerning the holy icons.

Today, we read the parable of the Sower, which is a very familiar parable, known even to people that are not Christians. Many of these parables are really part and parcel of our culture. People even use biblical terminology and don't even know that they are using it.

How do these parables affect us? There is an inner meaning and an outer meaning to these parables. Why did our Lord speak in parables? Why did He say things with a hidden meaning? The Fathers explain to us that when you look into something deeply and carefully, when it takes effort to look into it, then you develop more of an understanding. If something is handed to you and there is no effort involved in learning it, then you develop very little understanding.

We can see this principle even in secular life. Look at how young people can barely even read and write now, because of this television age that we are in. Information is given to them so freely it takes very little effort to find it out.

Also the parables are given because God does not those who are not worthy to be told things that they will be judged for. A man must do some investigation if he is to learn the deep meaning of these things, and God will judge us for what we know. God will also judge us for what we don't know, if we CHOOSE to not know things. God will judge us the same if we know something and don't do it or we choose to be ignorant in the ways of piety. If we are willfully ignorant, and this occurs whenever we do not try to seek out the knowledge of God's commandments and exercise them in our life, God will



then judge us in the Judgment, even if we try to say we do not know something.

What is the inner and outer meaning of this parable? There is a lot of explanation given for this parable, even in the very text of scripture itself. It is very rare in scripture where our Lord actually explains the deeper meaning of some dark saying of His. The Apostles came to Him, and they must have also come to Him many other times, and they said, we don't understand this at all. He explained this to them, because it's meaning is so important.

Who is the sower? None other than the Lord Jesus Christ. Be careful when you read scripture -- every

word has meaning. The Sower went OUT to sow his seed". He did not go "out" from the farmhouse and start to work -- this "going out" is the incarnation of the Son of God. The seed is the word of God, those words that He spoke.

As he sowed, some seed fell by various places, the wayside, the rock, among the thorns and on good ground. It "fell"; it was not thrown. It fell everywhere equally, and these places, are the souls of men. The preexisting one, Jesus Christ, thought it not robbery to be equal to us, and became a man. And He sowed his teaching to the entire universe, equally and freely to all men. It is available to everyone.

There are four kinds of men described in this parable, and, three of those kinds perished. All of humanity fits into one of these categories, and the majority will perish. This is true in our age, and has been true in every age. The majority of people will not inherit the Kingdom of God, because they are not the good ground. And yet our Lord and Savior still sows His seed, and still gives the opportunity to a man to accept Him and to follow His commandments.

Remember the story of the talents and the man with the one talent — our Lord knew that he was not going to use this talent. Remember what a talent is? It is the grace of God, which enables us to do good works, to obey His commandments, and to learn more of Him.

The man with the one talent is like the ground by the wayside. The fowls of the air immediately snatch away the word from his heart, and he never really believes at all. We have all known people like that, who really have no belief whatsoever. The wayside is hard, and packed down. No seed can penetrate into it, and it is washed away, or it sits there, prey for the birds of the air.

The birds are the demons, which snatch away the word from a man's heart, but only because a man leaves it out there, unprotected, and does not cherish it. The demons cannot take away the word from your heart if you hold it close to yourself, only if you care nothing for it.

So these men by the wayside, they have no part in salvation whatsoever, they never even bothered to believe.

Some of the seed fell upon the rock, and when it was spring up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture. Have you every been to a glade? This is an area where there is a thin layer of soil over limestone bluffs, and only certain kinds of plants can grow. When there is a drought, everything dies, except for a few very hardy trees. There is a little bit of soil, a very small amount, but there is not enough soil to retain any moisture, which is the essence of Christ. There is just a small amount of knowledge, and not much struggle or desire, and at the merest, smallest trial, such a person falls away, and he perishes.

Some people are thorny ground. The thorns spring up with the good wheat, the word of God. These thorns choke out the following of the commandments. They choke out the knowledge of God, because we turn away from God, to our thorns, whatever they are, whether they are riches, cares of this world, sensual pleasures, our pride, our fear, ambition. There are hundreds of ways that a man can turn away from Christ, even though he appears to be a Christian.

