



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross / Greatmartyr Eustathius Placidus, with his wife and children, of Rome September 20, 2020

Troparion – Tone 6

The Angelic Powers were at Thy tomb; the guards became as dead men. Mary stood by Thy grave, seeking Thy most pure body. Thou didst capture hell not being tempted by it. Thou didst come to the Virgin, granting life. O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, // glory to Thee.

Troparion – Tone 1

O Lord, save Thy people, and bless Thine inheritance! Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians over their adversaries; and by virtue of Thy Cross, // preserve Thy habitation!

Troparion – Tone 4

Thy holy martyr Eustáthius and his wife and sons, O Lord, through their sufferings have received incorruptible crowns from Thee, our God. For having Thy strength, they laid low their adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons. // Through their intercessions, save our souls!

Kontakion – Tone 6

When Christ God the Giver of Life, raised all of the dead from the valleys of misery with His mighty hand, He bestowed resurrection on the human race. // He is the Savior of all, the Resurrection, the Life, and the God of all.

Kontakion – Tone 2

Having openly imitated the Passion of Christ, and having eagerly drunk of His cup, O Eustáthius, thou becamest a partaker and fellow-heir of His glory, // receiving divine forgiveness from on high from the God of all.

Kontakion – Tone 4

As Thou wast voluntarily raised upon the Cross for our sake, grant mercy to those who are called by Thy Name, O Christ God; make all Orthodox Christians glad by Thy power, granting them victories over their adversaries // by bestowing on them the invincible trophy, Thy weapon of peace!

Prokeimenon – Tone 7

Extol the Lord our God: / worship at His footstool for He is holy!

v: The Lord reigns, let the people tremble!

Afterfeast of the Elevation of the Cross

From September 15 until the Leavetaking, we sing “O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. O son of God crucified in the flesh, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia” at weekday Liturgies following the Little Entrance.

Greatmartyr Eustathius Placidus, with his wife and children, of Rome

The Holy Great Martyr Eustathius (Eustace) was named Placidus before his Baptism. He was a military commander under the emperors Titus (79-81) and Trajan (98-117). Even before he came to know Christ, Placidus performed acts of charity, helping the poor and destitute. Therefore, the Lord did not leave the virtuous pagan remain in the darkness of idolatry.

Once while hunting in a forest, he saw a stag which would stop now and then to look him right in the eye. Placidus pursued it on horseback, but could not catch up. The stag leaped over a chasm and stood on the other side facing him. Placidus suddenly saw a radiant Cross between its antlers. In surprise the military commander heard a voice coming from the Cross saying, “Why do you pursue Me, Placidus?”

“Who are You, Master?” asked Placidus. The Voice replied, “I am Jesus Christ, Whom you do not know, yet you honor Me by your good deeds. I have appeared here on this creature for your sake, to capture you in the net of My love for mankind. It is not fitting that one as righteous as you should worship idols and not know the truth. It was to save mankind that I came into the world.”

Placidus cried out, “Lord, I believe that You are the God of Heaven and earth, the Creator of all things. Master, teach me what I should do.” Again the Lord replied, “Go to the bishop of your country and receive Baptism from him, and he will instruct you.”

Placidus returned home and joyfully recounted everything to his wife Tatiana. She in turn told him how the evening before, in a mysterious dream, she had been told, “Tomorrow you, your husband and your sons shall come to Me and know that I am the true God.” The spouses then proceeded to do as they had been bidden.

They hastened to the Christian bishop, who baptized all their family, and communed them with the Holy Mysteries. Placidus was renamed Eustathius, his wife was called Theopiste, and their children, Agapius and Theopistus.

On the following day, Saint Eustathius set out to the place of his miraculous conversion and in fervent prayer he offered up thanks to the Lord for having called him onto the path of salvation.

Again Saint Eustathius received a miraculous revelation. The Lord Himself foretold his impending tribulations: “Eustathius, you shall suffer many misfortunes, as did Job, but in the end you will conquer the devil.”

Soon Saint Eustathius was plunged into misfortune: all his servants died of the plague and his cattle perished. Brought to ruin, but not despairing in spirit, Saint Eustathius and his family secretly abandoned their home, to live unknown, humble and in poverty.

They went to Egypt to board a ship sailing for Jerusalem. During the voyage a new woe beset the saint. The ship owner, enchanted by Theopiste’s beauty, cruelly set Eustathius and his children ashore, keeping the wife for himself.

In great sorrow the saint continued on his way, and new woe beset him. Coming to a tempestuous river, he went to carry his two sons across in turn. When he had brought one across, the other was seized by a lion and carried off into the wilderness. As he turned back towards the other, a wolf dragged that child into the forest.

Having lost everything, Saint Eustathius wept bitterly, but he realized that Divine Providence had sent him these misfortunes to test his endurance and devotion to God. In his inconsolable grief, Saint Eustathius went on farther, prepared for new tribulations.

In the village of Badessos he found work and spent five years in unremitting toil. Saint Eustathius did not know then that through the mercy of God, shepherds and farmers had saved his sons, and they lived right near him. He also did not know that the impudent shipowner had been struck down with a terrible disease and died, leaving Saint Theopiste untouched. She lived in peace and freedom at the place where the ship landed.

During this time it had become difficult for the emperor Trajan to raise an army for Rome to deal with a rebellion, for the soldiers would not go into battle without their commander Placidus. They advised Trajan to send men out to all the cities to look for him.

Antiochus and Acacius, friends of Placidus, sought him in various places. Finally, they arrived in the village where Saint Eustathius lived. The soldiers found Eustathius, but they did not recognize him and they began to tell him of the one whom they sought, asking his help and promising a large reward. Saint Eustathius, immediately recognized his friends, but did not reveal his identity to them.

