

Saints for Wall, Iconography Project Phase II

March 11, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

In the following pages, you will find the list of Saints that we are planning to adorn the walls of St. Matthew Orthodox Church. Besides just the names of the Saints, we have also provided a very brief background on the history of each Saint. These short summaries were taken from pages of information that are available. Many details were not included, but I hope the summaries will encourage you to read up on the full history of each Saint. The details and stories are amazing and leave you with no doubt on why these men and women were deemed Saints of our Church.

As we are asking for your donations to this second phase of the Iconography project, I hope that this information helps you make a connection with one of these Saints. Our Sponsor a Saint campaign is built around making a donation toward a Saint you would like to sponsor. You can make any size donation toward a Saint. While each Saint will cost \$2,000, your donation of any size will help us arrive at a complete sponsorship of the 22 saints listed below.

We are off to a good start with \$15,000 already in the Iconography fund. Below are some pictures which are a good reference to how each wall will look. Also, included are examples of a few of the Saints as painted by our iconographer, Dmitry Shkolnik.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

In Christ,
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- 1. Ignatius of Antioch...***was the third bishop of Antioch, after the Apostle Peter, Several of his letters have survived to this day; he is one of the Apostolic Fathers (the earliest group of the Church Fathers) arrested by the Roman authorities and transported to Rome to die in the arena. Along his route, he wrote letters to the Ephesians, Magnesians, Trallians, Philadelphians, Smyrneans, and Romans.*
- 2. Irenaeus of Lyons...***Irenaeus is remembered as a martyr. His writings were formative in the early development of Christian theology. Irenaeus is thought to have been a Greek from Polycarp's hometown of Smyrna in Asia Minor, now Izmir, Turkey.*
- 3. Athanasius of Alexandria...***was a bishop of Alexandria and major theological writer in the fourth century. 20th Patriarch of the Church of Alexandria, spent 16 years in exile. During some of his exiles, he spent time with the Desert Fathers, monks and hermits who lived in remote areas of Egypt.*
- 4. Cyril of Alexandria...***was the [Pope](#) of Alexandria at the time Alexandria was at its height in influence and power within the Roman Empire. Cyril wrote extensively and was a leading protagonist in the Christological controversies of the 4th and 5th centuries. Cyril is among the patristic fathers, and his reputation within the Orthodox Christian world has led to his acquiring the title "Seal of all the Fathers."*
- 5. Nicholas of Myra in Lycia...***Wonder-worker, was the archbishop of Myra in southern Asia Minor, known especially for his care for the poor. Widely honored and venerated, the story of his rescue of sailors in the Aegean Sea during his lifetime, established him as the patron of mariners. His popularity in Russia rose to the point that almost all churches had some sort of shrine honoring St. Nicholas.*
- 6. Innocent of Moscow* ...***Innocent of Alaska, Equal-to-the-Apostles and Enlightener of North America (1797-1879), was a Russian Orthodox priest, bishop, archbishop, and Metropolitan of Moscow and all Russia. He is known for his missionary work, scholarship, and leadership in Alaska and the Russian Far East during the 1800s. Known for great zeal for his work as well as his great abilities as a scholar, linguist, and administrator.*
- 7. Tikhon of Moscow* ...***1865–1925, Enlightener of North America, was Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia (1917–1925). While in America, he established his cathedral in New York City, and presided over a vast archdiocese, encouraging and authorizing many publications in the English language. He encouraged the translation of the Eastern liturgy into English. He consecrated Orthodox Churches in America during the early 20th Century.*
- 8. Raphael of Brooklyn* ...***(November 20, 1860 - February 27, 1915) Was born in Beirut, Lebanon, to Damascene Syrian refugee parents. In 1904, he became the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in North America; the consecration was done by Archbishop St. Tikhon of Moscow and Bishop Innocent in New York City. He served as bishop of Brooklyn, New York, until his death. Assisted in the founding of St. Tikhon's Orthodox Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania.*