Remember the parable about the wheat and the tares? These tares are the same as thorns. The tares are growing up right by the wheat, and except to a man who has extreme discretion and knowledge, and of course, the God-man, Jesus Christ, such people are sometimes indistinguishable to true Christians. They go to church, they have families, they may give alms, and they do everything externally just like everybody else, except they don't have any life within them. Where their treasure is, so their heart is, and their treasure is not Christ, so Christ is not with them. Those people who are amidst the thorns have

not Christ, even though they would call themselves Christians.

Some of the seed, a small amount of the seed, fell on good ground. And it sprang up and bear fruit. St. Luke says a hundred fold, and St. Matthew also recounts this story and shows that the Lord gave other information. Some sprang up thirty, some sixty and some a hundred fold, because not all the Saints are the same. Not everyone follows the word of God to the same degree, or the same amount.

I guess that is good news to me, because I don't at this moment think that I can become like the Saints. I shouldn't think this way, because God can change a man, if he only gives himself to Him. However, if none of us lives with the LOFTY righteousness of the Saints, God has a place for us in His mansion, since there are many rooms, if we make an effort to live according to His commandments.

I have said this many times before; success is not as important as your effort. If you make an effort, then in the end, paradoxically, you will be successful, because God will receive your repentance, and reward you, for some thirty, some sixty, some one hundred. May it be that we all receive a hundred fold. May we all be like the man who had five talents, and labored and increased it to ten, and then our Lord gave him an infinite amount of grace.

Now, how is it that we can be good ground? Isn't that really what we should try to learn from this parable? What is good ground? Good ground has been tilled carefully, and dug, and the clods of dirt have been broken up, and it has been finely sifted, and fertilizer has been added to it, and it has been watered, and hedged round about so that animals can not get in. It has been guarded, so no one can steal the fruits it will produce. There is effort involved in having good ground. It does not just "happen".

Last year, I tilled a part of my property in order to plant. I did not take care of it this year, and did not plant, and you can not even TELL that it was good ground, and it was VERY good ground after I had finished with it, but I didn't take care of it, and so, it reverted back.

The same thing will happen to us. If we do not take care of the seed that is planted within us, we will revert back to the type of man we previously were, and we will allow the tares to grow in us. They will choke us out. Even if there are not tares to begin with — the seeds of tares fly through the air, don't they? So do the demons. The tares can come into good ground at any time, and they constantly must be plucked out and uprooted with great care.

It is very painful to tear out many tares by the way, thorns and thistles, because they are sharp and they cut,

and make us bleed. Regardless, we must do this work, and tear out these thorns and thistles if we are to be good ground, if indeed, we have EVEN begun to be good ground!

Our Savior says about those on the good ground, “But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.”

There are those words, that we have trouble with (I have trouble with them sometimes); “Having heard the word, KEEP it and bring forth fruit with PATIENCE.” Patience is the most difficult word in our language. The Christian life is patience, endurance. He who endures to the end will be saved. We are just beginning you know. And if indeed there is some part of our soul that is good ground, let us make the rest of it good ground, by careful labor, by backbreaking labor. And, while we are cleaning out those parts of our souls, let us at the same time pay attention to the places we have cleared, so the tares do not come in, and choke us.

How are we to do this? This is a task beyond our abilities! The Apostle tells us, in a marvelous way. He says, “For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Galatians 2:19-20).

Marvelous, magnificent words! May they be true in our lives. May we say that we no longer live, but Christ lives in us. May we live by faith, since this is the only way to accomplish our task. And what is our task? It is to know Christ isn't it? Isn't that what it said in the other Gospel today (John 17:1-13)? Our Savior was praying to His Heavenly father, shortly before He was going to go to His great passion for our salvation, and He said, “And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

What is knowledge? Knowledge is intimacy. Knowledge is ... love. To know God is to love Him, and give everything to Him.

We see evidence of this kind of love even in our own relationships. The love of a husband for a wife, or a child for his mother or father, and especially the love of an infant, such perfect love.

But just like a child who is not so intimate with his parents after he has done something wrong – he doesn't show up in the same room for a while, he doesn't want to talk to them, he hangs his head, he has broken communion with them because of guilt – so it is with us, if we do not follow the Lord's commandments.

