

St. Cyril Orthodox Church

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+ **May 29, 2022** +
6th Sunday of Pascha – The Blind Man.
Virgin Martyr Theodosia of Tyre (+308)



FEAST OF ASCENSION: Wednesday, June 1: Vespers at 6:00 pm
Thursday, June 2: Divine Liturgy at 10 am

LADIES LUNCHEON: Mark your calendar! St. Cyril Ladies Luncheon will be held on Friday, June 17, at noon at [Thai Cottage](#) 3105 College Park Drive. This is an opportunity for the ladies to get to know one another better. If you are interested, please RSVP to Tina Cates so that the appropriate reservations can be made.

MEALS FOR THE CUPPLES FAMILY - Breanne Shannon is organizing meals to help out the Cupples family after the upcoming birth of their child, starting June 6. To help with this effort, speak with Breanne Shannon.

TREASURER UPDATE - For May so far, we have received **\$10,549**, including a grant of \$1,333 from the OCA and \$1,400 from the Diocese of the South. Our projected expenses are **\$12,326**, so **we still need about \$1,777 to break even this month.**

LOOKING AHEAD: Sunday, June 12 - Great Feast of Pentecost - Kneeling Vespers and parish picnic. Saturday, June 18 - Men's lunch at Mel's Diner.

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The Feast of the Ascension of Christ

Jesus did not live with His disciples after His resurrection as He had before His death. Filled with the glory of His divinity, He appeared at different times and places to His people, assuring them that it was He, truly alive in His risen and glorified body. He presented Himself to them alive after His passion by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days, and speaking of the Kingdom of God (Acts 1.3). It should be noted that the time span of forty days is used many times in the Bible and signifies a temporal period of completeness and sufficiency (Gen 7.17; Ex 16.35, 24.18; Judg 3.11; 1 Sam 17.16; 1 Kg 19.8; Jon 3.4; Mt 4.2).

On the fortieth day after His passover, Jesus ascended into heaven to be glorified on the right hand of God (Acts 1.9-11; Mk 16.19; Lk 24.51). The ascension of Christ is His final physical departure from this world after the resurrection. It is the formal completion of

His mission in this world as the Saviour. It is His glorious return to the Father Who had sent Him into the world to accomplish the work that He had given him to do (Jn 17.4–5).

And lifting His hands He blessed them. While blessing them, He parted from them and was carried up into heaven. And they returned to Jerusalem with great joy (Lk 24.51–52).

The Church’s celebration of the ascension, like all such festal celebrations, is not merely the remembrance of an event in Christ’s life. Indeed, the ascension itself is not to be understood as though it were simply the supernatural event of a man floating up and away into the skies. Holy Scripture stresses Christ’s physical departure and His glorification with God the Father, together with the great joy which His disciples had as they received the promise of the Holy Spirit Who was to come to assure the Lord’s presence with them, enabling them to be His witnesses to the ends of earth (Lk 24.48–53; Acts 1.8–11; Mt 28.20; Mk 16.16–14).

In the Church the believers in Christ celebrate these very same realities with the conviction that it is for them and for all men that Christ’s departure from this world has taken place. The Lord leaves in order to be glorified with God the Father and to glorify us with himself. He goes in order to “prepare a place” for and to take us also into the blessedness of God’s presence. He goes to open the way for all flesh into the “heavenly sanctuary. At the Holy Place not made by hands” (see Hebrews 8–10). He goes in order send the Holy Spirit, Who proceeds from the Father to bear witness to Him and His gospel in the world, making Him powerfully present in the lives of disciples. The liturgical hymns of the feast of the Ascension sing of all of these things.

Troparion of Ascension. Tone 4.

Thou hast ascended in glory O Christ our God,
granting joy to Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing they were assured
that Thou art the Son of God,
the Redeemer of the world!

Kontakion of Ascension. Tone 6.

When Thou hadst fulfilled the dispensation for our sake,
and united earth to heaven,
Thou didst ascend in glory, O Christ our God,
not being parted from those who love Thee,
but remaining with them and crying:
I am with you and no one will be against you!

St. Justin the Philosopher

Commemorated on June 1

St. Justin the Philosopher was born around the year 114 at Sychem, an ancient city of Samaria. Justin's parents were pagan Greeks. From his childhood he displayed intelligence, love for learning, and a fervent devotion to the knowledge of Truth. When he came of age he studied the various schools of Greek philosophy (the Stoics, the Peripatetics, the Pythagoreans, the Platonists), and he concluded that none of these pagan teachings revealed the way to knowledge of the true God.

Once, when he was strolling in a solitary place beyond the city and pondering about where to seek the way to the knowledge of Truth, he met an old man. In the conversation that followed, the old man revealed to Justin the basics of Christian teaching and advised him to seek the answers to all the questions of life in the books of Holy Scripture. **“But before anything else,”** said the holy Elder, **“pray diligently to God, so that He might open to you the doors of Light. No one is able to comprehend Truth, unless he is granted understanding from God Himself, Who reveals it to each one who seeks Him in prayer and in love.”**

When he was 30 years old, Justin accepted holy Baptism. From this time on, Justin devoted his talents and his vast philosophical knowledge to preaching the Gospel among the pagans. He began to journey throughout the Roman Empire, sowing the seeds of faith. “Whosoever is able to proclaim Truth and does not proclaim it will be condemned by God,” he wrote.