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- 9. Nikolai of Zhicha***...*Saint Nikolai of Zhicha, “the Serbian Chrysostom,” was born in Lelich in western Serbia on January 4, 1881. In 1921, Bishop Nikolai was invited to visit America again and spent two years as a missionary bishop. In 1944, he and Patriarch Gavriilo were sent to the death camp at Dachau. He went to America in 1946, taught for three years at Saint Sava’s Seminary in Libertyville, IL, before he settled at Saint Tikhon’s Monastery in South Canaan, PA, in 1951. On March 18, 1956, Saint Nikolai fell asleep in the Lord.*
- 10. John of San Francisco***...*1896-1966, was a diocesan bishop of the Russian Orthodox Church Outside Russia (ROCOR), who served widely from China to France to the United States. In 1962, Abp. John was assigned to the Diocese of San Francisco, succeeding his long time friend Abp. Tikhon. Abp. John's days in San Francisco were to prove sorrowful, as he attempted to heal the great disunity in his community. He was able to bring peace, such that the new cathedral, dedicated to the Joy of all Who Sorrow Icon of the Mother of God, was completed.*
- 11. Great Martyr Panteleimon...***The Great Martyr and Healer Panteleimon was born into the family with a pagan Father and a Christian Mother. Panteleimon performed many miracles. When his father saw how his son healed a blind man by invoking Jesus Christ, he then believed in Christ and was baptized. After the death of his father, Saint Panteleimon dedicated his life to the suffering, the sick, the unfortunate and the needy. After performing many miracles, the emperor ordered to cut off the head of the Great Martyr Panteleimon. When the saint was beheaded, the olive tree to which the saint was tied, became covered with fruit.*
- 12. Great Martyr Demetrius...***was a Christian martyr of the early 4th century AD. During the Middle Ages, he came to be revered as one of the most important Orthodox military saints. In his military role, he was ordered to persecute and execute Christians. He began to teach the Christian Faith openly to the inhabitants of the city Thessaloniki and to overthrow pagan customs and the worship of idols. The Lord also destined Saint Dēmétrios to follow Saint Paul on the path to martyrdom. Learning of this, Saint Dēmétrios ordered his faithful servant, Lupus, to give his wealth to the poor saying, “Distribute my earthly riches among them, for we shall seek heavenly riches for ourselves.” He began to pray and fast, preparing himself for martyrdom.*
- 13. Great Martyr Catherine...***Catherine received an excellent education, studying the works of the greatest philosophers and teachers of antiquity. Saint Catherine had a vision of the Most Holy Theotokos with Her Child. The Lord looked tenderly at her and gave her a beautiful ring. During this time, the confessors of Christ, those who would not deny Him, were being tortured. They were condemned to death in the fire. The saint’s love for the Christian martyrs and her fervent desire to ease their sufferings, compelled Catherine to speak to the pagan emperor Maximian. Maximian proposed marriage to her, and he was refused. Saint Catherine firmly confessed her fidelity to the heavenly Bridegroom Christ, and, with a prayer to Him, she herself laid her head on the block beneath the executioner’s sword. Saint Catherine is called upon for relief and assistance during a difficult childbirth. Pilgrims to her monastery on Mt Sinai are given souvenir rings as a remembrance of their visit.*

