

Date: July 15, 2021

Subject: BURL-Choir St. Sergius of Radonezh Weekend NOTICE

Dorogiye druziya!

This Saturday/Sunday the Church commemorates Uncovering (obreteniye) of the relics of Venerable Sergius of Radonezh. The attached Tropar / Kondak text sheet for this weekend is attached, and includes the special prayers that will be sung.

This week, Friday /Saturday, the Church commemorates the Holy Royal Martyrs - Tsar Nicholas II of Russia, his wife the Tsarina Alexandra, children, and those who perished with them.

Next week, on Tuesday /Wednesday, the Church will commemorate the appearance of the Icon of the Most-Holy Mother of God in the City of Kazan.

Brief summaries about the obreteniye of the relics of Venerable Sergius, the Holy Royal Martyrs, and the Icon of the Most-Holy Mother of God in the City of Kazan are provided below.

\*\*\*\* 50-TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

This Sunday after Liturgy o. Stefan and matushka Tatayana will host a reception in our parish hall to celebrate their 50-th wedding anniversary. All are invited to attend.

\*\*\*\* UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF VENERABLE SERGIUS OF RADONEZH

The relics of the Saint Sergius were uncovered on July 5, 1422 (all dates are o.s.) when Saint Nikon (November 17) was igumen. In the year 1408, when Moscow and its environs was invaded by the Tatar horde of Edigei, the Trinity monastery was devastated and burned, and the monks led by Saint Nikon hid themselves in the forests. They saved the icons, sacred vessels, books and other holy things connected with the memory of Saint Sergius.

In a vision on the eve of the Tatar incursion Saint Sergius informed his disciple and successor about the coming tribulations. He also said that the vexation would not be prolonged but that the monastery, arising from the ashes, would flourish and grow even more. Metropolitan Philaret wrote about this in his Life of Saint Sergius: "Just as it suited Christ to suffer, and through the Cross and death to enter into the glory of the Resurrection, so it also becomes everyone who would be blessed by Christ with length of days in glory, to be tested by one's own cross and death." Going through its own fiery cleansing, the monastery of the Life-Creating Trinity was resurrected unto length of days, and Saint Sergius himself rose up, so that his holy relics should dwell within it forevermore.

Before the beginning of construction of the new temple of the Life-Creating Trinity on the site of the former wooden one (which was consecrated on September 25, 1412), Saint Sergius appeared to a certain pious layman and bid him inform the igumen and the brethren: "Why do you leave me so long in the grave, covered by earth and in the water, constraining my body?" During the construction of the cathedral, when they dug the ditches for the foundations, the incorrupt relics

of Saint Sergius were uncovered and brought up. All were astonished that not only his body, but also his clothing was undamaged, although there was water around the grave. Amidst a large throng of the devout and the clergy, in the presence of the son of Demetrius of the Don, the prince of Zvenigorod Yurii Dimitrievich (+ 1425), the holy relics were removed from the ground and placed temporarily in the wooden Trinity church (at this spot now stands the church of the Descent of the Holy Spirit). With the consecration of the stone Trinity cathedral in 1426, the relics were transferred into it, where they remain.

All the threads of the spiritual life of the Russian Church converge towards the great saint and wonderworker of Radonezh, and through all of Orthodox Rus the grace-filled, life-creating currents radiate outwards from the Trinity monastery he founded.

Naming a church for the Holy Trinity within the Russian land began with holy Equal of the Apostles Olga (July 11), who built the first Trinity temple at Pskov. Afterwards, similar churches were built in Great Novgorod and other cities.

The spiritual contribution of Saint Sergius in teaching the theology of the Holy Trinity is quite significant. The monk had profound insight into the secret mysteries of theology with the “spiritual eyes” of the ascetic, in prayerful ascent to the Tri-Hypostatic (i.e. in Three-Persons) God, and in the spiritual experience of communion with God and God-likeness.

“Coheirs of the perfect light and contemplation of the Most Holy and All-Sovereign Trinity,” explained Saint Gregory the Theologian, “are those which become perfectly co-united in the perfection of the Spirit.” Saint Sergius knew from personal experience the mystery of the Life-Creating Trinity, since in his life he became co-united with God, he became a communicant of the very life of the Divine Trinity, i.e. he attained as much as is possible on earth to the measure of “theosis” [“divinization”], becoming a “partaker of the Divine nature” (2 Pet 1:4). “If a man loves Me,” says the Lord, “he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, and We will come unto him and make our abode with him” (John 14:23).