Then, we will not be able to cry “Abba, Father”, because we will be hanging our head in shame. Or worse, I say most people don't do that, because they cannot bear that kind of shame. Instead, they just leave God. They become choked with cares, or lusts or passions, with misplaced priorities, or they become even worse than that, and they wither away, and have no faith whatsoever. That's what happens to most people.

I hope that in our church, if you forgive the expression, we beat the “odds”. I hope that all of us will be good ground, but I know that the only way that this can be possibly true is if we struggle -- apart and together. We must pray for one-another, help one-another, and then, in our corner, in our closet, cry out to God each day, asking Him to help us with whatever passions we have, with whatever sins we commit. Even if we have poor attitudes, and we desire to change our attitudes.

Do you know that all sin, and even all action proceeds from thought? Everything we do proceeds from thought. We decide to do something, and then we do it, whether it is good or bad. So we must amend our thoughts. That is why the Apostle Paul says, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things” (Philippians 4:8).

Train yourself! So now, if you want to be good ground, you must not add any trash to this ground. You must not add such things as impure thoughts, gossip, judging others. You can surely think of many other things that are within your heart that you do and that are affecting your ground. And if ground is left alone, and just walked over, and not cared for, it becomes the wayside. It becomes hard and the seed can no longer penetrate, and that which is in it dies, or never germinates. So we have a great labor to do, my brothers and sisters. We must continue to care for our ground carefully. And we must have patience.

There are two sides to patience. One is that we must be patient with our position in life, with our status, with the amount of money we make, with the difficulties we are encountering. We must not curse God or say that we should have this or we should have that. This is one kind of patience.

There is another kind – a very important kind of patience. Allow God to work! It takes time for Him to work. We do not know how much time we have, but the time we have is what God has allotted to us. He is going to use moment of that time to perfect us. So, if we have trouble with our sins, if there is something that we fall into every

day, then EVERY day repent of it, and be patient! day, then EVERY day repent of it, and be patient!

Be manly in spirit, and do not be like a child and run away from that sin, or rather, run away from the knowledge of that sin, since it will always be with you until you conquer it. Confront it! Confront it with sword and with shield, and with buckler, and with faith (Cf. Ephesians 6:13-17). Eventually, God will deliver you. It will happen. It is guaranteed. If a man struggles to know to know God's commandments, He will reveal them. This is absolutely certain, because in your struggling, you will be doing His commandments.

So, be patient, and cultivate your ground every day, every moment. However, be careful not to judge yourself. This is a hard lesson, that takes us a long time to learn – to not judge ourselves, and look at the sins we are doing and to say we can never do better. In some things we do better, and in some things, God help us and forgive us, we have done worse, but the demons cannot take away from us that we are children of the Most High.

We are able to cry "Abba Father", only if we are struggling to live in Christ. God lives within us. He enlightens us, He helps us, even though we are sinners. So, if He has come to us and has offered us FREELY His grace and mercy, who are we, in our pride and arrogance to say "that is not enough mercy or enough grace. I can't change"? Every man can change. Everyone can change magnificently if he only allows God to change him, but this takes time, a lot of time.



I am sure, you are like me, and are very tired of your sins. They weigh us down, they are like an anchor, and they cut and they hurt. And yet, in some weird and perverted way, they are dear to us. They must be dear to us in some way, but God understands, and will help us if we make an effort, and if we are patient.

None of us right now are the wayside because we are at least trying to be Christians. Some of us may be the rock, some may be thorns. God knows, and this will be all revealed in the end. Even if you have very little soil right now, and even if you are choked with thorns and cares, God will help you to become good soil. He will help any man to become good soil. He is no respecter of persons. Any man that desires will be given, freely, God's mercy. So take God's mercy and clasp it to your hearts. Hold in to it and cultivate it, and be good soil, and God

will save you. Amen.

Father Seraphim Holland



“Learn to Love the Saints...!”

