

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
FATHERS AT THE FIRST SIX ECUMENICAL COUNCILS



Icon of Feeding the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:14-22)

DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM

17 JULY 2026 ♦ TONE 07 EOTHINON 08 † EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST/FATHERS OF ECUMENICAL COUNCILS

GREAT DOXOLOGY:

Liturgy Book p. 17

ANTIPHONS:

FIRST:

Liturgy Book p. 29

SECOND:

Liturgy Book p. 32

THIRD:

Liturgy Book p. 36/45

ENTRANCE HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 38

APOLYTIKIA:

Resurrection (Tone 7)

Liturgy Book p. 45

Fathers of the first six Ecumenical Councils

(tone 8)

O Christ our God, You are infinitely glorified, for You established our Fathers as radiant stars on earth: You led us to the true faith though them. O Most Merciful One, glory to You!

Patron

Liturgy Book p. 47

KONDAKION:

Liturgy Book p. 48

TRISAGION:

Liturgy Book p. 50

PROKIMENON: *Tone 7*

Liturgy Book p. 60

EPISTLE:

Titus 3:8-15

My son Titus, this saying is true, and in this matter, I want to insist that those who believe in God be careful to excel in good works; these are good and useful to people. But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and quarrels, and disputes about the Law, for they are useless and futile. Avoid a factious man after warning him one or twice, knowing that such a man is perverted and sins, since he is condemning himself. When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to meet me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there. Help Zenas the lawyer and Apolos on their way, taking care that they lack nothing. And let our people also learn to excel in good works, in order to help cases of urgent need so that they may not be unfruitful. All my companions greet you. Greet those who love us in the faith. The grace of God be with all of you. Amen

ALLELUIA: *Tone 6*

Liturgy Book p. 62

O God, our ears have heard, our fathers have declared to us the deeds you did in their days, in the days of old.

For you saved us from those who afflicted us and have put to shame those who hated us

GOSPEL:

Matthew 5:14-19

The Lord said to his disciples, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Neither do men light a lamp and put it under a bushel, but upon the lamp-stand, so as to give light to all in the house. Even so let your light shine before men, in order that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven. Do not think I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one letter or one stroke shall be lost from the Law till all things have been accomplished. Therefore, whoever does away with one of these least commandments, and so teaches men, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever carries them out and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

HIRMOS:

Liturgy Book p. 77

KINONKON:

Liturgy Book p. 83

COMMUNION HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 87

POST- COMMUNION HYMN:

Liturgy Book p. 89 / Liturgy Book p. 90

SAINT JOSEPH CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

EVENTS IN JULY

EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday Evening, July 17

Confessions: 3:15 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, July 18

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

NINTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday Evening, July 26

Confessions: 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday Morning, June 27

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

Blessing of the Cars after D.L.

TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

Saturday Evening, August 1

Confessions: 3:45 p.m.

Divine Liturgy: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday morning, August 2

Confessions: 9:45 a.m.

Divine Liturgy: 10:00 a.m.

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

O St. Joseph, chaste spouse of the Lady Theotokos, head of the Holy Family, we again place ourselves under your patronage. † Through your powerful intercession, bestow upon us every good thing both spiritual and temporal. † Protect this your parish from all spiritual harm and renew in us the spirit of repentance and a fervent desire for the kingdom of heaven. † Make this vineyard flourish with new souls and by an increase of faith, hope and love; may forgiveness, peace and joy reign within our holy fellowship. † In all we do, may the Name of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit be glorified, now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

19 July: Janice Eckert, 40 day memorial by Fr. Ken; ✠ Dr. John Abda by Parish Community; ✠ James Kane, by Parish Community
26 July: Teachers of St Martha's Academy, by Annie Lefler; ✠ Dr. John Abda and James Kane, by Parish Community; ✠ James Kane, by Parish Community

2024 FOOD FESTIVAL NEWS

Festival dates: Aug 7, 8, 9 2026

Aug 1, 9 a.m.: kibbeh

2026 WEEKLY COLLECTION

July 12

Weekly Offering:	\$ 986.00
<u>Candles:</u>	<u>\$ 6.00</u>
Total:	\$ 992.50

EQUAL TO THE APOSTLES OLGA & VLADIMIR

WHEN TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY AMERICANS think of the Vikings, they may picture seafarers from Scandinavia sailing to Iceland and Greenland or raiding the coasts of England and Ireland. We rarely think of their inland cousins, whose rule extended into what is Russia today in the ninth to fourteenth centuries. Two of the saints commemorated this week were leaders of these “inland Vikings” who changed the face of Europe.

