

## **St. Andrew the Archbishop of Crete Commemorated on July 4**

Saint Andrew, Archbishop of Crete, was born in the city of Damascus into a pious Christian family. Up until seven years of age the boy was mute and did not talk. However, after communing the Holy Mysteries of Christ he found the gift of speech and began to speak. And from that time the lad began earnestly to study Holy Scripture and the discipline of theology.

At fourteen years of age he went off to Jerusalem and there he accepted monastic tonsure at the monastery of Saint Sava the Sanctified. Saint Andrew led a strict and chaste life, he was meek and abstinent, such that all were amazed at his virtue and reasoning of mind. As a man of talent and known for his virtuous life, over the passage of time he came to be numbered among the Jerusalem clergy and was appointed a secretary for the Patriarchate -- a writing clerk. In the year 680 the locum tenens of the Jerusalem Patriarchate, Theodore, included archdeacon Andrew among the representatives of the Holy City sent to the Sixth Ecumenical Council, and here the saint contended against heretical teachings, relying upon his profound knowledge of Orthodox doctrine. Shortly after the Council he was summoned back to Constantinople from Jerusalem and he was appointed archdeacon at the church of Hagia Sophia, the Wisdom of God. During the reign of the emperor Justinian II (685-695) Saint Andrew was ordained bishop of the city of Gortineia on the island of Crete. In his new position he shone forth as a true luminary of the Church, a great hierarch -- a theologian, teacher and hymnographer.

Saint Andrew wrote many liturgical hymns. He was the originator of a new liturgical form -- the canon. Of the canons composed by him the best known is the Great Penitential Canon, including within its 9 odes the 250 troparia recited during the Great Lent. In the First Week of Lent at the service of Compline it is read in portions (thus called "methymony" [trans. note: from the useage in the service of Compline of the "God is with us", in Slavonic the "S'nami Bog", or in Greek "Meth' Humon ho Theos", from which derives "methymony"], and again on Thursday of the Fifth Week at the All-night Vigil during Matins.

Saint Andrew of Crete gained renown with his many praises of the All-Pure Virgin Mary. To him are likewise ascribed: the Canon for the feast of the Nativity of Christ, three odes for the Compline of Palm Sunday and also in the first four days of Holy Passion Week, as well as verses for the feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and many another church hymns. His hymnographic tradition

was continued by the churchly great melodists of following ages: Saints John of Damascus, Cosma of Maium, Joseph the Melodist, Theophan the Written-upon. There have also been preserved edifying Sermons of Saint Andrew for certain of the Church feasts.

Church historians are not of the same opinion as to the date of death of the saint. One suggests the year 712, while others -- the year 726. He died on the island of Mytilene, while returning to Crete from Constantinople, where he had been on churchly business. His relics were transferred to Constantinople. In the year 1350 the pious Russian pilgrim Stephen Novgorodets saw the relics at the Constantinople monastery named for Saint Andrew of Crete.

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### **Venerable Martha the Mother of the Venerable Simeon Stylites the Younger**

*Commemorated on July 4*

Saint Martha, mother of Saint Simeon of Wonderful Mountain (May 24), lived during the sixth century and was a native of Antioch. From her early years she yearned for monasticism, but her parents persuaded her to marry. Her husband, John, soon died, and righteous Martha with all her strength devoted herself to the raising of her son. She was an example of high Christian temperament for her son. She often visited the temple of God, she attended church services attentively and with piety, and frequently received the Holy Mysteries of Christ.

Saint Martha rose up to pray each night, and her prayers were offered with heartfelt warmth and tears. She particularly venerated Saint John the Forerunner, who was for her a protector, frequently appearing to her in visions. Saint Martha was charitable towards the poor, she fed and clothed them, she visited the convalescent and she attended to the sick, she buried the dead, and for those preparing to receive holy Baptism she made the baptismal garments with her own hands.

Saint Martha was reserved, and no one heard from her a frivolous, false or vain word, no one saw her angry, nor fighting with anyone nor bitter. She was a model of chaste and pious life and by her example she guided many on the pathway to salvation. When her son, Saint Simeon, had become a renowned ascetic, she urged him not to exalt himself for his own efforts, but to thank God for everything.

