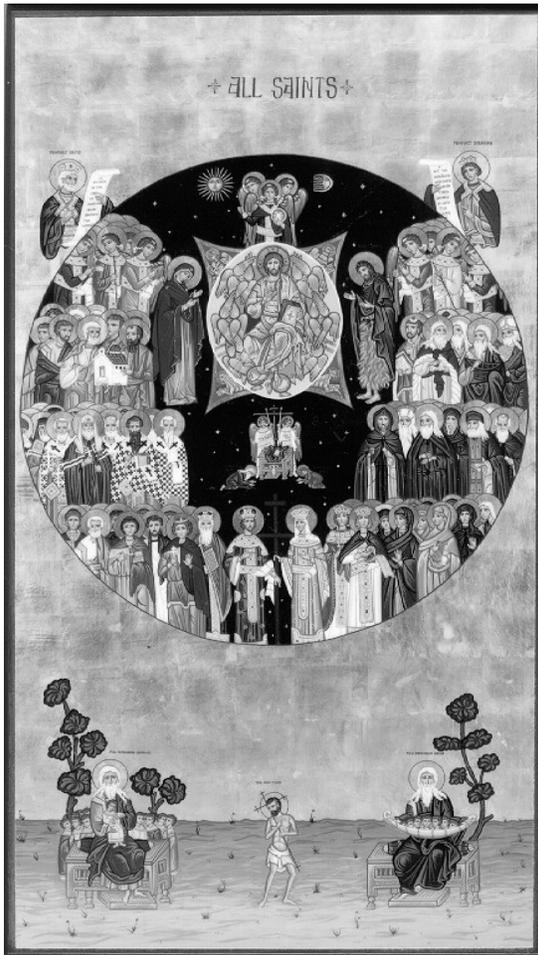


UKRAINIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF CANADA



**Church Camps
Religious
Theme
2004**

Resource Material

**THE SAINTS
Heroes of the Faith**

Prepared by the Office of Missions and Education,
Ukrainian Orthodox Church of Canada
Rev. Fr. Andrew Jarmus, Director

UOCC Church Camps Theme 2004 – The Saints

Forward

Christ is in our midst!

The following is resource material for the fourth annual Church Camps theme for our UOCC Ukrainian Orthodox camps and summer programs. This year's theme, "The Saints: Heroes of the Faith", follows in series with the earlier themes "Jesus Christ", "Mary the Mother of God", and "The Holy Apostles". This year's theme is designed to introduce children and youth to the lives of but a short collection of the numerous saints of our holy Orthodox Church.

You will find the material divided up into ten lessons, one for every weekday of a two-week camp session. If your session runs for one week only, this material could be presented in the morning and evening to cover all lessons. The lessons of Week One cover saints glorified throughout Orthodoxy, while Week Two focuses in on local saints of Rus'-Ukraine. Each lesson contains the following information: date of the saint's feast day, Tropar to the saint, a Scripture reading, a short account of the saint's life, and suggested discussion themes for children under 12 years old and 12 and older.

May this material prove valuable for further teaching our children and youth about these great heroes of our Faith. By the prayers of all the saints of Christ's Holy Church, both known and unknown, may each one of us find the courage and wisdom to be shining examples of God's grace and mercy in our own day and age.

Fr. Andrew Jarmus, Director
Office of Missions and Education

*"I sing the praises of the army of Your saints,
asking that my soul be enlightened by Your light through their prayers,
for You are the unapproachable Light
which drives away the darkness of ignorance by Your fiery rays,
O Light-giver Christ, the Word of God!" (from Matins of All Saints' Sunday)*

UOCC Church Camps Theme 2004

“The Saints: Heroes of the Faith”

Resource Material

WEEK ONE

MONDAY OF WEEK 1

St. John, the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord.

Feast Day: July 7 (Nativity of St. John)

Scripture Reading -- Mark 1:1-11

(John the Baptist gets people ready for Jesus. And when Jesus begins preaching, John baptizes Him in the River Jordan.)

¹ The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ²As it is written in the Prophets:

"Behold, I send My messenger before You,
Who will prepare Your way before You."

³"The voice of one crying in the wilderness:

"Prepare the way of the Lord;
Make His paths straight."