On this day, our Holy Mother Church celebrates the holy and god bearing fathers of the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea. As you remember from Catechism, this is the Council that deliberated and finalized the Orthodox experience and teaching on icons. With this council's resolutions, all the persecutions and bloody purges because of the use of icons came to a halt. With this council, the heretical teachings on icons and those who taught these heresies were rejected from the church. In church circles, the Ecumenical Councils many times are referred to as the “Municipalities (gatherings) of Martyrs”. In other words, many of the Holy Fathers who made up these assemblies were persecuted and eventually suffered martyrdom. It became a standard. All Ecumenical Councils there-



fore were “Municipalities of Martyrs”. The Holy Fathers who assembled at the Councils of the one united Christendom, spoke in a fashion similar to the manner that St. Paul spoke to Titus in today's Epistle lesson. St. Paul tells Titus what he witnessed, things he actually heard, that which he lived, and finally, the meaning he drew from these life experiences. His confession to Titus today was the sum total of his illuminating life experiences. These experiences were real and never forgotten. Today, therefore, is an opportunity for us to reflect on sainthood and martyrdom (witnessing the faith) and their meaning for us today.

Many people have a tilted understanding of saints and sainthood. It must be known that saints of the church were not singled out because of their virtue, the quality of their character, their noble way of life, nor for their heroic and admirable accomplishments. Saints were set aside by the Church because they participated in the Divine Nature

of God. During the Divine Liturgy we chant the beautiful hymn, “One is Holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen” The Church is Holy, not because we, the believers make her holy, but because Jesus Christ, the head of the Church, makes us holy. As the head of the Church is holy, He blesses the whole body of the Church, that is, the Christians who compose the body.

St. Symeon the New Theologian says, “Christians make up the entire body of Christ with their deeds, their knowledge and thoughts.” Those who unite themselves to Christ reflect the light of Christ. This is confirmed by St. Gregory Palamas who states “...we become creations of Divine Light”.

This concept is repeated by the Fathers of the Church. Man participates in the Divine Light of God's actions. God is, by His own nature, the Light. We have the potential of becoming the Light by God's grace. Saints therefore are the rays of God's light. The Church places an illuminating halo around the head of the saints as Saints reflect the uncreated light of God.

Martyrdom was not a simple act of self-sacrifice. Saints witnessed their faith in the Holy Trinity to the whole world. They taught that communion with God means communion with the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity.

The Holy Trinity reflects freedom, love and unity. As we freely accept to follow Christ (without threat or coercion) we display love for God and love for all people. This love serves to unify us regardless of our apparent differences.

The Saints witnessed to the world that Christ was not a social reformer. He was not a mere teacher of morality. Christ is the Victor of death, sin, and the adverse powers. He leads man to God. It is with Christ that man finds true freedom.

The Saints witnessed to the world that the Church is not an human organization. It is not a playing field where we can satisfy our psychological and emotional needs. It is the Divine/Human body of Jesus Christ. "...incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary." The Society of Christians see the Church as a Eucharistic Community. Holy Communion is the high point of their life. As we live within the Church, we apply all the lessons of Holy Scripture to our lives.

The Saints of the Church witnessed to the world that theology is not brain thing. The sphere of theology is our dwelling place as we reside with God. Because we accept God's love then return love to God, who loved us first, we receive understanding. When we develop passions and evil ways, it is because we have over stepped of loving relationship with God. Theology is rooted in the Pentecost experience. When our heart is fully purged by the Spirit of God, our mind is enlightened, our vision is renewed, and our love for our fellowman becomes reinforced.

The Saints of the Church offered their life reflecting the image of God and not in support of any political faction nor for the expediency of a given ideology. They see the world as a gift from God. Far, very far, from the notion that the world can be compared to a hunted prey which should be used and subjected to man's individual wants and needs. The earth and the fullness thereof is holy. It is the space where God and man exchange gifts. God offers gifts to us, we offer gifts to God and to our fellow human beings on earth.

The Saints offered their life for their convictions. They were revolutionaries, radicals and transformers for Christ. They were able to transform the society in which they resided simply by their intense love for God.

Let us heed Abba Isaiah's words, "Learn to love the saints, so they will shed mercy on you. Learn to yearn for the saints, so that their zeal for God will consume you."

How many of you have studied the life of the saint to whom you have been dedicated at baptism? Today is a good time to begin.