The time of her death was revealed to Saint Martha. She beheld angels with candles saying that they would come for her in another year's time. The saint was also granted visions of Paradise, and the All-Pure Virgin Herself showed to her the heavenly habitations prepared for the righteous.

Saint Martha's death was peaceful, and her body was buried on Wonderful Mountain, at the place of the ascetic deeds of her son, Saint Simeon the Stylite.

## LETTER FROM FR ANDREW

Dear Board of Trustees, Parishioners & Friends,  
Glory be to Jesus Christ!

As Christians we are commanded to obey Christ to the best of our ability. That includes listening to His whisper in our ear. As Orthodox Christians our Parish is in the Diocese and our Temple is an extension of that bigger parish, the Diocese. We are to be faithful and follow the direction of the Hierarchy, a direct line to Jesus Christ, sometimes even when it is hard to do.

There is no easy way to say this, but my last Sunday will be July 30, the day of our Lamb Roast. On August 1, 2017 I will begin a new parish assignment as rector of Holy Assumption Orthodox Church in Marblehead, Ohio. I will serve here at St. Panteleimon through July 16, take one Sunday as vacation, and return to serve the Patronal Feast Day on July 26 and remain until July 31. Three months ago when I was first asked if I was interested in going to Marblehead, I asked His Grace "If I say yes, can I take my name out of the running at any time?" He said, of course. I say, OK then.

This may be a shock to some of you. To others, it is not such a surprise. When I came here 3 years ago, when everyone thought the church was closing. I said to trust God and follow Him. He would make things be alright. You embraced a 5 years plan that, if followed, would put St. Panteleimon on the road to being a spiritually and financially strong church. The last two years ended in the black financially. And even though we are struggling now, we are on pace to finish again in the black. It is and was working. But in my humble opinion, it cannot be sustained.

As I have told you so many times before my dear friends, it is not always about money. I really believed in my heart and soul we would of sparked the interest in some of the 30 people, who I've come to call *the lost generation*, and

should be regular participants of our parish family to return. Yet, there has been not one whisper from any of them. Our parish has only four people under the age of 60 who attend with any regularity. In 5 years most of our parishioners will be close to age 70 years or older. That is not a sustainable picture. An aging parish is a dying parish. There are few, if any, new and younger faces coming in the front door and who are committed to the work of the Lord.

Please let me make one thing clear, I'm not leaving because I hate it here. That is the furthest thing from the truth. In fact, the exact opposite is true. I love living here. I love the Village of Summit and I love all of you. And secondly let me be equally clear to all you "faithful regulars"—the ones who are here every Saturday for Vespers, every Sunday for Liturgy, many other services, Bible Study, Orthodoxy 101 Class - you have done nothing wrong. The reason for my transfer is largely, and perhaps selfishly, financially based. It is hard, as many of you well understand not knowing if I would receive a check to pay bills.

If there is any failure here, it is my own. I have not been able to inspire and foster some from this parish the desire to embrace a vision of ministry as a Summit community church. So with that I ask your forgiveness.

This decision was not an easy one to make. I prayerfully consulted with my spiritual father many, many times, as well as His Grace, Bp. Paul. It has been an agonizing decision. Even driving to Ohio (in the eleventh hour) two weeks ago to meet with the new parish, I was hoping that I would receive a phone call or text from someone from the lost generation that they were planning to come back. But it never occurred.

In conclusion, please be rest assured of my continual prayers. Pray for me as God moves me to an new assignment in my life. I hope and pray that each of you continue to experience peace & growth in God's love.



"No one on this earth can avoid affliction; and although the afflictions which the Lord sends are not great men imagine them beyond their strength and are crushed by them. This is because they will not humble their souls and commit themselves to the will of God. But the Lord Himself guides with His grace those who are given over to God's will, and they bear all things with fortitude for the sake of God Whom they have so loved and with Whom they are glorified for ever. It is impossible to escape tribulation in this world but the man who is given over to the will of God bears tribulation easily, seeing it but putting his trust in the Lord, and so his tribulations pass."

~Blessed Elder Fr. Sophrony Sakarov