⁴John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. ⁵Then all the land of Judea, and those from Jerusalem, went out to him and were all baptized by him in the

⁶Now John was clothed with camel's hair and with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. ⁷And he preached, saying, "There comes One after me who is mightier than I, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to stoop

down and loose. ⁸I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

⁹ It came to pass in those days that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John in the Jordan. ¹⁰And immediately, coming up from the water, He saw the heavens parting and the Spirit descending upon Him like a dove. ¹¹Then a voice came from heaven, "You are My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Tropar to Saint John (Tone 2)

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with songs of praise, but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for you, O Forerunner. You were shown indeed to be the most honorable of the prophets, for in the waters you baptize the one whom you preached. After suffering with joy on behalf of the truth, you proclaimed even to those in hades the God who appeared in the flesh, who takes away the sin of the world, and grants us great mercy.

Life of St. John the Baptist and Forerunner

St. John the Baptist was Jesus' cousin; he was only six months older than Jesus. St. John is best known as "the Baptist" because he who baptised Jesus in the River Jordan. St. John is also called the "Forerunner", which means "the one who comes before", because it was his preaching that prepared people to follow Christ.

St. John prepared himself for his work of preaching God's word by living alone in the desert and following a strict life of fasting, prayer. He cared very deeply for God's People.

At the age of thirty, John began teaching the people that they needed to ask God to forgive their sins, because the Saviour that God promised was soon to come. One day, as he was preaching, Jesus came walking toward him. St. John saw Jesus and called out to the people, "Look, this is the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!" Jesus was the Saviour promised by God.

That day, St. John baptised Jesus in the River Jordan. While He was baptizing the Lord, John heard a voice from heaven say, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well-pleased", and he saw the Holy Spirit come down upon Jesus in the form of a dove. God revealed Himself as the Holy Trinity.

St. John knew the Jewish King at that time, King Herod. King Herod had married his brother's wife, Herodias, and John kept reminding him that this was against God's Law. Herodias was very angry with St. John. Finally, she and her daughter Salome tricked Herod into putting St. John to death by having his head cut off. The feast of the "Beheading of St. John the Baptist" is celebrated on September 11, and it is a day of strict fasting, in commemoration of the tragic death of a very holy person.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Fasting

St. John the Baptist prepared himself for his work of preaching to the people by prayer and fasting. Fasting is an important part of our lives as Christians. It helps to make our will power stronger, so that we can resist temptations. What are some of the things that we can fast from?

12 & Older: Repentance

St. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance. To repent means to change directions, to do a 180 degree turn in the way we think, act and live. In the Orthodox Church, we have a service especially for this – the sacrament of Holy Confession. What do we need to do in our life to make sure that our repentance is true and sincere and we are not just “going through the motions” when at Confession?

TUESDAY OF WEEK 1

St. Mary Magdalene, the Holy Myrrh-Bearer, Equal-to-the-Apostles.

Feast Day: August 4

Scripture Reading: Luke 24:1-10

(St. Mary Magdalene Meets Jesus After His Resurrection.)

¹ Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ²But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷saying,

"The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

⁸And they remembered His words. ⁹Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles.

Tropar to Saint Mary Magdalene (Tone 1)

In keeping His commandments and laws, O holy Mary Magdalene, You followed Christ, who for our sake was born of a virgin, And in celebrating your most holy memory today, we receive forgiveness of sins by your prayers!

The Life of St. Mary Magdalene

Mary was from the city of Magdala, which is why she is called "Mary Magdalene". The Gospels teach us that Mary followed our Lord Jesus when He went with the Apostles preaching about the Kingdom of God. Mary Magdalene was faithful to Jesus both in the days of His glory and at the time of His Passion and Crucifixion – even when most of his other disciples had left Him.

On the third day of Jesus' death, early in the morning, Mary Magdalene and several other women went to Jesus tomb to anoint His body with a special oil call myrrh. When they got to the tomb, they met an angel who told them that Jesus was no longer there. He had risen from the dead! At little later on Jesus Himself came to Mary. At first, Mary did not recognize Him, but then, Jesus said, "Mary!" At once she realized that the man she was talking with was Jesus Himself. She was so filled with joy and amazement that she ran into the city to tell the disciples what she had seen. Thus, Mary was the first person in history to call out "Christ is Risen!"

Mary Magdalene accompanied the apostles on their journeys to preach the Gospel. She even went to Rome and had an audience with the Emperor Tiberias. When she met him, she gave him a red egg with the words "Christ is Risen!" on it. This was the first Easter egg. She then went on to boldly tell him about Jesus, His teachings, life, death and resurrection.

