

St. Cyril Orthodox Church

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+ **November 28, 2021** +
23rd Sunday after Pentecost

Monk-Martyr Stephen the New (+767)
St. Theodore, Archbishop of Rostov (+1394)
NATIVITY FAST



MANY YEARS to **Kelvin Cates, Andy Afridi** and **Kenny Hendrickson** for their nameday Tuesday for St. Andrew the Apostle.

THIS WEEK: Wednesday, Dec. 1: Vespers at 6:30 pm; Bible study at 7 pm.

Thursday, Dec. 2: Divine Liturgy at 8:30 am, Prophet Habakkuk.

ACTIVITIES FOR ST. NICHOLAS DAY – We invite the children to bring a pair of shoes to set out in the hall before the Liturgy on Sunday, December 5. Also, the ladies are invited to join in a gift exchange at coffee hour that day. To participate, bring an inexpensive gift such as a decorative piece or Christmas ornament (no more than \$20 value) that you would like to exchange.

THE NATIVITY FAST continues. All adult Orthodox Christians should come to Confession before Christmas. Please do not wait to the last minute.

TREASURER UPDATE – For November, we have received **\$10,967**, including a grant of \$1,667 from the OCA and a grant of \$1,400 from the Diocese of the South. Our expenses are projected to be **\$13,317**. We are over our budget this month due to AC repair in the church office, and the purchase of wine, candles, books for the bookstore, and next year's candles.

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Look at the saints! They were not all hermits; and they were like us at first and were not sinless, and they were also engaged in worldly affairs, cares, and duties, and many of them had a family as well. But while doing their worldly occupations and duties, they did not forget at the same time their duties as Christians; and while living in the world, they made their way at the same time into the Kingdom of Heaven, and often they led others with them as well. In exactly the same way, if we wish, we can be at once good citizens, faithful husbands and good fathers, and also good and faithful Christians.

True Christianity is never and nowhere a hindrance, but on the contrary is everywhere and for everything beneficial. A true Christian is a person who believes in Jesus Christ and imitates Him in everything. The spirit of Christianity is pure, selfless, spiritual love – love which is a gift of the Holy Spirit. People call many things “love,” but not all are true Christian love.

- *St. Innocent of Alaska (+1879)*

Instructions to His Children

by the Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh (+1125)

Being ill and about to depart this life, I have considered in my soul and have praised God for having preserved me, a sinful man, to this day. Do not make light of this instruction, my children, or anyone else who may hear it, but if it please any of you children, take it to heart, give up laziness, and begin to work.

Above all, for the sake of the Lord and your own souls, have the fear of the Lord in your hearts by doing unstinted almsgiving, for that is the beginning of all good.

Truly, my children, consider how kind, and more than kind, is God, who loves mankind. We men, who are sinful and mortal, wish to avenge ourselves and immediately to spill the blood of him who has done us any wrong; but our Lord, who rules over life and death, suffers our transgressions above our heads, nay, to the very end of our lives, like a father, now loving his child, now chastising him, and again embracing him. Our Lord has likewise shown us how to be victorious over our foe, how to assuage and conquer him with three good acts: with repentance, tears and charity. It is not hard, my children, to keep this command of the Lord, and you can rid yourselves of your sins by those three acts, and you will not lose the kingdom of heaven. And, I beg you, be not slack in the performance of the Lord's commands.

Great are You, O Lord, and marvelous are Your works, and no word suffices to hymn Your wonders! And again we say: Great are You, O Lord, and wondrous are Your works, and may Your name be blessed and praised for ever and through all the earth! For who would not praise and glorify Your power and Your great miracles and goodness that are evident in this world: how by Your wisdom the heaven is built, how the sun, the moon, the stars, darkness and light, and the earth is placed on the waters, O Lord! How the various animals, birds and fishes are adorned by Your foresight, O Lord! And we also wonder at the miracle, how He has created man from the dust, how different the forms of human faces are, how if you look at the whole world, you will not find all made in one image, but the face of each according to God's wisdom. And we wonder also how the birds of the sky come from the south, and do not remain in one country, but both the weak and the strong fly to all lands, by the will of God, in order to fill the woods and fields. All these God has given for the use of man, for food and enjoyment.

Listen to me, and if you will not accept everything I say, at least pay attention to half of it! If God should soften your hearts, shed tears over your sins and say: "As You showed mercy to the harlot, the murderer and the tax collector, in the same way also show mercy to us sinners." Pray in this way both in church and when you lie down to sleep. Do not fail to say this even a single night. If you can, make a prostration to the ground; if your strength gives out, do it three times; in any case, do not be slack in it, for with this nightly prostration and singing man conquers the devil and frees himself from the sins he has committed during the day.