Fr. Emmanuel Pratsinakis



HOLY TRINITY'S Liturgical Schedule from October 10 to October 18 2020

Saturday October 10:

**12:00 pm-3 pm: TRADITIONAL
ROMANIAN FOOD FESTIVAL
(DRIVE-BY)**

Sunday October 11 (21st Sunday after Pentecost):

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:00 am - Sunday School

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

Wednesday October 14 - Holy Righteous Paraskeva of Iași:

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

Sunday October 18 (20th Sunday after Pentecost)

9:00 am - Matins

10:00 am - Divine Liturgy

11:00 am - Sunday School

12:00 pm - Coffee Hour

**1:00 pm - Baptism ANISIA
DARIE**



Holy Righteous Paraskeva the New of Iași

Our venerable Mother Paraskeva the New lived as a monastic in the 11th century. She is beloved in Romania as Parascheva and in Serbia and Macedonia as Petka.

In the Eastern Orthodox tradition there are three different saints known as St. Parascheva. The first one was born in Rome, in the 2nd century, and is considered a healer and a protector of cattle and crops. She is commemorated on August the 8th. The second one was born in Iconia and she died as a martyr during the reign of the emperor Diocletian in the 3rd century. Her feast day, October 27th, is observed mostly in Dalmatia.

However, the best known and the most widely revered by Eastern Orthodox Christians is the third one, St. Paraskeva the New (a.k.a. St. Paraskeva the Young), whose relics are sheltered in the metropolitan cathedral in Iași, Romania. Our Saint Paraskeva lived in the 11th century. Her feast day is celebrated on October 14.

Saint Paraskeva the New was born into a wealthy and noble Christian family, in Epivat (in the province of Thrace, near Constantinople - now in Turkey), on the shores of the Marmara Sea. Her pious parents gave her and her older brother, Euthymius, a solid religious education, and raised them in the tradition and practice of the Orthodox Church.

One day, while Paraskeva was attending the Divine Liturgy with her mother in the "Church of the Holy Theotokos", she heard the Lord's words, "Whoever wants to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Mark 8, 34). These words pierced her heart like an arrow, and had a profound effect on her. Thus, after a deep meditation, the young girl that was only ten years old, decided to give her rich clothes away to the poor. Thus, to the exasperation of her parents who found the girl's charity more than they could understand or support, she began to dress poor people in her expensive clothes. As her parents objected and tried to get her to stop, to follow her calling, Paraskeva fled from home. She abandoned her wealth and privileges, left her parents, and ran away to Constantinople. One could imagine how much she was very impressed by the capital city of the



Byzantine Empire, a city full of churches with many relics and wonder-working icons. There she met some zealous ascetics who instructed her in the spiritual life. Thus, near relics of saints, she spent her time in prayer and meditating on the words of Christ.

To find their daughter, the parents began to travel from city to city. Paraskeve succeeded in eluding them, by moving to Chalcedon, and then to Heraclea Pontica, near the Black Sea, where she settled at to the church of the Most Holy Theotokos. There she spent five years living an austere life of continuous prayer and devotion.

When her parents died, she sold her properties and gave the money to the poor. Thus, she gave up the world for the "desert", dedicating her life entirely to God through prayer and fasting, while she was still young in years. Her older brother Euthymius became a monk, and later he was consecrated as Bishop of Matidia. During her prayers she received visions of the Holy Virgin Mary and in one of the visions, she was instructed to go to Jerusalem.

After spending some time in the city, she joined a convent in the Jordanian desert. A few years later, she returned to Constantinople and then, at the age of twenty-five, moved to the village of Katikratia where, at the "Church of the Holy Apostles", where she lived the remaining two years of her life.

Then she made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, where she had long desired to venerate those places where our Saviour had lived and walked. She did not return to Constantinople but, yearning to withdraw still further from the world and its distractions, she crossed the River Jordan into the wilderness.

She undertook ascetic struggles in the desert of Jordan. There she lived the ascetic life until she reached the age of twenty-five. An angel of the Lord ordered her to return to her homeland, saying: "Leave the wilderness and return to your homeland; it is necessary that you render your body to the earth there, and your soul to the habitation of the Lord." St. Paraskeve obeyed, and returned to Epivat in the village of Katikratia where she lived for two years in ceaseless fasting and prayer.