Because of her zeal for preaching the Gospel of Christ, and because she was the first person to proclaim that Jesus had risen from the dead, the Church gave Mary Magdalene the title "Equal-to-the-Apostles".

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Dedication

St. Mary Magdalene was dedicated to Jesus both in good times and bad. This is what true friendship is. A true friend does not hang around when things are going well for someone and then leave when things get tough. How can we be dedicated friends when someone we know is going through a hard time?

12 & Older: On being an Apostle

When we call someone an "apostle" it means that they have been sent out on a mission to teach people about God. St. Mary Magdalene knew that all Christians are apostles and so wherever she went, she proclaimed Christ's Good News. How can we go out in our lives and share God's teaching with people through: 1.) words; 2.) attitudes, and 3.) actions?

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 1

St. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

Feast Day: November 26

Scripture Reading: John 10:11-16

(Jesus is the Good Shepherd of His followers – anyone who is a leader in the Church must try to be a good shepherd like Jesus.)

¹¹"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹²But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. ¹⁴I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. ¹⁵As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ¹⁶And other sheep I have which are not of this

fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

Tropar to St. John Chrysostom (Tone 8)

Grace shining forth from your lips like a beacon has enlightened the universe; it has shone to the world the riches of poverty; it has revealed to us the heights of humility. Teaching us by your words, O Father John Chrysostom, intercede before the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.

Life of St. John Chrysostom

Saint John Chrysostom was born in the city of Antioch in about the year 347 into the family of a military-commander. As a young man, St. John became a monk, and soon he was being considered to be made a bishop. But St. John went into hiding because he felt that he was unworthy to be a bishop. He spent four years praying and fasting in the wilderness. For two years, he lived in a cave, all by himself, in complete silence. These efforts made him very weak physically, and he had to go back to Antioch to recover his health. Upon returning, St. John was ordained a deacon.

After five years of serving as a deacon, St. John was ordained a priest. As priest St. John was intensely dedicated to caring for the needy. Under St. John, each and every day the Church in Antioch looked after over 3000 homeless people, shut-ins, orphans, elderly and others in need. St. John was also a splendid preacher, and for his rare God-given talent his parishioners called him the "Golden-Mouthed" ("Chrysostomos").

St. John Chrysostom's fame as a preacher grew, and he was elected Patriarch of Constantinople – the spiritual leader of all Christians. As Patriarch of Constantinople, the saint was committed to spreading the Christian Faith throughout the Empire and beyond. He even sent missionaries to preach to the Scythians, the ancient ancestors of the Ukrainian people.

As a bishop, St. John Chrysostom stressed the importance of living a moral life. He was especially critical of the members of the Byzantine Emperor and his family, whom he believed should be examples for all of their subjects. Not all of the Byzantine Royalty was happy with St. John's instructions to them, and eventually those who opposed him had him exiled.

During his time in exile, St. John Chrysostom continued to support and guide his spiritual children. His exile was very hard on him physically, though, and eventually he could bear these hardships no longer. Having received Holy Communion, the holy bishop fell died on September 27, 407. His final words were: "Glory to God for all things!"

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Caring for others

St. John Chrysostom knew that living a true Christian life means being concerned about people who are in need. What are some of the ways that we can help those who are needy?

12 & Older: The responsibility of being well-known

St. John Chrysostom stressed that the people in positions of fame or leadership have a great responsibility to be living examples of a faithful Christian life. As Christians, any time we find ourselves in a position of authority or recognition, we understand that we have the same responsibility. Discuss the different kinds of authority or recognition that we can have, and how they can be used as examples of true Christian living.

THURSDAY OF WEEK 1

St. Barbara the Great Martyr

Feast Day: December 17

Scripture Reading: 2 Corinthians 6:3-7 (CEV)

(Being a Christian means being true to Jesus' teachings, even when this is difficult.)

³We don't want anyone to find fault with our work, and so we try hard not to cause problems. ⁴But in everything and in every way we show that we truly are God's servants. We have always been patient, though we have had a lot of trouble, suffering, and hard times. ⁵We have been beaten, put in jail, and hurt in riots. We have worked hard and have gone without sleep or food. ⁶But we have kept ourselves pure and have been understanding, patient, and kind. The Holy Spirit has been with us, and our love has been real. ⁷We have spoken the truth,

and God's power has worked in us. In all our struggles we have said and done only what is right.

