

July 15



Holy Martyr Cyricus

The Holy Martyrs Cyricus and Julitta

St. Julitta was arrested in the year 305 in the city of Tarsus for her confession of Christ and was subjected to severe torture. Her three-year old son Cyricus cried loudly, seeing her suffering. The torturer wanted to stroke him and to take him into his arms, but the child tore himself away to go to his mother with the shout: "I am a Christian". The angry judge pushed the boy away from him and the boy, rolling down the steps, died from his injuries. After this St. Julitta was hanged, her body was pierced with a sharp iron rod, and boiling pitch was poured on her wounds and, finally, they beheaded her.

Kontakion, Tone 4

**Martyrs for Christ Julitta and Cyricus,
You were carried into the embrace of the Father.
Undergoing the brave ascetic feats
You joyfully cried out:
Christ is the praise of martyrs.**

See July 14. The Epistle: 1 Cor. 13:11-13, 14:1-5, sel. 154. The Gospel: Luke 10:19-25, sel. 51.

🏰 Holy Equal to the Apostles Great Prince Vladimir, in holy Baptism Basil

The grandson "of the Most Blessed Olga", son of Sviatoslav, from birth was wise, enterprising, brave and military. He ascended the Kievan throne in the year 980. As a pagan, he was known for his love of power, violent passions, fervent adherence to idolatry and love of sensual pleasures. The Lord, "seeing the Russian land decaying in sin, sent His Spirit into the

strong-minded soul of the glorious Vladimir, so that he would understand Christ our God as One of the Trinity and for him through baptism to enlighten His chosen people, entrusted to him by Him, and to lead them to Him with faith". After this Vladimir became worthy to receive "visitations of the Most High, Who opened to him the all merciful eye of the good God and shined understanding in his heart, - he understood the vanity of idolatry and sought the One God, Who created everything visible and invisible". Enlightened by the grace of God, Vladimir learned the Christian faith from a Greek philosopher and in the year 988 accepted Holy Baptism in the city of Korsun (see Taurida Diocese). This baptism of the holy prince was accompanied by a miracle. Before baptism the holy prince was struck with blindness, from which he suddenly received healing during the completion of the holy sacrament of his baptism. After his baptism St. Vladimir, having destroyed the idols in Kiev, converted the Kievans to Orthodox Christianity and then began to spread the Christian faith to all Russia, "has saved us from every evil, and delivered many people and all the Russian land from those who sacrificed to idols". After these holy deeds St. Vladimir was much occupied with spreading the Holy Orthodox faith in his fatherland and all his life carried out Christian piety in his spiritual efforts, having done "many good deeds" and having adorned himself "with righteousness, long-suffering, love, humble charity and mercies". He built temples and generously endowed them. He cared for the good education of his own and the people's children. He started and constructed schools, encouraged preaching in church, issued laws for building up church life, established hospitals, alms-houses and shelters for homeless strangers, released slaves at will and redeemed debtors and freed captives. He had a fatherly defense and protection for the poor, needy and weak. He quite often sent everything needed to the houses for poor ill persons, and built dining rooms for general meals for the needy 1) and ordered "all the poor and needy to come to the court of the prince to receive all kinds of help". According to the words of Metropolitan Hilarion, St. Vladimir was "dress for the naked, food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, helper for the widows, calm haven for the wanderers, protector for those without cattle, defender and enricher of the poor and the abused". He expanded his mercy and meekness to even consider it a sin to punish criminals. St. Vladimir started and approved peace treaties with all Christian rulers and also at the same time vigilantly protected the people from enemies and the Church from teachers of lies. St. Vladimir died on July 15, 1015 and was buried in the Desiatinnaia Church (Church of the Tithe) in Kiev that was built by him. In 1636 his relics were found incorrupt. Today his honorable head is in the St. Sophia Cathedral in

Kiev, and small particles of his relics are in various places in Russia. In its hymns the Holy Church compares St. Vladimir to the Equal to the Apostles Emperor Constantine and calls him "the root of true faith", "the originator of piety and preacher of faith", "destroyer of idols", "most blessed father and teacher ", "equal to Apostle Paul". 2)

Troparion, tone 4

**You were like the merchant who sought the fine pearl, O Vladimir,
Distinguished in your rule and seated on the high throne of Kiev,
The Mother of Cities, which has been saved by God.
Sending envoys to the Royal City
To investigate the Orthodox Faith and put it to the test,
You found Christ the Pearl without price,
Who chose you as a second Paul,
And Who shook off your blindness of soul and body in the holy font.
Therefore, we your people are here celebrating your falling asleep.
Beseech that our authorities and God-loving people may be saved.**

Kontakion, tone 8

**O all glorious Vladimir,
In old age you imitated the great Apostle Paul,
You abandoned striving after idols as childish wisdom,
And as a fully grown man
You adorned yourself with the purple of divine Baptism.
Now standing before Christ the Savior with rejoicing,
Beseech Him that our authorities and God-loving people may be saved.**

Paramoeas and the rest, see May 21.

In the Rubrics (Ustav) the feast of St. Vladimir is marked ☩ (Middle Feast); but an 1888 decree of the Holy Synod, for the impression in the awesome memory for ever of the Orthodox children of the Russian Church named for the Enlightener of the Russian people, decided to attribute to him a feast having a cross in a semicircle - ☩ (Class 2 Feast). Together with this, the prayers for the Litiya, on the Gospel in Matins, before the Canon, are the same as those used for the dismissals and prayers for the commemoration of the Hierarchs of the ecumenical and Russian Church. The name of the Saint Equal to the Apostles Prince Vladimir should be remembered directly after the names of Saints Cyril and Methodius, Teachers of the Slavs. A special

book of services together with the Akathist Service is published for the service on July 15.