St. Paraskeva departed to the Lord at the age of twenty-seven, and was buried near the sea. She was given a Christian burial, but as no one knew who she was or where she was from, she was buried in an unmarked grave. It pleased God, however, to reveal the glory of His saint. Years after her repose, the body of a dead sailor washed ashore. It had already begun to decay and give off a horrible stench before a stylite saint nearby detected it and asked the villagers to bury it. They unknowingly dug the grave right over the relics of St. Paraskeva. That night, one of the grave-diggers, a pious man by the name of George, had a dream. He saw a queen seated on a throne, surrounded by a glorious company of soldiers. One of them said to him, "George, why did you disdain the body of St. Paraskeva and bury a stinking corpse with it? Make haste and transfer the body of the Saint to a worthy place, for God desires to glorify His servant on earth." Then St. Paraskeva herself spoke: "George, dig up my relics at once. I can't bear the stench of that corpse." And she told him who she was and that she was originally from Epivat. That same night, a devout woman, Euphemia, had a similar dream.

On being told about these dreams the next morning, the villagers took lighted candles and went to the cemetery, where they dug down and discovered St. Paraskeva's relics, fragrant and incorrupt. The relics were taken to the church of the Apostles Peter and Paul, where, by the prayers of the holy ascetic, many people were healed of various diseases and the blind received their sight. She remained there for about 175 years.

St Paraskeva's relics were moved to Trnovo, Bulgaria in 1238 and placed in the cathedral. Patriarch Euthymius wrote her Life and established the day of her commemoration as October 14. The Turks occupied Bulgaria in 1391, and her relics were given to Mircea the Elder, Prince of the Wallachia (one of the former principalities of nowadays Romania) which, unlike Bulgaria, was not under the turks. In 1393 the relics were given to Princess Angelina of Serbia (July 30), who brought them to Belgrade in the Ružica Church. When Belgrade fell to Ottoman forces in 1521, the relics were translated to Constantinople and placed in the patriarchal cathedral.

In 1641, during the time of Patriarch Parthenius the Old of Constantinople (1639-1644), when the Patriarchate of Constantinople found itself in great financial need, the relics St. Paraskeva were given as a gift to the Prince of Moldavia, Vasile Lupu Voevod (1634-1653), in recognition of his financial support. The holy relics were lowered over

the fortified wall of Phanar and were secretly transported to Iași (Jassy), the capital city of the Principality of Moldavia (Romania). On June 13, 1641, the relics arrived to Iași, and were settled in the Monastery of the Three Hierarchs where many healings took place.

On December 26, 1888, after being rescued from a fire, St. Paraskeva's relics were placed in the Metropolitan Cathedral at Iași, where they remain until the present day. They can be venerated at any time, the Metropolitan Cathedral being usually open every day.

A severe drought in 1946-47 affected Moldavia, adding to the misery left by the war. Then, Metropolitan Justinian Marina took a courageous decision. In that period of Stalinist communism, when in Romania the Soviets were carrying the toughest anti-Christian persecution, Justinian initiated the first procession featuring the coffin containing the relics of Saint Paraskeva.

The relics wended their way through the drought-deserted villages of eight Moldavian counties: Iași, Vaslui, Roman, Bacău, Putna, Neamț, Baia and Botoșani. The offerings collected on this occasion were distributed, based on Metropolitan Justinian's decisions, to orphans, widows, invalids, school cafeterias, churches under construction, and to monasteries in order to feed the sick and old or feeble monks.

Saint Paraskeva is venerated as the Protector of Iași and Iași and all Moldavia. Each year, on October 14, hundreds of thousands of Orthodox faithful and hierarchs from many countries gather in Iași to celebrate her feast day and to venerate her holy relics, which continue to work miracles. The line to venerate the relics can last for 12 hours and can be as long as 2.5 km (i. e. 1.553 mi).

Orthodox Romanians have placed many churches under the protection of the St. Paraskeva. Thus, in the metropolias, archdioceses and dioceses of the Romanian Patriarchate there are over 250 churches dedicated to St. Paraskeva.

Let us pray the Venerable Paraskeva to intercede for us, sinners, to Our Lord Jesus Christ, saying with St. Nikolai Velimirovich: *"By your prayers, help us in the misfortunes of life. Through the clouds of earthly sorrow bring us light, like a rainbow - O chaste virgin, most wonderful, Holy Mother Paraskeva!"*

(Edited by Fr. Nicolai Buga)