Tropar to St. Barbara (Tone 8)

Let us honor the holy martyr Barbara, for as a bird she escaped the snares of the enemy, and destroyed them through the help and defense of the Cross!

Life of St. Barbara

The Holy Great Martyr Barbara was the only daughter of a wealthy pagan. Seeing Barbara's extraordinary beauty, her father decided to hide her from the eyes of strangers. He built a tower for Barbara, where only her pagan teachers were allowed to see her. From the tower she was able to see the beauty of the natural world. Soon she began to ask herself questions about the Creator of so harmonious and splendid a world. She became convinced that the idols that her father worshipped could not have made the world. The desire to know the true God filled her soul, and she decided to dedicate her life to this task.

The fame of St. Barbara's beauty spread throughout the city, and many young men sought her hand in marriage. Her father thought that her attitude had been affected by her life alone, so he let her leave the tower to make new friends. St. Barbara met young Christian women in the city, and they taught her about the Holy Trinity, and about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Soon, Barbara was secretly baptised.

During this time her father was building a luxurious bathhouse at his home. By his orders the workers prepared to put two windows on the south side. But while her father was away, Barbara asked them to make a third window, in honour of the Holy Trinity. When her father returned she explained to him why she had put the third window in the bathhouse. Her father went into a rage; he beat his daughter terribly, and then tried to force her to give up her Christian beliefs by starving her. Finally he handed her over to the governor of the city, who had her tortured over and over again. By night St. Barbara prayed fervently to Christ, and Jesus Himself appeared and healed her wounds. Then they subjected her to new, and even more frightful torments. Through it all, St. Barbara refused to give up her faith in Christ. After much torture and humiliation, St. Barbara was eventually beheaded by her own father.

Since the 1200's St. Barbara's body has rested in Kyiv at St. Volodymyr's cathedral.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: The Holy Trinity

St. Barbara had three windows put in her father's bathhouse in honor of the Holy Trinity: God the Father, God the Son (our Lord Jesus Christ), and God the Holy Spirit. What are some of the ways that we honour the Trinity in our Church, using "threes"? (*Note to Instructor: Have the children consider also how many things in life come in threes... this is also Trinitarian.*)

12 & Older: Putting God first in life

St. Barbara own father gave her up to suffer and die for her faith. Although she loved and respected her father, she knew that she could not let even him get in the way of her relationship with Christ. Discuss how we might have to put relationships with others "on the line" for the sake of keeping an strong relationship with Christ. (*e.g. struggles with peer pressure*)

FRIDAY OF WEEK 1

The Blessed Family of St. Basil the Great

Feast Days:

St. Basil the Great, St. Emelia, Mother of St. Basil, & St. Basil the Elder, Father of St. Basil, January 14;

St. Peter of Sebaste, Brother of St. Basil, January 22

St. Gregory of Nyssa, Brother of St. Basil & St. Theosebia the Deaconess, Sister of St. Basil, January 23;

St. Macrina the Elder, Grandmother of St. Basil, June 12

St. Macrina the Younger, Sister of St. Basil, August 1

Scripture Reading: Psalm 128

(The Lord blesses the families of those who follow Him; this is a hymn sung at our Orthodox wedding service.)

Blessed is every one who fears the Lord, who walks in His ways. ²When you eat the labor of your hands, you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. ³Your

wife shall be like a fruitful vine In the very heart of your house, your children like olive plants All around your table. ⁴Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord. ⁵The Lord bless you out of Zion, and may you see the good of Jerusalem all the days of your life. ⁶Yes, may you see your children's children.

A Prayer for Our Homes:

O Holy Lord, King of heaven and earth, look down with mercy and compassion from the height of Your holy dwelling , upon our homes. Grant health and everything good to our parents, so that they may take care of us and everyone in our household. And help us all to do what is good and pleasing to You. Amen.

The Life of a Saintly Family

Many of the saints came from families that were very devoted to God. One of the best examples of this is St. Basil the Great and his family.

St. Basil the Great is honored as one of the greatest bishops and teachers in the Orthodox Church. One of the most important ideas that he taught was that it is not enough just to say we follow Jesus, we have to show that we follow Him through our actions. Because of St. Basil's teachings, it was the Church that built the first-ever hospitals, orphanages, shelters for people who were abused, abandoned or homeless.

St. Basil's grandmother, St. Macrina the Elder, was alive when the Church was still be persecuted; her father died a martyr's death, and she herself suffered much for her Christian beliefs.