Abba Sergius, in everything observing the commands of Christ, belongs to the rank of holy saints in the souls of whom the Holy Trinity “has made abode.” He fashioned himself into “an abode of the Holy Trinity,” and everyone with whom Saint Sergius associated, he elevated and brought into communion with the Holy Trinity.

The Radonezh ascetic, with his disciples and conversants, enriched the Russian and the universal Church with a new knowledge and vision of the Life-Creating Trinity, the Beginning and Source of life, manifesting Itself unto the world and to mankind in the “Sobornost” [“Communality”] of the Church, with brotherly unity and the sacrificial redemptive love of its pastors and children.

It was not only spiritual gifts and grace-filled healings bestowed to all, approaching with faith the relics of Saint Sergius; God also gave him the grace to defend the Russian land from its enemies. The monk by his prayers was with the army of Demetrius of the Don at the Battle of Kulikovo Pole (“Field”), -- he even blessed his own monks, Alexander Peresvet and Andrew Oslyab to serve in the army. He told Ivan the Terrible where to build the fortress of Sviyazhsk and helped in the victory over Kazan. During the Polish incursion, Saint Sergius appeared in a dream to the

Nizhni Novgorod citizen Cosmas Minin, ordering him to gather funds and equip an army for the liberation of Moscow and the Russian realm. And when in 1612 after a Molieben to the Holy Trinity the militia of Minin and Pozharsky moved towards Moscow, a propitious breeze fluttered the Orthodox standards, "as though from the grave of the Wonderworker Sergius himself."

#### \*\*\*\* HOLY ROYAL MARTYRS

In 1981 Russian Orthodox Church Abroad canonized the as New Martyrs TSAR NICHOLAS II OF RUSSIA, his wife Tsarina Alexandra, and their five children Olga, Tatiana, Maria, Anastasia, and Alexei. They were canonized along with their servants, who had been killed along with them. The canonized servants were their court physician, Yevgeny Botkin; their footman Alexei Trupp; their cook, Ivan Kharitonov; and Alexandra's maid, Anna Demidova. Also canonized were two servants killed in September 1918, lady in waiting Anastasia Hendrikova and tutor Catherine Adolphovna Schneider.

Less than 20 years after the fall of the communist party and resurgence of Orthodoxy in Russia, from 13-16 August 2000, the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, Russia, gave it's blessings for the glorification, and canonization for Emperor Tsar Nicholas II, Empress Alexandra, Grand Duke Tsarevich Alexis, Grand Duchesses Olga, Tatiana, Marie, and Anastasia.

The Holy Canonization for the Imperial Romanov Family took place on 19-20 August 2000, at Christ the Savior Russian Orthodox Church, in Moscow, Russia.

NOTE: In addition to the Royal Martyrs of Russia, as Passion-Bearers, the same council of the Bishops gave it's blessings for the glorification and canonization for 860 martyrs and confessors, and in addition, decreed the church wide veneration of 230 local saints of these two categories. Besides this, nine holy hierarchs, holy righteous persons, and venerable persons, and 34 martyrs from the Valaam Transfiguration Monastery were enrolled in the canon of saints. In addition, church-wide veneration was decreed for the venerable Iov of Anzersk (a local saint of the Solovki Monastery) and thirteen Elders of Optina Monastery who also had been locally venerated saints previously.

The final procedure for the act of glorification and holy canonization for the above mentioned, took place on the evening of the feast of our Lord's Holy Transfiguration, 19 August, and completed on 20 August, by His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II, and the Synod of Bishops at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, in Moscow, Russia. In addition, on the morning of August 20th the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was consecrated.

On the second day of the Council of Bishops of Russian Orthodox Church in Moscow, Russia on 14 August 2000, the jubilee bishop's council made the decision to glorify for church-wide veneration a list of passion bearers, confessors, martyrs, and saints. At that time 146 bishops participated in the sessions. The canonization was held on August 19-20, 2000, at the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, in Moscow Russia. The last memorial service was held, proceeded by the Great Vigil of Vespers and Matins on the evening of 19 August 2000. It was during the Matins

service that the actual holy canonizations took place, the revealing of the holy icons took place in the center of the Cathedral.

Then on Sunday 20 August 2000, the Cathedral of Christ the Savior was consecrated, and the Holy Hierarchical Divine Liturgy was then celebrated, along with His Holiness Patriarch Alexis II, and the Synod of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church, in Russia, and also in attendance visiting Eastern Orthodox Hierarchs from around the world, and during this Divine Liturgy the singing of the Tropar, and Kontakion of those canonized was sung in prayer after the small entrance with the Holy Gospel. This now finalized the act of glorification, and holy canonization.

