



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

*Our priest is Fr. Peter Irfan, Acting Rector.
You may reach him at 716-342-8520 (cell) or at fatherpeter777@yahoo.com.*

*Please join us for prayer and fellowship.***

**** Archbishop Michael has blessed us to worship with up to ten (10) households per service. Please contact Father Peter if you are planning to attend. ****

Sunday of the Saints of North America



**Upcoming Services:
Sunday, June 21. 28
Divine Liturgy: 10 am**

No coffee hour **Social Distancing guidelines must be observed.

The above services are at St. Olympia Chapel 123 Main Street Potsdam, NY, 13676

First row: Holy Martyr Peter the Aleut (September 24), Our Lord Jesus Christ, Saint Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America (December 12, August 9)

Second Row: Saint Nikolai of Zicha (March 18), Saint Raphael, Bishop of Brooklyn (February 27), Saint John Maximovitch, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco (July 2), The Most Holy Theotokos, Saint Innocent of Alaska, Equal to the Apostles and Enlightener of North America (October 6, March 31), Holy Hieromonk Juvenal (September 24), Saint Tikhon the Confessor, Patriarch of Moscow and Apostle to America, (April 7, October 9)

Third Row: Hieromartyr John of Chicago, Missionary to America and First Hieromartyr under the Bolshevik Yoke (October 31), Saint Alexander of New York, Missionary to America and Hieromartyr under the Bolshevik Yoke (December 4), Blessed Olga of Alaska (not yet glorified, reposed November 8), Saint Jacob of Alaska, Enlightener of the Native Peoples of Alaska (July 26), Saint Alexis of Wilkes-Barre, Confessor and Defender of Orthodoxy in America (May 7), New Martyr Archpriest Vasily of Alaska and New York (May 4) Upper Left Corner: Saint Brendan the Navigator (May 16)

Lives of the North American Saints are located here <https://www.oca.org/fs/north-american-saints> on the OCA website.

Feast of Saints Peter and Paul at the Hermitage
June 28, 5pm Vespers & June 29, 10am, Divine Liturgy

Please contact Mother Sophronia at the Hermitage of Saint Olympia, if you are planning to attend. A maximum of ten people may participate due to size restrictions. <saintolympiahermitage.org>

On the second Sunday after Pentecost, each local Orthodox Church commemorates all the saints, known and unknown, who have shone forth in its territory. Accordingly, the Orthodox Church in America remembers the saints of North America on this day. Saints of all times, and in every country are seen as the fulfillment of God's promise to redeem fallen humanity. Their example encourages us to "lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily besets us" and to "run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). The saints of North America also teach us how we should live, and what we must expect to endure as Christians.

Although it is a relatively young church, the Orthodox Church in America has produced saints in nearly all of the six major categories of saints: Apostles (and Equals of the Apostles); Martyrs (and Confessors); Prophets; Hierarchs; Monastic Saints; and the Righteous. Prophets, of course, lived in Old Testament times and predicted the coming of Christ.

The first Divine Liturgy in what is now American territory was celebrated on July 20, 1741, the Feast of the Prophet Elias, aboard the ship Peter under the command of Vitus Bering. Hieromonk Hilarion Trusov and the priest Ignatius Kozirevsky served together on that occasion. Several years later, the Russian merchant Gregory I. Shelikov visited Valaam monastery, suggesting to the abbot that it would be desirable to send missionaries to Russian America. On September 24, 1794, after a journey of 7,327 miles (the longest missionary journey in Orthodox history) and 293 days, a group of monks from Valaam arrived on Kodiak Island in Alaska. The mission was headed by Archimandrite Joasaph, and included Hieromonks Juvenal, Macarius, and Athanasius, the Hierodeacons Nectarius and Stephen, and the monks Herman and Joasaph. Saint Herman of Alaska, the last surviving member of the mission, fell asleep in the Lord in 1837.

Throughout the Church's history, the seeds of faith have always been watered by the blood of the martyrs. The Protomartyr Juvenal was killed near Lake Iliamna by natives in 1799, thus becoming the first Orthodox Christian to shed his blood for Christ in the New World. In 1816, Saint Peter the Aleut was put to death by Spanish missionaries in California when he refused to convert to Roman Catholicism. Missionary efforts continued in the nineteenth century, with outreach to the native peoples of Alaska. Two of the most prominent laborers in Christ's Vineyard were Saint Innocent Veniaminov and Saint Jacob Netsvetov, who translated Orthodox services and books into the native languages. Father Jacob Netsvetov died in Sitka in 1864 after a life of devoted service to the Church. Father John Veniaminov, after his wife's death, received monastic tonsure with the name Innocent. He died in 1879 as the Metropolitan of Moscow.

As the nineteenth century was drawing to a close, an event of enormous significance for the North American Church took place. On March 25, 1891, Bishop Vladimir went to Minneapolis to receive Saint Alexis Toth and 361 of his parishioners into the Orthodox Church. This was the beginning of the return of many Uniates to Orthodoxy.

Saint Tikhon (Belavin), the future Patriarch of Moscow came to America as bishop of the diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska in September 1898. As the only Orthodox bishop on the continent, Saint Tikhon traveled extensively throughout North America in order to minister to his widely scattered and diverse flock. He realized that the local church here could not be a permanent extension of the Russian Church. Therefore, he focused his efforts on giving the American Church a diocesan and parish structure which would help it mature and grow. Saint Tikhon returned to Russia in 1907, and was elected as Patriarch of Moscow ten years later. He died in 1925, and for many years his exact burial place remained unknown. Saint Tikhon's grave was discovered on February 22, 1992 in the smaller cathedral of Our Lady of the Don in the Don Monastery when a fire made renovation of the church necessary.

Saint Raphael of Brooklyn was the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in North America. Archimandrite Raphael Hawaweeny was consecrated by Bishop Tikhon and Bishop Innocent (Pustynsky) at Saint Nicholas Cathedral in New York on March 13, 1904. As Bishop of Brooklyn, Saint Raphael was a trusted and capable assistant to Saint Tikhon in his archpastoral ministry. Saint Raphael reposed on February 27, 1915.

The first All American Council took place March 5-7, 1907 at Mayfield, PA, and the main topic was "How to expand the mission." Guidelines and directions for missionary activity, and statutes for the administrative structure of parishes were also set forth. In the twentieth century, in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, countless men, women, and children received the crown of martyrdom rather than renounce Christ. Saints John Kochurov and Alexander Hotovitzky both served the Church in North America before going back to Russia. Saint John became the first clergyman to be martyred in Russia on October 31, 1917 in Saint Petersburg. Saint Alexander Hotovitzky, who served in America until 1914, was killed in 1937.

In addition to the saints listed above, we also honor those saints who are known only to God, and have not been recognized officially by the Church. As we contemplate the lives of these saints, let us remember that we are also called by God to a life of holiness.

From the OCA website