St. Basil's parents, St. Basil the Elder and St. Emelia are also honored as saints in the Church. They were a very devout couple, and the love of Christ filled their house. They had ten children and five of them are honored as Saints.

St. Basil's brother, St. Gregory of Nyssa, is honored as another holy bishop and great teacher of the Orthodox Faith. In his time, there were those who were trying to change the true beliefs of the Church. Because St. Gregory defended the true teachings, his enemies convinced the Emperor to send St. Gregory into exile. Many of St. Gregory's writings explain how deeply God loves us and how much we need to have God's love in our lives.

St. Macrina the Younger, St. Basil's sister, was a very devout Christian. As a young woman, she was engaged to be married, but her fiancé died, and she then dedicated her life to serving God. After her father died, St. Macrina convinced her mother that they should enter the monastic life. They, along with some of their servants, lived as nuns, praying and serving God. St. Macrina had a very good education in the Orthodox Faith; it is said that many of the ideas taught by her brother St. Gregory were inspired by conversations that he had with his sister, Macrina.

St. Peter of Sebaste was ordained into the priesthood by his brother St. Basil. Later, he became bishop of the city of Sebaste in Armenia. St. Peter was one of the bishops who took part in the Second Ecumenical Council where part of the Creed that we say in church was written.

Another of St. Basil's sisters, St. Theosebia was a deaconess in the Church. She served God by taking care of the needy and those who were sick, and by teaching the Faith to women who were preparing to be baptised. When her brother St. Gregory was sent into exile, St. Theosebia went with him and shared in his struggles, so that he did not have to endure them alone.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Family Time with God

St. Basil's family had so many saints in it because they knew how important it was to spend time together serving and praying to God. How can we serve God and pray to Him together as a family?

12 & Older: Supporting Each Other

One of the reasons that there were so many saints in St. Basil's family was because their whole household was immersed in prayer and service to God. This made it easier for any one of them to stay faithful to God, even in times of difficulty. How can we be of support one another, in our families or among our friends, so that we can stay faithful to God in every part of our life?

WEEK TWO

MONDAY OF WEEK 2

The Blessed Kniahynia Ol'ha, Equal-to-the-Apostles

Feast Day: July 24

Tropar (Tone 1)

With wings of divine wisdom your mind ascended over the physical world. You searched and found the God and Creator of all, accepting Him before your baptism. You took pleasure in the life-giving Cross, and achieved angelic life forever, O holy Ol'ha.

Scripture Reading: Romans 13:1-4

(St. Paul teaches us that People in authority are placed there to serve God.)

¹ Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴For he is God's minister to you for good.

Life of St. Ol'ha, Equal to the Apostles

St. Ol'ha was the grandmother of St. Volodymyr the Great. She began ruling the lands of Rus'-Ukraine after her husband was killed by rebel forces in his realm. St. Ol'ha was a great builder of the life and culture of Rus'-Ukraine. She was always travelling throughout the land looking at how she could improve life for her subjects. But it was not only the earthly well-being of her people that she was interested in. Even more important for her was the spiritual life of her people.

She grew up a pagan, but in her heart St. Ol'ha loved holy Orthodoxy, and she made the decision to become a Christian. As a Christian she devoted herself to spreading the Christian faith throughout her land. She built many churches including the famous Saint Sophia's Cathedral in Kyiv.

In her work for Christ, St. Ol'ha faced strong opposition from the pagans in her court. She was even opposed by her son Svyatoslav, who refused to give up his pagan beliefs. Because of this opposition, St. Ol'ha's dream of making Rus' Christian did not come true in her lifetime.

Her struggles to bring the Good News of Jesus to her people, and her sorrow at not being able to do this as she had hoped, eventually made her very weak. In the year 969 Saint Ol'ha died. Before she died, she gave instructions that she was not to have a pagan funeral. And so, she was buried by an Orthodox Christian priest according to her wishes.

Because of her great efforts at spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Rus', St. Ol'ha has the title "Equal to the Apostles".

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Diligence

One of the ways that we show God how much we love Him is by trying our best in all of our work, and not giving up easily – this is called "diligence". What are some of the things that kids have to do, and how can they do them with diligence, as a way of showing God how much we love Him?

12 & Older: Facing Opposition

Not everyone agrees with the beliefs and principles that we live by as Christians. Sometimes, we know what is right, but when we try and do it, we face opposition from those around us. What are some ways that we can deal with this opposition, in order to keep on doing what is right?