Personal note: I was a member of several groups who were fortunate to visit Russia after the fall of the Communist Party. Members of my family, (and many other visitors) seized the opportunity to contribute to the funding that was established to resurrect the Christ Cathedral. Whether one brick or much more, the rebuilding of the Cathedral was truly a global-international effort, led by the faithful in Russia!

#### \*\*\*\* APPEARANCE OF THE ICON OF THE MOST-HOLY MOTHER OF GOD IN THE CITY OF KAZAN (1579)

The Appearance of the Icon of the MostHoly Mother of God in the City of Kazan (1579): On 1 October 1552, on the feastday of the Pokrov-Protection of the Most-Holy Mother of God, at night, tsar Ivan IV in heading the Russian forces made ready for a decisive assault against the Tatar city of Kazan, and suddenly he heard the peeling of the Moscow bells. The tsar realized that this was a sign of the mercy of God: that through the prayers of the mighty commander-in-chief, the Lord deigned that the Kazan people should be converted to Him.

The surrender of Kazan on the feast of the Pokrov-Protection of the Most-Holy Mother of God completed a course of events, initiated way back centuries earlier in the year 1164 by holy Prince Andrei Bogoliubsky (+ 1174), against the Moslem Volga Bulgars. With the taking of Kazan, the Volga – the chief waterway route of the land, became finally a Russian river. And from Tatar servitude were liberated 60,000 Russian people. The enlightenment of the Tatars with the light of the Gospel truth was started. There were the first martyrs – Saints Peter and Stephen. The newly established Kazan diocese entered into the complex of the Russian Church and was soon illustrious in its own archbishops: Sainted Gurii (+ 1563) and Sainted German (+ 1567).

But the advance of Orthodoxy was especially enabled amongst the Volga Mahometans by the appearance, on 8 July 1579, of the wonderworking Icon of the Mother of God in the city of Kazan. Preaching the Gospel had been a difficult matter in this conquered kingdom amongst the incorrigible Moslems and pagans. The Most-Holy Mother of God, Mediatrix of preachers of the Word of God, Who even during Her earthly life shared in the evangelic work of the holy Apostles, – in looking down upon the efforts of the Russian missionaries, She did not hesitate to send them Heavenly help, manifest through Her wonderworking Icon.

On 28 June 1579, there occurred a terrible conflagration which had started around the church of Sainted Nikolai of Tula. This fire destroyed part of the city and turned to ashes half of the Kazan Kremlin. The adherents of Mahomet gloated, supposing, that God had become angered against

the Christians. "The faith of Christ, – says the chronicler, – is rendered a fable and an outrage". But the conflagration at Kazan was the foreboding of the ultimate fall of Islam and affirmation of Orthodoxy throughout all the land of the Golden Horde, the future East portion of the Russian realm.

The city began quickly to rise up from its ruins. Together with others who had been burned out, and not far from where the conflagration had started, – was built the house of the musketeer Daniil Onuchin. The Mother of God appeared in a dream to his nine year old daughter Matrona and commanded her to find Her icon, hidden in the ground by secret confessors of Orthodoxy way back still in the time of Moslem rule. But to the words of a mere girl they paid no attention. Thrice the Mother of God appeared and pointed out the spot, where the wonderworking icon had been concealed. Finally, Matrona with her mother began to dig in the indicated place and they found the sacred icon. To this place of the miraculous discovery there came archbishop Jeremii at the head of his clergy and transported the holy image into a church of Saint Nicholas situated nearby. From there, after a Molieben, amidst a church procession they transferred it to the Annunciation cathedral – the first Orthodox temple in the city of Kazan, erected by tsar Ivan the Terrible. During the time of the procession there occurred the healing of two blind men – Iosif and Nikita.

A copy of the Icon, which had appeared at Kazan, together with an account of the circumstances of its discovery and descriptions of the miracles was dispatched in 1579 to Moscow. Tsar Ivan the Terrible gave orders to build at the place of its appearance a temple in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God, to install therein the holy icon, and to found there also a women's monastery. Matrona and her mother, instrumental in finding the sacred icon, accepted monastic tonsure at this monastery.

