

## **St. Gregory the Theologian Orthodox Church**

### **Church School Year for Adults and Youth: The Year of Saints**

This year is difficult to have the normal church school for both adults and youth. After meetings with the church school teachers, I have decided that we will study a different saint each month for the year. There will be material for all age groups available each month and we will try to do either in-person classes if safely available or video class each month on the day indicated (usually around 3:00 PM on that Saturday with Vespers and a pot-luck to follow). The exciting thing is that we will virtually travel each quarter to different places to learn about the saint of the month which will be open to all people. All parishioners and families are encouraged to read and discuss the saint of the month in their own home setting. There is plenty of material online for each of the listed saints.

So here is the list for the saints of the month, their Feast Day and the day in which we will have a class/tour.

**October 17** – *October 6 is the Feast Day for St. Innocent of Moscow, Enlightener of North America.* St. Innocent is one the most important saints in North America and a leading missionary saint. He ended his life as the Metropolitan of Moscow but left behind in North America a unique legacy. On October 17 at 3:00 PM we will travel virtually to Sitka, Alaska and meet with Fr. Ishmael Andrew, the Dean of the Cathedral of St. Michael. This is a church that St. Innocent actually built with his own hands and houses the great treasure of the Orthodox Church in America, the miraculous icon of Our Lady of Sitka. Fr. Ishmael will bring us on a tour of the Cathedral, tell us about St. Innocent, show us the items that St. Innocent built and we will also see the icon of our Lady of Sitka. Everyone is invited to attend and I will send out the Zoom link to the parish.

**November 14** – *November 8 is the Feast Day for Archangel Michael and the other Bodiless Powers.* We are surrounded by a cloud of angels and other Bodiless powers. We will discuss angels and who and what they are. We will guardian angels, how they work with us in our life, We will learn how they are praised and imitated in the services of the Church.

**December 12** – *December 6 is the Feast Day of St. Nicholas the Wonderworker.* St. Nicholas is one of the most revered saints in the Church and his memory is celebrated world-wide. We will learn why he so celebrated, as a theologian, an icon of charity and being a bishop as well as a protector for the vulnerable. The modern myth is very different from the actual life that this holy man lived.

**January 16** – *January 25 is the Feast Day for St. Gregory the Theologian.* St. Gregory is one the most revered theologians in the Church and actually is celebrated twice in January (once on January 25 and then again as part of the Three Hierarchs on January 30). It is also our parish's patron saint. We will learn about his great legacy to the Church especially in Trinitarian theology and why he is one of only three saints given the title "Theologian". We will also learn about why churches take saints as heavenly protectors.

**February 13** – *February 27 is the Feast Day of St. Raphael of Brooklyn.* We will learn about another American saint who served not far from here and lead the Middle Eastern Orthodox Christians. He traveled widely throughout North America and brought many people to Christ. He is buried at Antiochian Village in Ligonier, Pennsylvania and we will virtually travel there to learn and get a tour of the museum to learn

about Middle Eastern Orthodox Christians and well as visit his relics. The time and Zoom link will be announced once we get closer.

**March 13** – *March 17 is the Feast Day of St. Patrick of Ireland.* People forget that he is an Orthodox Saint and that he had a huge influence not only in Western Christianity but also in Eastern Christianity. We will learn about his mission to Ireland the lasting influence he had on that country. We will also learn about some other Western Saints who are venerated in both the East and the West.

**April 10** – *April 23 is the Feast Day of the Great Martyr George.* Another very misunderstood saint whose myth overshadows the reality of this great saint. We will learn the real story of St. George and why he is so widely venerated throughout the world. We learn about his great courage, faithfulness and the incredible story of his martyrdom.

**May 15** – *May 7 is the Feast Day of St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre.* He is another American Saint who served all around this region and brought thousands of people to the Orthodox Church. We learn his story and how he came to do this and the many families who were influenced by him. We will also virtually travel to St. Tikhon's Monastery to see his relics and to learn about the monastic life. The Zoom link and time will be released as we get closer to the date.

**June 12** – *June 29 is the Feast Day of the Apostles Peter and Paul.* Why are these great New Testament Saints celebrated together in the Orthodox Church and why do we have a fasting period prior to their Feast Day? We will learn about their missionary work and travels as well their incredible influence on the early Church. We look into their Epistles in the New Testament as well as how they brought together a fledgling Church despite their many persecutions.

**July 10** – *July 27 is the Feast Day of St. Panteleimon,* St. Panteleimon is one of the greatest healing saints in the Church and is called an "Unmercenary". We will learn about this great healer and there is a category of saints dedicated to healing people both physically and spiritually. We will learn about what real healing is to an Orthodox Christian and the many services dedicated to the healing of people.

**August 14** – *August 9 is the Feast Day of St. Herman of Alaska.* The first saint in North America and the roots of our own Orthodox Church in America. We will learn about this incredible and humble man and his long missionary journey to serve the people of Alaska. We will learn about the memory of this saint was kept alive by the Native Alaskan people. We will also travel virtually to Holy Resurrection Cathedral in Kodiak, Alaska to see his relics and learn about his life. We may also try to get a glimpse of Spruce Island (weather permitting) and see where he spent his years in exile serving the local people. A Zoom link and time will be released as we get closer to the date.

**September 11** – *September 23 is the Feast Day for St. John the Baptist.* His image adorns every church and his life is celebrated throughout the year. We will learn about St. John the Baptist, what his title is and why his influence on the Church is so critical in understanding who and what Jesus Christ is. We will also learn about asceticism and fasting and why we do such things in our daily life in the Church.