TUESDAY OF WEEK 2

St. Volodymyr the Great, Equal to the Apostles

Feast Day: July 28

Tropar (Tone 4)

Sitting on the throne of God-protected Kyiv, O Volodymyr, you were like a merchant seeking goodly pearls. You searched and went to the Imperial City to know the Orthodox Faith. You found Christ the Pearl of great price, Who chose you like Paul and enlightened your blindness at the Font. Your people celebrate your repose: therefore pray for Rus'-Ukraine and all peoples, that the Orthodox may be granted peace and great mercy.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 1:11-19

(At first, St. Paul did not believe in Jesus, but then he became one of Jesus' greatest disciples.)

¹¹ But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. ¹²For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ.

¹³For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it. ¹⁴And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers.

¹⁵But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, ¹⁶to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately confer with flesh and blood, ¹⁷nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me; but I went to Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

¹⁸ Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and remained with him fifteen days. ¹⁹But I saw none of the other apostles except James, the Lord's kinsman.

Life of St. Volodymyr the Great, Equal to the Apostles

St. Volodymyr the Great was the grandson of St. Ol'ha. In his first years as ruler of Rus'-Ukraine Volodymyr was a fierce pagan, living a wild and sinful life. One day, Volodymyr had a divine vision that helped him see his sinful ways for what they really were. He gave up his pagan beliefs and began looking for a religion for himself and his people.

St. Volodymyr sent representatives out to explore the great religions of the world. When his men who went to the city of Constantinople and came back with their report, St. Volodymyr knew that had a found a faith his people. "When we wet into the great church in Constantinople," they told him, "we did not know whether we were in heaven or on earth. Truly, God dwells among the Eastern Christians."

St. Volodymyr became a Christian and he sent out a decree to his people that all Rus' was to put aside their pagan ways and be baptised into the Christian faith. The people of Kyiv gathered together with Volodymyr on the banks of the Dnipro River. They cast the idols they had been worshipping into the water, and then they themselves went into the River to be baptised into the Holy Orthodox Faith.

The era of St. Volodymyr was a very important and positive one for Rus'-Ukraine, but it was also filled with dangers. Both foreign enemies and traitors within his own court wanted to overthrow St. Volodymyr. He held fast to his faith and his rule over Rus'. However, his long years of ruling Rus' had a great toll on his health. In the year 1015, St. Volodymyr died, after having rule Rus'-Ukraine for 37 years, 28 of which he ruled as a Christian.

Because of his great dedication to the Holy Orthodox faith, and his efforts bring Orthodoxy to his people, St. Volodymyr was called the "Splendid Sun" by his people, and the Church gives him the title "Equal-to-the-Apostles".

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Blessed Water

Water is one of the most important elements of life. Most of our planet, and most of our bodies, are made up of water. Without water, we cannot live. This is the reason that in the Church water plays such an important part in our spiritual life. What are some of the ways that we used bless blessed water in the Church?

12 & Older: Don't give up on people

In his early life, for many, many years St. Volodymyr was a pagan. Like the Apostle Paul, St. Volodymyr was, at first, not at all interested in Christ or His Church. It was only later on that St. Volodymyr's heart became open to Christianity. If we were to have known St. Volodymyr in his earlier years, there is

probably no way that we would have ever guessed that one day he would be honored as a Christian saint. When we see someone who is living in a way that we know God would not approve of, we must not judge them. We must always hope and pray that God would warm their souls to His ways. There is a saying: "Hate the sin, but love the sinner." What do you think this means. How could we apply this saying when dealing with someone who is doing something that we do not approve of?

WEDNESDAY OF WEEK 2

Saint Job, Abbot and Wonderworker of Pochayiv

Feast Day: October 23

Scripture Reading: Proverbs 3:13-20

(God's Wisdom is a great blessing for us.)

¹³Happy are they who find wisdom, and the ones who gain understanding; ¹⁴for her proceeds are better than the profits of silver, and her gain than fine gold.

¹⁵She is more precious than rubies, and all the things you may desire cannot compare with her. ¹⁶Length of days is in her right hand, in her left hand riches and honor. ¹⁷Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.

¹⁸She is a tree of life to those who take hold of her, and happy are all who retain her. ¹⁹The Lord by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding He established the heavens; ²⁰by His knowledge the depths were broken up, and clouds drop down the dew.