- 14. Juvenaly, Protomartyr of America***...was born in 1761 in Nerchinsk, Siberia. He was formally trained as a mining engineer. In 1794, he went to Alaska as a missionary. In 1795, Father Juvenal baptized over 700 Chugatchi at Nushek, then he crossed Kenai Bay and baptized the local people there. In 1796, Saint Juvenal was killed by a hunting party. Saint Innocent said the following about his death. "Saint Juvenal did not try to defend himself when attacked, nor did he make any attempt to escape. After being struck from behind, he turned to face his attackers and begged them to spare the natives he had baptized". Thus, the zealous Hieromonk Juvenal became the first Orthodox Christian in America to receive the crown of martyrdom. Saint Juvenal, in his tireless evangelization of the native peoples of Alaska, served the Church more than all the other missionaries combined.
- 15. Peter the Aleut, Martyr of California***...Saint Peter the Aleut, along with 14 others, were imprisoned by the Spanish in California, as the Franciscans were forcing all of them to convert to the Catholic Faith. Peter was tortured, the blood flowed, but the martyr endured all and firmly repeated one thing, "I am a Christian." He died in such suffering, due to a loss of blood. Saint Peter was from Kodiak, Alaska, and, because of his sufferings and in his steadfast confession of the Faith, Saint Peter is the equal of the martyrs of old, and also of the New Martyrs who have shone forth in more recent times.
- 16. Anthony the Great**...was born in Egypt in the year 251. When Saint Anthony was about twenty years old, he lost his parents, but he was responsible for the care of his younger sister. He sold the property that he received after the death of his parents, then distributed the money to the poor, and left his sister in the care of pious virgins in a convent. In this period of his life, Saint Anthony endured terrible temptations from the devil. Saint Anthony went into the desert alone in complete isolation and constant struggle with the demons, and he finally achieved perfect calm. Saint Anthony spent eighty-five years in the solitary desert. The Lord granted the saint the gift of wonderworking, casting out demons and healing the sick by the power of his prayer. Saint Anthony died peacefully in the year 356, at age 105, and he was buried in the desert by his disciples.
- 17. Mary of Egypt**...Mary of Egypt is a highly venerated Desert Mother. At the age of twelve, she ran away from her parents to the city of Alexandria. Here she lived an extremely dissolute life. She often refused the money offered for her sexual favors, as she was driven "by an insatiable and an irrepressible passion" and that she mainly lived by begging. After seventeen years of this lifestyle, she traveled to Jerusalem for the Great Feasts of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. She tried to enter the Church of the Holy Sepulchre for the celebration, she was barred from doing so by an unseen force. Realizing that this was because of her impurity, she was struck with remorse, and upon seeing an icon of the Theotokos (the Virgin Mary) outside the church, she prayed for forgiveness and promised to give up the world (i.e., become an ascetic). Then she attempted again to enter the church, and this time was permitted in. She left for the monastery of Saint John the Baptist on the bank of the River Jordan, where she received absolution and afterwards Holy Communion. The next morning, she crossed the Jordan and retired to the desert to live the rest of her life as a hermit in penitence. Approximately one year before her death, she recounted her life to Saint Zosimas of Palestine, who encountered her in the desert. When he unexpectedly met her in the desert, she was completely naked and almost unrecognizable as human. She asked Zosimas to toss her his mantle to cover herself with, and then she narrated her life's story to him. She asked him to meet her at the banks of the Jordan, on Holy Thursday of the following year, and bring her Holy Communion. When he fulfilled her wish, she crossed

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the river to get to him by walking on the surface of the water, and received Holy Communion, telling him to meet her again in the desert the following Lent. The next year, Zosimas travelled to the same spot where he first met her, some twenty days' journey from his monastery, and found her lying there dead. According to an inscription written in the sand next to her head, she had died on the very night he had given her Communion and had been somehow miraculously transported to the place he found her, and her body was preserved incorrupt. He buried her body with the assistance of a passing lion. On returning to the monastery, he related her life story to the brethren, and it was preserved among them as oral tradition until it was written down by St. Sophronius.

18. Sergius of Radonezh... *Our venerable father Sergius of Radonezh was a leading Russian monk in the fourteenth century who founded the Holy Trinity monastery north of Moscow. He is much revered and has a special place in Russian monasticism and the nation of Russia. His community at Holy Trinity served as the model of secluded ascetic life organized as communities outside the limits of towns and cities. He himself was a model of asceticism. While not a learned man nor a great preacher, he was a man committed to poverty and utter sincerity. He was deeply humble and had a staunch faith in God's help. He committed to giving help to all who sought his help with loving attention. He was a true leader who led his monks in work and service by setting an example. Sergius died on September 25, 1392. He was glorified as a saint in 1452.*

19. Seraphim of Sarov... *Saint Seraphim of Sarov, a great ascetic of the Russian Church, was born on July 19, 1754, and lived at the Sarov Monastery in the 18th century, and is considered a wonder-worker. His taking of the monastic vows occurred in 1786, when he was 27 years old. He was given the name Seraphim, which in Hebrew means "fiery" or "burning." He justified his name by his extraordinarily burning prayer. He spent all of his time, save for the very shortest of rests, in church. Through such prayer and the labors of religious services, Seraphim became worthy to see angels, both serving and singing in church. During the Liturgy on Holy Thursday, he saw the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, in the form of the Son of man, proceeding into the Church with the Heavenly host and blessing those praying. The saint could not speak for a long time after being struck by this vision. One of his many quotes was, "Acquire a peaceful spirit, and around you thousands will be saved."*