When you are riding and have no engagement with anyone, and you know no other prayer, keep on repeating quietly: “Lord, have mercy on me!” For it is better to say this prayer than to waste time thinking about idle things. Above all, do not forget the poor, but feed them according to your means, and give to the orphan, and protect the widow, and do not allow the strong to oppress the people. Slay neither the righteous, nor even the wrongdoer, nor order him to be slain who is guilty of death, and do not ruin a Christian soul.

Whenever you speak, whether it be a bad or a good word, do not swear by the Lord, nor make the sign of the Cross, for there is no need. If you have occasion to kiss the Cross with your brothers or with anyone else [*to make a vow or oath*], first ask yourself whether you will actually keep the promise, and only then kiss it; and having kissed it, see to it that you do not transgress, and your soul perish. As for the bishops, priests and abbots, receive their blessing in love, and do not keep away from them, but love them with all your might, and provide for them, that you may receive the benefit of their prayers to God. Above all, have no pride in your hearts and minds, but say: “We are mortal, alive today, and tomorrow in the grave. All that You have given us, is not ours, but Yours, and You have merely entrusted it to us for but a few days.”



Grand Prince Vladimir Monomakh

Do not hoard treasure in the earth, for that is a great sin.

Honor the elders as your father, and the younger ones as your brothers. Do not be slack in your houses, but watch over everything, not just relying on your servants to watch over things, lest those who come to see you should make light of your house and of your dinner. If you start out to a war, do not be slack and simply trust your generals, while you abandon yourselves to drinking and eating and sleeping. But rather put out the guards yourselves, and lie down to sleep only after you have placed the guards all around the army, and rise early to check on everything. Do not take off your armor in haste, for man perishes suddenly through his negligence. Avoid lying and drunkenness and debauchery, for body and soul perish from them.

Whenever you travel over your lands, do not permit the servants to do any damage in the villages, or in the fields, that the people may not curse you. Wherever you go, and wherever you stay, give food and drink to the poor. Above all honor the stranger, from whatever place he may come, whether he be a commoner, a nobleman, or an ambassador; if you are not able to honor him with gifts, at least give him food and drink, for these travelers will proclaim a man to all the lands, whether he be good or bad. Visit the sick. Go to funerals, for we are all mortal, and do not pass by a man without greeting him with kind words. Love your wives, but let them not rule you.

But the main thing is that you should keep the fear of the Lord higher than anything else. Whatever good you know, do not forget it, and what you do not know, learn it; just as my father had learned, even while staying at home, five languages, for this makes one honored in other lands. Laziness is the mother of all vices; a lazy person forgets what little he knows, and doesn't bother to learn that which he doesn't know. While doing good, do not be negligent in any good act, first of all in regard to the Church.



Do not let the rising sun find you in bed. Thus my father of blessed memory did, and thus do all good, perfect men. Having prayed to God at daybreak, when he would notice the rising sun, he would praise God in joy and say: "O Christ, You have given me sight, and You have given me this beautiful light!" and again: "Lord, add years to my years, that I may repent of my sins and, improving my life, may praise God."

I have undergone many hardships in the chase. Near Chernigov I have with my own hand caught ten or twenty wild horses in the forests, and I have besides caught elsewhere many wild horses with my hands, as I used to travel through Russia. Two aurochs¹ threw me and my horse with their horns: a stag butted me with his horns; an elk trampled me under his feet, and another butted me with his horns. A boar took away the sword at my side; a bear bit me into my knee covering; a grim animal [wolf] leaped at my loins and threw me with my horse: and yet God has preserved me. I have often fallen from my horse, I twice injured my head and frequently hurt my hands and feet in my youth, being reckless of my life and not sparing my head. Whatever there was to be done by my servants, I did myself, in war and in the chase, in daytime and at night, in the summer heat and in winter, without taking any rest.

Think not ill of me, my children, nor anyone else who may read this, for I do not boast of my daring, but praise God and proclaim His goodness for having preserved me, a sinful and wretched man, for so many years from the hour of death, for having made me, the wretched one, active in the performance of all humane acts. Having read this instruction, may you hasten to do all good acts and praise the Lord with His saints. Fear neither death, my children, nor war, nor beast, but do what behooves men to do, whatever God may send you. Just as I have come out hale from war, from encounters with animals, from the water, and from my falls, even so none of you can be injured or killed, if it be not so ordained by God. And if death come from the Lord, neither father, nor mother, nor brothers can save you. Though it is good to take care of oneself, yet God's protection is better than man's.

¹ An auroch, or oryx, was a breed of very large, wild cattle, now extinct.