Justin opened a school of Christian philosophy. Saint Justin subsequently defended the truth of Christian teaching, persuasively confuting both pagan sophistry (in a debate with the Cynic philosopher Crescentius) and heretical distortions of Christianity. He also spoke out against the teachings of the Gnostic Marcian.

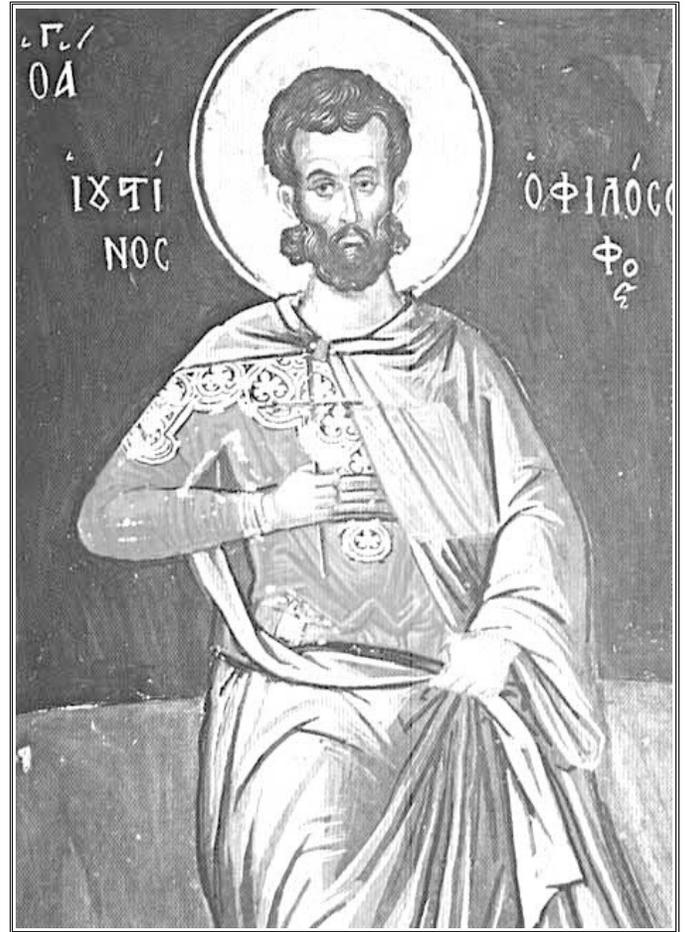
In the year 155, when the emperor Antoninus Pius started a persecution against Christians, Saint Justin personally gave him a book which was titled *Apologia* (meaning, a “defense”) in defense of three Christians innocently condemned to execution.

In the *Apologia* he demonstrated the falseness of the slander against Christians accused unjustly for merely having the name of Christians. The *Apologia* had such a favorable effect upon the emperor that he stopped the persecution. Saint Justin journeyed, by decision of the emperor, to Asia Minor where they were persecuting Christians with particular severity. He proclaimed the joyous message of the imperial edict throughout the surrounding cities and countryside.

In Ephesus there was held a debate between Saint Justin and a Jewish rabbi named Trypho. The Orthodox philosopher demonstrated the truth of the Christian teaching of faith on the basis of the Old Testament prophetic writings. Saint Justin gave an account of this debate in his work *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*.

A second *Apologia* of Saint Justin was addressed to the Roman Senate. It was written in the year 161, soon after Marcus Aurelius became emperor.

When he returned to Italy, Saint Justin, like the Apostles, preached the Gospel everywhere, converting many to the Christian Faith. When the saint arrived at Rome, the envious Crescentius, whom Justin always defeated in debate, brought many false accusations against him before the Roman court. Saint Justin was put under guard, subjected to torture, and suffered martyrdom by beheading in 165. The relics of Saint Justin the Philosopher rest in Rome.



St. Justin the Philosopher

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As pleasurable as worldly life may be, it cannot give us the joy that the spiritual life gives and for which the soul thirsts. It is light, joy, peace, the life of Christ. Let us desire with greater longing to live in this way.

- *Elder Ieronymos of Aegina*

The Lord does indeed long to gather everyone into His arms. Yes, everyone; but especially sinners.

- *St. Macarius of Optina*

Learning does not save. But obedience and humility do. - *Father Archippus of Glinsk*

An elder said: He who loses gold or silver can find more to replace it. But he who loses time cannot find more.

An elder also said: Every evening and every morning we should render an account of ourselves to God, and say to ourselves: What have we done of what God does not want, and what have we done of that which God does want? In this way, we must live in repentance.