Tropar (Tone 4)

You were a pillar of the True Faith, a zealous for the commandments of the Gospel, a denouncer of pride, a defender and teacher of the humble. Therefore those who honor you pray for the forgiveness of their sins, and that this your holy habitation may be kept safe from all harm, O our Father Job, you are like unto the long-suffering one of old.

The Life of Saint Job of Pochayiv

Saint Job of Pochayiv was born in the mid-1500's in Pokutia, Halychyna. From his youth he was known for his great piety and at age twelve he became a monk. As a young man, he was ordained a priest. For more than twenty years St. Job was the head of Holy Cross monastery near the city of Dubno. This was a very difficult time for the Orthodox Church in western Ukraine. It was almost constantly under attack by non-Orthodox Christians foreigners and their supporters in Ukraine.

At the beginning of the 1600's, St. Job left the monastery and went to live alone in a cave on Pochayiv hill, not far from the ancient Dormition Monastery. This monastery is one of the great holy places in Ukraine, and is famous for it's miracle-working Pochayiv Icon of the Mother of God. The monks at the monastery loved St. Job deeply, and they elected him as the head of their community. St. Job zealously fulfilled his duty as head of the monastery. He was kind and gentle with the brethren, and he did much of the work himself. During his time at Pochayiv, St. Job was again a fervent defender of the Orthodox faith against its enemies.

Even while leading the monks at Pochayiv, St. Job would still take time to go into his cave home to pray and fast. Sometimes he completely secluded himself within the cave for three days or even a whole week.

St. Job died in the year 1651. He was more than 100 years old, and had directed the Pochayiv monastery for more than fifty years.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Standing up for what is right

There can be times when we know that something is not going the way that God would want it to: maybe two friends are fighting, or someone is being picked on or ignored. In times like this, it is important to do what God would want us to, and not just ignore it, or "go with the flow". What are some of the ways that we can stand up for what God teaches us when we know that something isn't going the way He would want it to?

12 & Older: Spending time with God

In any close relationship, it is important to spend "one-on-one" time together, without distractions. Throughout his life, St. Job would take time to go off into the cave that he used for his room and spend "one-one-one" time with God. From time to time, each of us needs to have this quite, personal time with God. These are moments when, if we are really open to it, we can feel God's loving presence in our hearts, giving us peace, strength and guidance. Have you had a place

where you have been by yourself, but felt close to God? What was that like for you?

THURSDAY OF WEEK 2

St. John the New Martyr of Suchava

Feast Day: June 15

Scripture Reading: Isaiah 43:10-13 (CEV)

(The word “martyr” means witness – the prophet Isaiah teaches us that we are all witnesses of God’s love and blessings.)

¹⁰My people, you are my witnesses and my chosen servant. I want you to know me, to trust me, and understand that I alone am God. I have always been God; there can be no others. ¹¹I alone am the Lord; only I can rescue you. ¹²I promised to save you, and I kept my promise. You are my witnesses that no other god did this. I, the Lord, have spoken. ¹³I am God now and forever. No one can snatch you from me or stand in my way.

Tropar (Tone 4)

Your Martyr John, O Lord our God, has through his sufferings obtained from You an incorruptible crown; for rejoicing in Your strength, he overcame his tormentors and subdued the impotent offenses of the demons; by his intercessions O Lord save our souls.

The Life of St. John of Suchava

St. John lived in the 14th century in the city of Trapezund, in what is now north-east Turkey. He was a trading merchant, and a pious and dedicated Orthodox Christian.

Once St. John was sailing on a ship on a trade mission. He had a discussion about faith with the captain of the ship, who was not a Christian. In their talk the captain became very angry with St. John for his firm defense of Christianity.

When the ship reached port, the captain went to the governor of the city, who was a pagan worshipper of fire. He told the pagan governor that St. John wanted to become a fire worshipper. The governor invited St. John to become a fire worshipper and join him in mocking Christ. St. John prayed to God and the Lord gave him the strength to hold firm to his Christian beliefs.

The governor became very angry and ordered that St. John be tied to the tail of a wild horse and dragged through the city. As the horse was running through the city, a man ran up to St. John and cut off his head with a sword.

St. John's body laid in the street until evening, when Christians from the city came and took it away. The governor gave them permission to bury St. John near the local church.