Martyr Abudimus

He was born on the island Tenedos and suffered under Diocletian.

Notes:

1) Besides this St. Vladimir, as is known, frequently loved to arrange celebrations and feasts. His love for this is explained by the fact that on such feasts usually the reading of the Holy Scriptures takes place. The divine words of Holy Scripture having filled the soul with such blessedness spiritually revived the holy prince, and so wonderfully renewed him, that he wanted it as often as possible and that his subjects also partake of this blessedness, and he wanted their speedy spiritual renewal. But as the subjects of the holy prince were still too rough to be going as one body to hear the word of God, and in order to get them to incline to this hearing, the holy prince also took advantage of the custom of reading a soul-pleasing book during meals, which was done in the Byzantine court and monasteries. Of course, in the first place for the majority there still was physical satisfaction on these feasts and that is why this satisfaction is so remembered over the centuries. But there is no doubt that those feasting at the table of the prince not only were satisfying physical hunger but also left with spiritual satisfaction, each drawing up to his limit his acceptance of the rule of life appropriate to being called Christian. Undoubtedly as well that such an establishment of feasts was reflected also in the use of drink and led to greater abstinence. The custom of reading at the meal did not end with St. Vladimir, but also continued after him in the monasteries until today. Thus the feasts of St. Vladimir stand in a close bond with his love for the word of God and were one of the means of enlightening the Russian land with the light of Christ through teaching (see details in "Tserkovniia Vedomosti" (Church News), 1893, 39). At the present time when we have tea and dining rooms, it would be rather desirable that we renew this beautiful custom of the first times of Christianity in Rus in glory and the memory of the originator of this custom, the holy Enlightener of Rus.

2) It is impossible to worthily appreciate all those good things that the Holy Prince Vladimir did for Russia. He enlightened all the Russian land with the light of the Christian faith. He led her out of the darkness of idolatry into the wonderful light of the grace of God and renewed her by holy baptism. He established the Orthodox Church, the pillar and foundation of

truth in our fatherland, and in that way installed the Kingdom of Christ, the source of life, power and strength of Russia, into the Russian kingdom. He made a nation for the Russian people by the election of God and with the love of God. Due to his spiritual efforts " the darkness of idolatry left us and the brightness of sound faith appeared. The fog of service to demons disappeared and the sun of the Gospel illuminated our land. Pagan temples were destroyed and churches were erected. Idols were destroyed, and icons were revealed to be holy. Demons fled, and the cross has consecrated cities. Pastors preached the lamb of Christ: the bishops, presbyters and deacons began to offer up the bloodless sacrifice, and the clergy adorned and vested in piety the saints of the church. The apostolic trumpet and the Gospel thunder resounded in all cities. Incense was offered up to God, and sweetened the air. Monasteries were founded. Monk and nuns, men and women, great and small, all the people who filled the ranks of the saints of the church glorified the Lord." The holy faith planted by St. Vladimir has brought to our nation an incalculable amount of beneficial fruits. All the good that we see, all that is great and glorious in our fatherland, everything shown off by our cities and villages, everything that is valiant, famous, ever memorable in the history of the kingdom of Rus, is the planted fruit of the holy faith by St. Vladimir, its beneficent action and its precious gift. She gathered the Russian people as one, who before were divided into tribes, and expanded the boundaries of Russia to the most remote ends of the earth. She introduced us to laws and civil governance, organized the whole general and family order, blessed the mutual relations and bonds, which binds all members of the great family, the Russian people living in unity and as the strong body of the Russian state. She brought up great and wise kings, famous military leaders, wise advisers and leaders of the people. She brought up and glorified with the eternal glory of God whole choirs of our holy compatriots and made them by their prayers protectors and defenders of the Russian land. She inspired our forefathers and fathers with courage, single-mindedness and self-denial, with which they protected and defended the property of their ancestors from their many enemies. The Holy Orthodox faith more than once saved the Russian land from final destruction, through this faith our forebears conquered kingdoms. And everything that now is good in our communal, family and personal life is the fruit of the holy faith, as the purest and unspeakable source of light, spirit, life and power. For all these benefits, heavenly and earthly, we and our whole country are obligated to the Holy Equal to the Apostles Prince Vladimir, who enlightened Rus with the light of the Orthodox faith and who left a sacred covenant for Russia to be the protector of Orthodoxy as a defense against unbelief and

impiety, the guardian of peace and the tranquility of the nation, the instrument of Providence to quiet storms and the turmoil that is generated by human passions, the kingdom of peace and the bulwark always opposed to the contradictory kingdom of self-will, enmity and disorder. Fidelity to this sacred covenant of the Holy Prince Vladimir obliges all of us, as children of Russia, with firmness in the Orthodox faith to disperse the unbelief of the world with strong observance of the sacred rules (Ustav) of the Church and the pious customs of our forebears to expose the vanity of changeable customs clothed in light, with confirmed obedience to the authorities supplied by God to show by their example to the faithful their duty as citizens, by careful fulfillment of their obligation as sons to be truly devoted to their fatherland. All this assigns to the pastors of the Church the sacred duty with the indelible features impressed in the awesome memory of the Orthodox children of the Russian Church named after the Enlightener of Rus to tell them about his works and spiritual efforts, to describe with brilliant colors the great importance of these spiritual efforts for our fatherland, to explain the great merit of the covenant left for us by the Holy Equal to the Apostles Prince Vladimir and with special pastoral persistence to ask all "to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called" (Eph. 4, 1).

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd ed., 1274 pp., (Kharkov, 1900). p. 244-6
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