Beginning in AD 862 the Viking prince Rurik and his brothers established a network of states in the territory of today’s Romania, Ukraine and western Russia which came to be called Kievan Rus’. Around 945 the Grand Prince of Kiev, Igor, Rurik’s youngest son, was killed by rebellious Dravidian tribesmen. Igor’s wife, Olga (c. 890-969), avenged her husband by destroying the Dravidian towns and enslaving their leaders. Olga then ruled, first as regent on behalf of their young son, Sviatoslav. The young prince came of age in 962 but Olga was frequently in charge of Kiev thereafter during Sviatoslav’s military expeditions.

“Equal to the Apostles”

There had been some Christians in Kiev since the ninth century when St Photios the Great sent them a missionary bishop. The local governor Askold reputedly accepted the faith at that time. Olga became the first ruler of Kievan Rus’ to embrace Christianity. She was baptized in Constantinople in 957, taking the name Helena, and attempted to extend the Christian presence in Rus’. She is said to have built the churches of St. Nicholas over Askold’s grave and of the Holy Wisdom at Kiev (sites revered to this day), of the Annunciation at Vytebsk, and of the Holy Life-Creating Trinity at Pskov. She tried unsuccessfully to secure the appointment of a resident metropolitan for Kiev. Nor did she convince her son Sviatoslav to become a Christian. At first he tolerated the growing Christian presence in his realm for her sake, but later would destroy some of their churches, including ones she had built. It would be his son, Vladimir, himself raised by his grandmother, who would make of his realm a Christian nation.

Olga died on July 11, 969. In 1007, during the reign of her grandson Prince Vladimir, the relics of St Olga were transferred to the Desyatin Church of the Dormition in Kiev and placed in a special sarcophagus. She was the first woman canonized by the Russian Church. One of only five women saints proclaimed as Equal to the Apostles, she was so honored for her pioneering role in Slavic Christianity.

St. Vladimir the Great

Olga’s grandson, Vladimir, was the third son of Sviatoslav, reportedly by his mother’s servant, Malusha. In 969 Sviatoslav had given Kiev to his oldest son, Yaropolk, made his second son, Oleg, prince of the Drevlians, and placed Vladimir as prince of Novgorod while he was engaged in fighting the Bulgars. The brothers were soon engaged in fighting one another and Vladimir was driven from Novgorod by Yaropolk’s forces. With help from his cousin Haakon, the ruler of Norway, Vladimir retook Novgorod, then marched on Kiev. In 978 he defeated his brother Yaropolk and became Grand Prince of all Kievan Rus’ extending his rule throughout surrounding territories over the next few years.

The Tale of Bygone Years

In 1113 the Monk Nestor compiled a history of Kievan Rus’ from AD 850 to 1110. Also known as the Russian Primary Chronicle, this work tells of the founding and early history of Kiev. Nestor relates how Vladimir adopted Christianity and suppressed the worship of the local

gods at Kiev.

According to Nestor, “Vladimir summoned together his vassals and the city elders, and said to them: ‘Behold, the Bulgars came before me urging me to accept their religion. Then came the Germans and praised their own faith; and after them came the Jews. Finally the Greeks appeared, criticizing all other faiths but commending their own, and they spoke at length, telling the history of the whole world from its beginning. Their words were artful, and it was wondrous to listen and pleasant to hear them.’”

The nobles urged Vladimir to send his own people to investigate the claims of these rival religions. On their return, they reported, “When we journeyed among the Bulgars, we beheld how they worship in their temple, called a mosque, while they stand ungirt. The Bulgarian bows, sits down, looks hither and thither like one possessed, and there is no happiness among them, but instead only sorrow and a dreadful stench. Their religion is not good.