At the Nikol'sk (Nicholas) church, where the first Molieben had been made before the Kazan Icon, was serving at this time as priest the future Sainted Ermogen, Patriarch of Moscow (+ 1612). Fifteen years later, in 1594, now as Metropolitan of Kazan, he compiled a report of the holy events to which he had been an eyewitness and participant: "Account and Miracles of the Most-Pure Mother of God from Her Venerable and Gloriously Manifest Image at Kazan". In this account are descriptions with great factual precision regarding many an instance of healing, from the wonderworking Icon through the prayers of believers. The "Account" manuscript – written by His Holiness Patriarch Ermogen – was in its entirety reproduced in facsimile edition: "Report about the Wonderworking Kazan Icon of the MostHoly Mother of God", with an introduction by A. I. Sobolevsky, (Moscow) 1912.

The not-large Icon, discovered by the girl Matrona in the then recently annexed foreign frontier of the Russian realm, soon became a national sacred item, a sign of the Heavenly protection of the Mother of God, manifest for all the Russian Church, since the soul of the Orthodox nation sensed the special participation of the All-Pure Lady Mother of God in the historical destiny of its "Rodina" native-land. Not by mere chance was the Kazan Image a copy of the ancient Blakhernae Icon, written by the holy Evangelist Luke, and considered in its iconographic type to be of icons named "Hodegetria" ("Putevoditel'nitsa", "Way-Guide"). Many a time the "Kazan Mother" showed the way to victory for Russian Orthodox soldiers in the fulfilling of their sacred duty for God and Country.

In the year of its appearance at Kazan (in other sources two years afterwards) there began the remarkable onward march "Beyond Kazan" (beyond the Ural Mountains) envisioned by Blessed German (+ 1567), and taken by the Cossack ataman Ermak Timofeevich Povol'sky (+ 1584), an effort crowned finally with the annexation of Siberia. With a graced energy and coursing about in miraculous manner it proved sufficient, that for some several decades Russian explorer-missionaries should proceed to the East, "to meet the sun", going many thousands of kilometers. On the feastday of the Pokrov (Protection) in 1639 they sailed out on their first voyage along the Pacific Ocean, preaching salvation to the surrounding peoples.

Orthodox soldiers and missionaries went east, while apostates fled to the West. Jesuits seemingly attempted to drown Rus' at the beginning XVII Century with tumultuous waves of sovereign-imposters and "rapacious people". It was indeed through Divine Providence, during the period of the Polish Occupation (1605-1612), which the nation termed the "Time of Troubles", that the Russian Church was headed by a great confessor of Orthodoxy – the Priest-Martyr Ermogen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus', who had been among those first to venerate the Kazan Icon of the Most-Holy Mother of God, becoming the author of the "Account" about it and the Service to it.

During the difficult days when Moscow was occupied by the Polish, and discord and disorder having spread throughout all the land, this resolute sufferer for the Holy Faith and Fatherland was held under guard, and he managed secretly to send off to Nizhni Novgorod an appeal: "Write to Kazan to metropolitan Emphrem, and let there be sent a document of direction to the regiments for the boyars and to the Cossack forces, that they should rise up in force for the faith, put an end to the plundering and preserve brotherhood, and should vow to pledge their souls for the house of the All-Pure and the wonderworkers and for the faith, let there be done. And in every city... write thus in my name". The Nizhni Novgorod people responded to the appeal of the archpastor Prince Dimitrii Mikhailovich Pozharsky headed the gathered militia.

The Kazan forces, joining in with the militia, brought with them a copy of the wonderworking Kazan Icon, which they gave to prince Dimitri at Yaroslavl'. The Most-Holy Lady Mother of God took the militia under Her protection, and by Her intercession Russia was saved.

The Russian forces experienced tremendous difficulties: inward hostilities, and insufficient armament and supplies. In the bad weather of autumn the Russian army moved on to storm Moscow, situated in the hands of the Polish.

A three-day fast and fervent prayer before the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God inclined the Lord to mercy. Within the besieged Kremlin at this time was held captive the Hellas Archbishop Arsenios (Arsenii, afterwards Suzdal' archbishop, + 1626), who had arrived from Greece and was grievously ill from his journeying and being shaken about. By night, the cell of Sainte Arsenii was suddenly lit up by a Divine light, and he beheld the Monk Sergei of Radonezh, who said: "Arsenii, our prayers are heard; through the intercession of the Mother of God the Divine judgement of the Fatherland is changed to mercy; on the morrow Moscow wilt be in the hands of its besiegers and Russia saved".

As though in proof of the veracity of this prophecy, the archbishop received healing from his sickness, and then this joyful occurrence became known to the Russian forces. On the following day, 22 October 1612, Russian forces, inspired by the vision, seized a sweeping victory and took the Chinese-quarter, and 2 days later – the Kremlin itself.

