

# Orthodox Christian Fellowship at Penn State Newsletter

9/17/2020

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Saint Andrew Cathedral Church  
Patras, Greece

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## Featured Saint: Saint Peter the Tax Collector



Saint Peter, the former tax collector, is commemorated every year on September 22nd. Saint Peter was the chief tax collector in Africa for Emperor Justinian, and he was known as cruel and merciless. One day, after throwing a piece of bread to a beggar, he had a dream where the good deeds of his life were weighed against his evil deeds. In the dream, the only good deed he ever committed was giving bread to the beggar. Saint Peter repented and began giving food, money, and clothes to needy people. Eventually, Saint Peter sold himself into slavery and ordered his servant to distribute the money from the sale to the poor. One day, when Saint Peter's master discovered the luxurious background of his slave, Saint Peter ran away. As he was leaving the city, he performed a miracle: he ordered a deaf and mute gatekeeper to open the city gates in the name of Jesus Christ, and the gatekeeper obliged, gaining the ability to speak and hear. Saint Peter went into hiding and remained hidden until he died.

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## Featured Icon: Kursk Icon



The Kursk Root Icon of the Mother of God dates back to the 13th century and is one of the oldest icons within the Russian Orthodox Church and it is known as a miracle icon. In 1259, a hunter saw the icon on a root face downwards, and once the hunter lifted the icon a spring of pure water surged up from where the icon was resting and the water became known for its miraculous healing properties. The day this occurred September 8th became the icon's annual feast day. Later the hunter rebuilt a small chapel and placed the holy icon within it. People came to the icon to pray about their sorrows and needs and the Mother of God healed and helped all of those who came to her icon.

Later the icon was transferred to Rylsk and placed in a new church but the icon did not remain there for long. It disappeared and returned to the place where it had first appeared and no matter how many times the inhabitants of Rylsk took it back to their city, the icon always miraculously returned to its former place, which is now on the grounds of the Kursk Root Hermitage. Many miracles are associated with this icon and it is even linked to many prosperous and victorious events within Russian history. Several copies of the icon have been made, which have also been associated with miracles.

More on the icon's story and its numerous miracles can be found at this [link](#).

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## Holy Day: The Feast of the Conception of John the Baptist



### **What is the Feast of the Conception of John the Baptist?**

On September 23rd we celebrate the miracle that was the conception of John the Baptist. He was born of a righteous village priest Zachariah and his wife Elizabeth (both of whom would later become saints). Unfortunately, the couple remained childless into their old age. Zachariah prayed unceasingly to God for a child, and one day while serving in the temple sanctuary the Angel Gabriel appeared to him and informed him that his wife would bear him a child, which he would name John. Because Zachariah did not initially believe Gabriel's words, he was forced to remain silent until the day of the birth of his son, John.

You can read more about the feast day [here](#).

### **Symbolism**

John the Baptist is referred to as the Forerunner because he often foreshadowed events that would take place in the life of Christ. This foreshadowing began with John's very conception, as his

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miraculous birth foreshadowed the miracle that is the birth of Christ.

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### Archbishop Elpidophoros Presides at Memorial Service for Families of Orthodox Christians who Perished on September 11, 2001

This past week, Archbishop Elpidophoros of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese served a memorial service for families of Orthodox Christians who perished during the attack on the World Trade Center on September 11th. The prayers also included the individuals who perished in Shanksville, PA. Following the memorial service, the Archbishop stated: "Today, in this day of unspeakable sorrow for you, I want all of you to know that we stand with you, we pray with you, and we remember with you. We have gathered here in front of the Saint Nicholas Church and National Shrine, which is once again under construction, in order to offer unto our Heavenly Father - the names, the souls, and the memories of those who perished nineteen years ago, this very day. ... We will never forget; we will never allow the world to forget. The rebuilt Saint Nicholas Church will be an everlasting memorial to their lives. It will also be both a spiritual home and a spiritual hospital for you, the survivors, to come and find healing and fellowship."

To read the full article, please click this [here](#).

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### Featured Prayers:

#### For the Sick

O Christ, Who alone art our Defender: Visit and heal Thy suffering servant \_\_\_\_\_, delivering him (her) from sickness and grievous pains. Raise him (her) up that he (she) may sing to Thee and

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praise Thee without ceasing, through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind.

*For all sick people*

O Lord Almighty, healer of our souls and bodies, Who putteth down and raiseth up, Who chastiseth and health also; now, in Thy great mercy, visit our brothers and sisters who are sick. Stretch forth Thy hand that is full of healing and health, and raise them up, and cure them of their illness. Put away from them the spirit of disease and of every malady, pain and fever to which they are bound. And if they have sins and transgressions, grant to them remission and forgiveness, for Thou lovest humankind. Yea, O Lord my God, have pity on Thy creation, through the compassions of Thine only-begotten Son, together with Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, with whom Thou art blessed, both now and ever, and to ages of ages.

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