

***ST NICHOLAS ORTHODOX CHURCH
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Readers Subdeacon Michael Speck & David Donch
Fr Michael Speck Fr Stephen Mack, Pastor*

OCTOBER 4, 2015

A Note from Fr Steve: As you may notice I'm not here today. I will be back for services next weekend. In the meantime, enjoy your services with Fr Michael.

Wednesday, Oct 7 at 8:30AM: Divine Liturgy with Fr. Michael

Saturday, Oct 10 at 6PM: Vespers

Sunday, Oct 11 at 10AM: Divine Liturgy of St John

October namesdays include Thomas, Phillip, Luke and Anastasia. Happy Namesday to those who celebrate this month, Happy Anniversary to all celebrating theirs, and Happy Birthday to the following members of our parish family: 3rd – Greg Szymaniak /// 4th – Irene Bashta & Mary Ellen Dittmar /// 5th – Jake Michaels & Adam Szymaniak /// 7th – Matushka Katrina Binkewicz /// 12th – Tina Ashby /// 15th – Melissa Mullen & Subdeacon Reader Michael Speck /// 17th – Cheryl Saunders /// 19th – Luke Wilczek // 22nd – Anne McDonough /// 28th – Tom Young /// 30th – Nathaniel Donch /// 31st – Mary Rusinko

God is Wonderful in His Saints: Orthodox Saints commemorated in October

October 4: Hieromartyr Hierotheos, Bishop of Athens (1st c.)

He was probably the first Bishop of Athens, ordained by the Holy Apostle Paul himself. St Dionysius (see October 3) describes St Hierotheos as his teacher and friend "after Paul." With St Dionysius, St Hierotheos was miraculously brought by the power of the Holy Spirit to be present with the Apostles at the Dormition of the Theotokos. He reposed in peace.

October 5: Holy Martyr Charitina of Amissos (304)

She was the handmaid (according to the Great Horologion) or adopted daughter (according to the Prologue) of an eminent Roman citizen named Claudius, during the reign of Diocletian. She was betrayed as a Christian to the governor Dometian, before whom she fearlessly confessed her faith. After she had endured many cruel tortures, the governor sent some dissolute youths to rape her. Having prayed to be spared this dishonor, she was permitted to give up her soul to God.

† Holy Hierarchs of Moscow Peter (1326), Alexis (1378), Jonas (1461), Macarius (1563), Philip (1569), Hermogenes (1612), Philaret (1867), Innocent (1879), and Tikhon (1925)

This Feast of the Hierarchs of Moscow was established during the reign of Tsar Theodore and Patriarch Job in the year 1596. All of them are commemorated individually as well as on this day. Only Sts Peter, Alexis, Jonas and Philip are specifically mentioned in the Menaion service, but other holy hierarchs of Moscow have been added to the commemoration over the years.

October 6: † Holy Apostle Thomas

One of the Twelve Apostles, he was a Galilean by birth. His name means "twin." The twentieth chapter of St John's Gospel describes how, when

he doubted the appearance of the Risen Lord, Christ appeared to him again, saying "Reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing," at which Thomas cried out "My Lord and my God. Through this one event the Holy Scriptures attest that Christ is risen bodily, not merely as a spirit, as some heresies claim; and that He is in fact God. After Pentecost, St Thomas proclaimed the Gospel in the East, and established the Christian faith as far as India, where the small remnant of the ancient Church still traces its foundation to him. According to some accounts he met a martyr's end; according to others, he reposed in peace. St John Chrysostom mentions that his tomb was in Edessa in Syria; his relics may have been translated there from India in the fourth century.

October 7: The Ninety-nine Fathers of Crete (date unknown)

Saint John the Hermit and thirty-five companions lived in Egypt, but took ship as a group for Cyprus in order to practice asceticism in exile. At Cyprus they met a party of thirty-nine others who also sought to live the ascetic life more fully, and the two groups joined. "In order that these ascetics, too, might taste of the graces of voluntary exile" (Synaxarion), they travelled to Attalia in Pamphylia. There, twenty-four more monks joined them, so that their company now numbered ninety-nine. (This number was ordained by God, so that Christ Himself, their Head, would complete their number at one hundred.) After some time they took ship again for Crete, where they lived in two caves in a remote, deserted area, living only on the plants that grew wild there.

Saint John sought his brothers' blessing to live as a hermit. On the day of his departure they prayed that they all might repose on the day of John's death, and enter together into the Kingdom of God. John's asceticism was so severe that after awhile he could no longer walk, but crawled from his cave to gather the small quantities of food he allowed himself. A shepherd, seeing him from a distance, thought that he was some animal, and shot him with an arrow. Finding the dying John, the shepherd was stricken with horror and grief, and threw himself at the hermit's feet, begging forgiveness. The saint only lived long enough to give the young man his pardon and blessing before surrendering his soul to God.

October 8: Our Holy Mother Pelagia (461)

"This Saint was a prominent actress of the city of Antioch, and a pagan, who lived a life of unrestrained prodigality and led many to perdition. Instructed and baptized by a certain bishop named Nonnus (November 10), she departed to the Mount of Olives near Jerusalem, where she lived as a recluse, feigning to be a eunuch called Pelagius. She lived in such holiness and repentance that within three or four years she was deemed worthy to repose in an odour of sanctity, in the middle of the fifth century. Her tomb on the Mount of Olives has been a place of pilgrimage ever since." (Great Horologion). The Prologue adds that Pelagia had accumulated a large fortune as a courtesan, all of which she gave away to the poor upon her conversion.

October 9: † Holy Apostle James, Son of Alphaeus.

He was one of the Twelve Apostles, the brother of the Apostle and Evangelist St Matthew. After Pentecost he preached the Gospel in many nations, and was finally martyred in Egypt, crucified by pagans.

October 10: Blessed Fool for Christ Andrew of Totma (1637)

"Saint Andrew came of a family of devout, unlettered peasants. He obtained an education by going to church and, on the death of his parents, became a novice at the Monastery of Galich, in the diocese of Kostroma. The Abbot, who was remarkable for his wisdom, discerned Andrew's spiritual gifts and encouraged him to undertake the unusual and difficult ascesis of Foolishness-for-Christ. Andrew left the monastery to lead a wayfaring life, but often returned to reveal his thoughts and deeds to his starets. On his Elder's death, he settled near the Church of the Resurrection in the town of Totma, where he was completely unknown.

"Worn out by ascesis and privation, Saint Andrew foreknew the day of his decease. He called a priest, confessed and communicated in the holy Mysteries, and not long after he fell asleep in the Lord, a heavenly scent pervading the room where his body lay. Some time later, the Saint appeared to a sick woman as she slept, holding the Gospel for her to venerate and telling her to pray at his tomb. When she awoke, the woman was healed." (Synaxarion)