On Sunday, 25 October, Russian forces triumphantly in church procession made entry into the Kremlin, bearing the Kazan Icon. At the Skull-Place ("Lobnoe mesto", i.e. the public execution spot), the church procession was met by Archbishop Arsenii emerging from the Kremlin, bearing the Vladimir Icon of the Mother of God, saved by him in his captivity. Moved by the effect of the meeting of the two wonderworking icons of the Mother of God, the people with tears made prayer to the Heavenly Mediatrix.

With the expulsion of the Polish from Moscow, – according to the Nikonov chronicle, prince Dimitri Pozharsky had the holy Kazan Icon placed in his own parish church of the Entry in the Temple of the Most-Holy Mother of God, at Lubyanka in Moscow. Afterwards, at the expense of the prince-patriot, there was erected the Kazan cathedral on Red Square. The holy icon, which had been with the armies of Pozharsky during the liberation of Moscow, was transferred in 1636 into the newly constructed temple, the Kazan cathedral. At present, this holy image is situated in the Patriarch's Theophany cathedral in Moscow.

In commemoration of the liberation of Moscow from the Poles, a special feastday in honor of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God was established on 22 October. At first this celebration was made only at Moscow, but from 1649 it became an all-Russian celebration.

In 1709, before the Poltava Battle, Peter the Great prayed with his soldiery in front an icon of the Kazan Mother of God (that from the village of Kaplunovka). In 1721 Peter transferred one of the copies of the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God from Moscow to Petersburg, where at first the icon was placed in a chapel, then at the Alexandro-Nevisky Lavra monastery, and from 1737 it was in the church of the Nativity of the Mother of God on Nevsky Prospekt. In 1811, before the Fatherland War, the holy icon of the Heavenly Mediatrix was transferred into the newly constructed Kazan cathedral.

In 1812, the Kazan Icon of the Mother of God provided blessing for Russian soldiers in repulsing the French invasion. On the feast of the Kazan Icon, 22 October 1812, Russian detachments under the command of Miloradovich and Platov destroyed the Davu rearguard. This was the first outstanding blow against the French after their departure from Moscow, and in which the enemy lost seven thousand men. And on this day snow fell, bitter frosts began, and the army that had subdued Europe began to falter.

The Kazan cathedral st Petersburg was built in the years 1801-1811 – as though especially for this, to be a commemorative temple of Russian glory in the 1812 Fatherland War. The iconostas of the main altar was an elaborately wrought work, made of an hundred pud-weight [pud = 36 lbs] of silver: of this, forty puds were an offering to the temple by the Don Cossacks, having taken this silver in 1812 from the French. The walls of the cathedral were adorned with trophies, taken from the French in 1812. Buried at the cathedral and with enemy standards draped over his holy tomb was prince Mikhail Kutuzov-Smolensky, saviour of the Fatherland. Bronzen

sculptures of Kutuzov and Barclay de Tolli stand before the temple at the end of the colonnades, in the hemisphere circling upon the cathedral square.

Numerous wonderworking copies of the Kazan Icon in Rus' glorify the All-Pure Mother of God, Protectress of the Orthodox Russian people. Of the plethora of icons of the Mother of God venerated in the Russian Orthodox Church, none is more widespread in number than the Kazan Icon. For all Orthodox Rus' it is esteemed as holy, and to it oftenest of all do they turn their gaze in misfortunes and illnesses, crying out: "O fervent Mediatrix, Mother of the Lord Most-High, for all pray Thine Son Christ our God... with everything grant benefit and save all, O Virgin Birthgiver of God, and be Thou the Divine protection for Thine servant".

With blessings of grace are dispersed icons of the All-Pure Mother of God throughout the extent of the Russian land, truly imaging the Heavenly protection, with Her constant intercession sent down by Her Divine Son, having offered Himself in sacrifice for the salvation of mankind. The ancient Vladimir holy Image of the Mother of God preserves and blesses the Northern bounds, the Smolensk and Pochaev Icons guard the West, and in the East, to the ends of the land shine the rays of the inexhaustible grace of the wonderworking Kazan Image of our All-Pure Mother.

NOTE: The text of the Tropar to Kazan Icon of the Mother of God begins with "Zastupnitse userdnaya ...", an arrangement of which was sung by our parish choir as the first selection in our concert of works glorifying the Queen of Heaven. You can find and listen to this work on the main page of our website (<https://allrussiansaintsburlingame.org/>); scroll down to the image of our choir.