“Then we went among the Germans, and saw them performing many ceremonies in their temples; but we beheld no glory there. Then we went on to Greece, and the Greeks led us to the edifices where they worship their God, and we knew not whether we were in heaven or on earth. For on earth there is no such splendor or such beauty, and we are at a loss how to describe it. We know only that God dwells there among men, and their service is fairer than the ceremonies of other nations. For we cannot forget that beauty. Every man, after tasting something sweet, is afterward unwilling to accept that which is bitter, and therefore we cannot dwell longer here.

“Then the vassals spoke and said, ‘If the Greek faith were evil, it would not have been adopted by your grandmother Olga, who was wiser than all other men.’”

What had so impressed the Kievans? Nestor explained it this way: “On the morrow, the emperor sent a message to the patriarch to inform him that a Russian delegation had arrived to examine the Greek faith, and directed him to prepare the church and the clergy, and to array himself in his sacerdotal robes, so that the Russians might behold the glory of the God of the Greeks. When the patriarch received these commands, he bade the clergy assemble, and they performed the customary rites. They burned incense, and the choirs sang hymns. The emperor accompanied the Russians to the church, and placed them in a wide space, calling their attention to the beauty of the edifice, the chanting, and the offices of the hierarch and the ministry of the deacons, while he explained to them the worship of his God. The Russians were astonished, and in their wonder praised the Greek ceremonial.”

In 988 Vladimir captured the Greek city of Kherson in the Crimea. Nestor reports that Vladimir threatened to march on Constantinople itself unless the emperor sent his sister to marry Vladimir. The emperor replied: “It is not meet for Christians to give in marriage to pagans. If you are baptized, you shall have her to wife, inherit the kingdom of God, and be our companion in the faith.” Nestor reports that the princess urged Vladimir to be baptized if he wanted to be healed of a painful eye ailment. Vladimir accepted and was baptized by the Bishop of Kherson, taking the name Basil. Healed, Vladimir praised God saying, “I have now perceived the one true God.” Many of his companions then accepted baptism as well.

On his return to Kiev Vladimir brought his nobles and retainers to baptism, beginning the Christianization of Kievan Rus’ which continued throughout his reign. Vladimir died in 1015 and his relics were distributed among the churches and monasteries he had founded.

In the thirteenth century July 15 was set as St Vladimir’s feast day to commemorate his intercession for the forces under Grand Prince Alexander Nevsky who defeated Swedish invaders on July 15, 1240.

WHY PRAY VESPERS AND ORTHROS AT HOME?

By Rt. Rev. Philip Raczka, PhD & Deacon John Moses

Introduction

Most believers are aware that there exist the church services of Vespers every evening, and Orthros (Matins) every morning. Often these offices are celebrated in parish churches for Sundays and Feast Days, but not every day. Although many view these services as being of monastic origin, they have always been the daily prayer of the faithful. While monasticism developed in the 4th Century AD in Egypt and Syria, daily morning and evening prayer have existed in the Church from the beginning. *1 Clement*, a Roman Early Church document from the 90's AD, clearly states regarding these prayers:

We should do in order everything that the Master commanded us to do at set times. He has ordered oblations and services to be accomplished, and not by chance and in disorderly fashion, but at the set times and hours... 1 Clement 40:1-4

These daily offices were originally prayed at home in the family until the end of the Roman Persecutions (312 AD). Then these services began to be served daily in the churches, as related by the Early Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 330 AD):

For it is surely no small sign of God's power that throughout the whole world in the churches of God at the morning rising of the sun and at the evening hours, hymns, praises, and truly divine delights are offered to God. God's delights are indeed the hymns sent up everywhere on earth in his Church at the times of morning and evening. For this reason, it is said somewhere, "Let my praise be sung sweetly to him (Ps 146:1)," and "Let my prayer be like incense before you (Ps 140:2)."