Seventy years later, St. John's body was moved to the cathedral in the Ukrainian city of Suchava, in Bukovyna. For this reason he is called St. John of Suchava or St. John Suchavsky.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: God gives us strength

God wants us to follow His teachings. Sometimes, this is not easy. Instead, it might seem easier to do things that God would not want us to do, because we are afraid of looking out of place or getting a hard time from people. When we are afraid or embarrassed to do what God teaches us, we know that God will give us strength and courage, if we ask Him. What are some situations when we might need to pray for God to give us strength, so that we can keep following His ways?

12 & Older: False gods

The governor of the city where St. John was martyred worshipped fire. Only God is deserving of our worship, because it is God who made us, who sustains us in our life, and who makes us holy. Any time we put our faith and love into something or someone that is not the True God, we are worshipping an idol – a false god. False gods do not just have to be things, though; they can also be spirits, people or ideas. What are some of the false gods that we need to be careful of in our modern life?

FRIDAY OF WEEK 2

St. Anna Vsevolodivna, Princess of Rus'-Ukraine

Feast Day: November 16

Tropar (Tone 8)

In you, O mother, was the image of God revealed; for having taken up your Cross and following Christ, you taught by your own example that the flesh is to be spurned as something fleeting, but particular care should be bestowed upon the immortal soul, therefore, O Mother Anna, your soul rejoices with the Angels.

Scripture Reading: Matthew 25:1-13 (CEV)

(In a parable about five wise young women, Jesus teaches us about being ready to welcome Him into our lives and serve Him)

¹The kingdom of heaven is like what happened one night when ten girls took their oil lamps and went to a wedding to meet the groom. ¹²Five of the girls were foolish and five were wise. ³The foolish ones took their lamps, but no extra oil.

⁴The ones who were wise took along extra oil for their lamps. ⁵The groom was late arriving, and the girls became drowsy and fell asleep. ⁶Then in the middle of the night someone shouted, "Here's the groom! Come to meet him!"

⁷When the girls got up and started getting their lamps ready, ⁸the foolish ones said to the others, "Let us have some of your oil! Our lamps are going out."

⁹The girls who were wise answered, "There's not enough oil for all of us! Go and buy some for yourselves."

¹⁰While the foolish girls were on their way to get some oil, the groom arrived. The girls who were ready went into the wedding, and the doors were closed. ¹¹Later the other girls returned and shouted, "Sir, sir! Open the door for us!"

¹²But the groom replied, "I don't even know you!"

¹³So, my disciples, always be ready! You don't know the day or the time when all this will happen.

Life of St. Anna Vsevolodivna

The Holy Princess Anna Vsevolodivna was daughter of the Kyivan Kniaz Vsevolod (1078-1093), and granddaughter of St. Yaroslav the Wise. Her mother was a Byzantine princess. Anna grew up in a very pious family, and chose not to

get married, but instead to serve God as a nun. Her father was so supportive of her decision that he actually built a monastery in Kyiv for her, dedicated to St. Andrew the Apostle.

For 27 years St. Anna gathered women together in the Monastery and served them as the abbess (the head of the community). Being the daughter of Kyivan royalty, St. Anna was well-educated and she valued learning. Because of this, she established at the monastery the first school for girls in all Rus' Ukraine. This was an important event, since education for girls was very limited before this time.

Three years after becoming a nun, St. Anna went on a journey to Constantinople to meet her mother's family, and also to learn about life in women's monasteries and schools there. Her other reason for going was that, as a member of the Kyivan royal family, St. Anna had the responsibility of finding a new Metropolitan for the Church of Kyiv. She returned to Kyiv with the newly-consecrated Metropolitan John the Third.

In November of the year 1112, St. Anna died. She was buried in Kyiv in the Church of St. Andrew, which her father had built. In May of 1113, her body was taken out of its tomb and found to be "incorrupt", which means that it had not decayed. This is a sign that the person who died was a saint. She was so filled with the grace of the Living God that even after her death, death could not take it her body.

St. Anna's life is a model, to both women and men alike, of dedication to educational development, cultural formation and above all, an unfailing commitment to serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

Suggested Discussion Themes

Under 12: Committing our life to God

St. Anna committed her whole life to God. As a monastic, her life was spent in prayer and offering spiritual guidance to the women who came to her monastery. As a member of the Kyivan royalty, she used her authority for the betterment of God's Church. How can we show our commitment to God by things that we a.) do; b.) say, and c.) think (*e.g. attitudes*)?

12 & Older: Striving for excellence

As Christians we are challenged with committing ourselves to excellence in all our endeavours, and especially in our spiritual growth. What are some of the things that can get in the way of this growth, and how can we get around them?