He borrowed money from one of his friends and fed the visitors. As they looked at him, the travellers noted that he resembled their former commander. When they saw a scar on his shoulder from a deep sword-wound, they realized that it was their friend there before them. They embraced him with tears and told him why they were seeking him.

Saint Eustathius returned to Rome with them and again became a general. Many new recruits were drafted into the army from all over the empire. He did not know that two young soldiers who served him, and whom he loved for their skill and daring, were actually his own sons. They did not know that they were serving under the command of their own father, nor that they were brothers by birth.

While on campaign, the army led by Eustathius halted at a certain settlement. The soldier-brothers were talking in their tent. The elder one spoke about his life, how he had lost his mother and brother, and how in a terrifying way he had been parted from his father. The younger brother then realized that before him was his very own brother, and told him how he had been rescued from the wolf.

A woman overheard the soldiers' conversation, since their tent was pitched right next to her house, and this woman realized that these were her sons. Still not identifying herself to them, but not wanting to be separated from them, she went to their commander, Saint Eustathius, to ask him to take her to Rome with him. She said she had been a prisoner, and wanted to go home. Then she came to recognize the commander as her husband, and with tears she told him about herself and about the two soldiers who were actually their sons. Thus, through the great mercy of the Lord, the whole family was happily reunited.

Soon thereafter the rebellion was crushed, and Saint Eustathius returned to Rome with honor and glory. The emperor Trajan had since died, and his successor Hadrian (117-138) wanted to celebrate the event of victory with a solemn offering of sacrifice to the gods. To the astonishment of everyone, Saint Eustathius did not show up at the pagan temple. By order of the emperor they searched frantically for him.

"Why don't you want to worship the gods?" the emperor inquired. "You, above all others, ought to offer thanks to them. They not only preserved you in war and granted you victory, but also they helped you find your wife and children." Saint Eustathius replied: "I am a Christian and I glorify and give thanks to Him, and I offer sacrifice to Him. I owe my life to Him. I do not know or believe in any other god than Him."

In a rage, the emperor ordered him to take off his military belt and brought him and his family before him. They did not succeed in persuading the steadfast confessors of Christ to offer sacrifice to idols. The whole family of Saint Eustathius was sentenced to be torn apart by wild beasts, but the beasts would not touch the holy martyrs.

Then the cruel emperor gave orders to throw them all alive into a red-hot brass bull, and Saint Eustathius, his wife Theopiste, and their sons Agapius and Theopistus endured a martyr's death. Before being placed in the bull, Saint Eustathius prayed, "Grant, O Lord, Thy grace to our relics, and grant to those who call upon us a place in Thy Kingdom. Though they call upon us when they are in danger on a river or on the sea, we entreat Thee to come to their aid."

Three days later, they opened the brass bull, and the bodies of the holy martyrs were found unscathed. Not one hair on their heads was singed, and their faces shone with an unearthly beauty. Many seeing this miracle came to believe in Christ. Christians then buried the bodies of the saints.

Epistle: Galatians 2:16-20

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.

Epistle: 2 Corinthians 4:6-15

For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us. We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed – always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So then death is working in us, but life in you. And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, "I believed and therefore I spoke," we also believe and therefore speak, knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you. For all things are for your sakes, that grace, having spread through the many, may cause thanksgiving to abound to the glory of God.

Gospel: Mark 8:34-9:1

When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, "Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him the Son of Man also will be ashamed when He comes in the glory of His Father with the holy angels." And He said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power."

Gospel: Matthew 22:35-46

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, "What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?" They said to Him, "The Son of David." He said to them, "How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,' saying: 'The LORD said to my Lord, sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool'? If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?" And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.

Service Schedule for the week of September 20 – services will be streamed live

Today – 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine

Saturday September 26 – 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy and 5:00 PM Vespers

Sunday September 27 – **MASKS REQUIRED** 9:45 AM Hours, 10:00 AM Divine Liturgy

Weekly Giving

September 12 & 13 – 31 adults, 5 youth, \$1,398

Parish Announcements

Upcoming service schedule (Divine Liturgy 10:00 AM):

Saturday September 19 – Masks required

Sunday September 20 – Masks not required

Saturday September 26 – Masks not required

Sunday September 27 – Masks required

Saturday October 3 – Masks required

Sunday October 4 – Masks not required

Saturday October 10 – Masks not required

Sunday October 11 – Masks required

Saturday October 17 – Masks required
Sunday October 18 – Masks not required

Saturday October 24 – Masks not required
Sunday October 25 – Masks required

Saturday October 31 – Masks required
Sunday November 1 – Masks not required

Saturday November 7 – Masks not required
Sunday November 8 – Masks required

Coffee Hour will not commence today due to the ongoing Covid Pandemic. The Parish Council will re-evaluate at the Parish Council Meeting on October 22.

There will be a Senior R Club meeting in Daria Hall next Sunday, September 27, after Divine Liturgy.

In order to prevent the spread of germs, the Communion prosphora and prosphora after Divine Liturgy will be handed out by an Altar server. We ask that you receive the prosphora in your hand and not reach for the prosphora on the tray or bowl.

The church has been set up for appropriate social distance seating. However, if you are feeling ill, please stay home. Also, those age 65 and over are still considered high risk and should make careful decisions about attending services. Father Volodymyr will continue to stream live Vespers and Sunday Divine Liturgy.

Thank you for your monetary contributions to the church on a regular basis! We pray for everyone's continued health and well-being!