When the monks began their monasteries in the 4th Century, they just copied what everyone else was doing by praying Vespers and Orthros every day. Traditionally these services consist of Psalms/hymns and intercessions. Monastic services were much longer than those of the parish churches, where people attended before and after the work day. After the 9th Century the monastic usages tended to take over in the parish churches of both East and West. This happened out of admiration for the monasteries, but the negative result was with longer services the lay people gradually stopped participating. After this point in time, shorter books of the hours were used by many of the faithful at home, thus Vespers and Orthros returned to their domestic setting. Many of the devotions of the Latin Church started as a substitute for the Liturgy of the Hours (Vespers and Orthros). Since Vatican II (1965) there has been a revival of the Liturgy of the Hours among the Latin faithful and parishes by using simplified and shorter services and books.

The Roman Catholic religious orders that set up schools in the Middle East taught their students these Latin devotions, and the use of the Horologion decreased. We encourage the use of the Horologion at home with the daily praying of Vespers and Orthros.

All Christians have the obligation to praise and worship God every day. It is not just a Sunday duty. Whether done at home, or in church, we should all be praying every morning and evening. We are meant to be close to God, as St. Paul says to pray always.

Herein we examine the scriptural and patristic basis, origins and development of Vespers and Orthros, and the prayers of praise, thanksgiving, intercession and repentance that make up these services.

A Sacrifice of Praise

In the New Testament, we read of our prayers as a Christian Sacrifice of Praise, meaning that the praises offered to God by Christians are a type of sacrifice. What is a sacrifice? Briefly it is a gift offered to God. Hebrews 13:15 says: *Through him [Christ] let us continually offer God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips that confess his name.* Here the author is referring to speech or singing praises to God. Saint Paul tells us in Romans 12:1: *I urge you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God.* Saint Paul is referring to our bodies and their activities. 1 Peter 2:5 tells us: *And like living stones, let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.* This sentence is in agreement with the two previous quotations. It also stresses that the Christians are a priesthood offering sacrifices to God. In the Old Testament there were daily morning and evening sacrifices offered in the Jewish Temple (Exodus 29:38-41; 30:7-8 and Numbers 28:3-8). The three New Testament passages quoted above imply that the Christians' praises are a sacrifice to God, and that the Christians are a priestly people able to offer sacrifices to God. Thus, the Christians' Sacrifice of Praise replaces the daily sacrifices of the Old Testament Temple.

This line of thinking continues in the early Patristic Literature. Justin Martyr (ca. 150 AD) refers to the sacrifices of Christians which are the Eucharist (*Dialogue with Trypho* 41, 116 & 117), and their prayers (1 Apology 13).

This is the passage where he refers to the sacrificial hymns and prayers.

He has no need of bloody sacrifices, libations, and incense ... With thankful voices, to offer Him solemn prayers and hymns for our creation, for the preservation of our health, for the variety of things, and for the changes of the seasons, and to beseech Him in prayer that we may rise to life everlasting because of our faith in Him.

Other Early Church writers, such as Clement of Alexandria (ca. 225 AD), shows the continuity of these prayers (*Str* 7.7. 49; *Orac. Sib* 8.332-336), and the Early Church African author Tertullian (ca. 200 AD), who referred to the "Sacrificial Prayers (*On Prayer*: 19)" offered in the morning. The Early Church then considered that there were two types of liturgical sacrifices offered by the believers, the daily praises and prayers of the evening (Vespers) and morning (Orthros), and the Holy Eucharist.

The Great Sacrifice of the New Testament is the death of Christ on the Cross that wiped away our sins (Ephesians 5:2, Hebrews 9:12-14, 25-28, 10:1-14, 2:17, 1 John 2:2, 4:10). The sacrifices of the Christians do not add or subtract from that of Christ on the cross. Rather, they are primarily sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving for the salvation brought about by the atoning sacrifice of Christ. Our worship is built upon our thanksgiving to God for our salvation received through the work of Christ.

Hymns and Psalms constitute our praise and thanksgiving to God. Saint Paul talks about Christians singing to God (1 Corinthians 14:26), and in Colossians 3:16:

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another, singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. Colossians 3:16

ST. JOSEPH THE BETROTHED

MELKITE GREEK-CATHOLIC CHURCH