20. Herman of Alaska*... *Venerable Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America. He was an 18th century missionary to Alaska. Herman of Alaska was a Russian Orthodox monk from Valaam Monastery in Russia who traveled with eight other monks in 1793 to bring the Gospel to the native Aleuts and Eskimos in the Aleutian Islands. As part of the Russian colonization of the Americas, Russians had been exploring and trading there since at least 1740. Thus, he marks the first arrival of Orthodox Christian missionaries in North America. He preached the love of Christ to the Aleutians and drew many to the Church through his charitable life, caring for their orphans, building a school, and frequently defending them from the injustices and exploitation of the Russian traders. He was known to them as Apa, which means "Grandfather." He lived most of his life as the sole resident of Spruce Island, a tiny wooded island near Kodiak Island. St. Herman's Orthodox Theological Seminary (Kodiak, Alaska) is named in his honor. He, in 1970, became the first saint to be glorified by the Orthodox Church in America.*

21. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre*...Also known as Saint Alexis Toth was a missionary priest, sent from his homeland in Slovakia as a Uniate, who, in order to serve and protect his flock in the United States in a hostile Latin environment, recognized the need to lead them in a return to their Orthodox Christian heritage. In the late 1880's, Father Alexander Dzubay, who studied with Father Alexis in the seminary, wrote a petition from America to Bishop John asking that Father Alexis be sent to America. The bishop agreed and sent Father Alexis as a "missioner." He arrived in the United States on November 15, 1889, and, on Thanksgiving Day, November 27, Father Alexis conducted his first services in the new St. Mary's Church in Minneapolis as the first resident priest to serve this church officially. However, the church edifice was incomplete, there were no furnishings, no vestments, but a debt. Over the next year, Father Alexis worked with his community, preaching, asking for donations, acquiring furnishings, vestments, and bringing the parish to an organized, stable institution, all this without receiving any salary. In December 1892, he evangelized the immigrants in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania, preaching and enlightening them about their social and religious future in America. In 1902, he received the parish of St. John the Baptist in Mayfield, Pennsylvania, into the Orthodox fold. Elevated to the rank of protopresbyter, he was in the forefront, over the years until his death, of receiving parishes from the Uniate into Orthodoxy. Through his efforts over 20,000 Carpatho-Russian and Galician uniates were re-united with the Orthodox Church.

22. Jacob of Alaska*...Enlightener of the Peoples of Alaska, was a native of the Aleutian Islands who became a priest of the Orthodox Church and continued the missionary work of St. Innocent among his and other Alaskan people. Father Jacob was born in 1802 on Atka Island, part of the Aleutian Island chain in Alaska. Jacob chose a life with the Church and enrolled in the Irkutsk Theological Seminary. After Seminary, Father Jacob and his party set off for Alaska on May 1, 1828. Once in Alaska, by the end of 1829, six months after arriving at Atka, Father Jacob had recorded 16 baptisms, 442 chrismations, 53 marriages, and eight funerals. On December 30, 1844, St. Innocent appointed him head of the new Kvikhpak Mission. He traveled to the settlements for hundreds of miles along the Yukon and Kuskokwim Rivers, visiting the inhabitants of settlements along the way. For the next twenty years, he learned new languages, met new people and cultures, invented another alphabet, and built more churches and communities. At the invitation of the native leaders, he traveled as far as the Innoko River, baptizing hundreds from many, and often formerly hostile, tribes. During his last missionary travels in the Kuskokwim/Yukon delta region, he is remembered for baptizing 1,320 people and for distinguishing himself as the evangelizer of the Yup'k Eskimo and Athabascan peoples. Saint Jacob fell asleep in the Lord on July 26, 1864. He was 60 years old.

References:

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OrthodoxWiki website. https://orthodoxwiki.org/Main_Page

*North American Saint