



Fire & Light

St. Symeon Orthodox Church

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✠ September 4, 2011 ✠

The Holy Prophet and God-seer Moses (16th B.C.)

Hieromartyr Babylas of Antioch (251) St. Joasaph of Belgorod (1754)

New Hieromartyr Peter, Metropolitan of Dabro-Bosnia (1941)

The joy of the world
has appeared:
The glorified Virgin
sprung from Joachim and Anna!
Because of her purity she became
the living temple of God!
Only she is called the Theotokos!
Through her prayers,
O Christ God,
send peace to the world
and to our souls great mercy!

**This *Fire & Light* is dedicated to the memory of the newly departed
Ever-memorable Archbishop Dmitri, retired Archbishop of Dallas
and founder of the Diocese of the South**

✠ November 2, 1923 – August 28, 2011 ✠

May his memory be eternal and may his soul dwell with the Blessed!

This Week: Nativity of the Theotokos

✠ Wed. Sept. 7 6:30pm ~ Vespers of the Nativity of Theotokos

✠ Thurs. Sept. 8 10:00am ~ Divine Liturgy –Nativity of the Theotokos

⇒ This Saturday, Sept. 10 ~ Annual Parish Picnic–Galtney Lake House– begins 9:00am

NOTE: Saturday Vespers at the Lake ~ aprox. 5:00pm

Next Week:

✠ Wed. Sept. 14 ✠ Feast of the Elevation of the Cross ✠

⇒ Vespers Tuesday, Sept. 13 6:30pm and 6:00am Divine Liturgy – Sept. 14

✠ Saturday, Sept. 17 3:00pm Holy Baptism – the Nash Family – Condras are sponsors

✠ Sunday, Sept. 18 2:00pm Nash Marriage Blessing

⇒ Annual Parish Meeting - Sunday, October 2

Great Leaders

"Great leaders embrace truth and live in reality. They deal with things as they really are and envision the way they would like them to be. They put plans into place and apply them, working to change the reality where needed."
- anon.

Confessing the Garden

✠ "Through confession, a person discards everything that is useless within; and becomes spiritually fruitful. One day I was digging in my garden to plant a few tomatoes. Right then someone came and said to me, 'What are you doing Geronta?' 'Well, I am confessing my garden,' I told him. Puzzled at my remark, he said, 'Does a garden need confessing too?' 'Of course it does! I have discovered that when I confess it, that is, when I remove the rocks, the weeds, the briars and so on, it then produces healthy vegetables; otherwise, the tomatoes are yellowish and sickly.'"

Elder Paisios

St. Gregory Palamas ~ Homily on the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin

{from the Homilies Vol. 2; St. Tikhon's Seminary Press}

"This sacred Feast that we are keeping is the first to commemorate our recall and re-creation according to grace, for on it all things began to be made new, enduring precepts began to be brought in instead of temporary ones, the spirit instead of the letter, the truth instead of shadows. Today a new world and a mysterious paradise have been revealed, in which and from which a New Adam came into being, re-making the Old Adam and renewing the universe. He is not led astray by the deceiver, but deceives him, and bestows freedom on those enslaved to sin through his treachery. Today a paradoxical book has been made ready on earth, which in an indescribable way can hold, not the imprint of words, but the living Word Himself; not a word consisting of air, but the heavenly Word; not a word that perishes as soon as it is formed, but the Word Who snatches those who draw near Him from perdition; not a word made by the movement of a man's tongue, but the Word begotten of God the Father before all ages. Today the living Tabernacle of God not made with hands appears, the inspired human Ark of the true Bread of Life sent down from heaven for us (cf. Jn. 6:32 ff.).

Today, according to the Psalms 'Truth has sprung up from the earth,' the true image of human nobility which comes from above, 'and righteousness has looked down from heaven' (Ps. 85:11 LXX). This righteousness has deposed the unrighteous ruler from his just dominion, after being wrongfully condemned by him and rightly condemning him, and having bound the strong and evil one, plundering his goods (cf. Mt. 12:29), and transformed them, rendering them receptive to divine righteousness. Thus Christ took sin's prisoners to live with Him forever, justifying them by faith in Him, but He bound the prince of sin with inescapable bonds, and delivered him to eternal fire without light. Today, as prophesied, out of the 'stem of Jesse' a rod has come forth (cf. Isa. 11:1), from which a flower has grown which knows no wilting. This rod recalls our human nature, which had withered and fallen away from the unfading garden of delight, makes it bloom again, grants it to flourish forever, brings it up to heaven, and leads it to paradise. With this rod the great Shepherd moves His human flock to eternal pastures, and supported by this rod, our nature lays aside its old age and feeble senility, and easily strides towards heaven, leaving the earth below for those who, devoid of support, are plunging downwards."

He Was Manifested in the Flesh

✠ "The holy Paul, the priest of the divine mysteries, writes: 'Great indeed, we confess, is the mystery of our religion: He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the nations, believed on in the world, taken up in glory' (I Tim. 3:16). What then does 'manifested in the flesh' mean? It means that the Word of God the Father became flesh, not by a change or alteration of His own nature, but because having made the flesh taken from the holy Virgin His own, one and the same subject is called Son, before the Incarnation as the Word still incorporeal and after the Incarnation as the same Word now embodied. That is why we say that the same subject is simultaneously both God and man, not dividing Him conceptually into a human being with a separate individual identity and God the Word also with a separate identity, that we may exclude any idea of two Sons, but acknowledging that one and the same subject is Christ and Son and Lord."

St. Cyril of Alexandria (444)

By Holy, Eternal Divine Truths

✠ "Saints are people who live on earth by holy, eternal Divine truths. That is why the Lives of the Saints are actually applied dogmatics, for in them all the holy eternal dogmatic truths are experienced in all their life-creating and creative energies. In the Lives of the Saints it is most evidently shown that dogmas are not only ontological truths in themselves and for themselves, but that each one of them is a wellspring of eternal life and a source of holy spirituality."

St. Justin Popovich (+1979)

In Memoriam: + His Eminence, Archbishop Dmitri

August 28, 2011

Orthodox Christians were deeply saddened to hear of the falling asleep in the Lord on Sunday, August 28, 2011, at 2:00 am, of His Eminence, The Most Reverend DMITRI, retired Archbishop of the Diocese of the South, Orthodox Church in America. The Archbishop was eighty-seven years old. Ordained in 1954, then consecrated to the episcopacy in 1969, his ecclesial ministry spanned fifty-seven remarkable years.

His Eminence was born Robert R. Royster on November 2, 1923, into a Baptist family in the town of Teague, Texas. He often credited his mother for providing him and his sister with a strong, initial faith in Christ. After discovering Orthodoxy as teens they asked their mother for a blessing to convert, whereupon she asked one basic yet predictive question: "Does the Orthodox Church believe in Christ as Lord and Savior?" As it turned out, a specific emphasis on the person and work of Jesus Christ became the hallmark of the future hierarch's ministry, profoundly influencing his preaching and writing. Additionally the Archbishop would later recall that an Orthodox clergyman and mentor advised him early on in his priesthood to include always the name of Christ in every conversation; to make Him the focus of every sermon.

Having received their desired blessing, and after a period of inquiry and study, brother and sister were received together as Orthodox Christians at Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church in Dallas, Texas in 1941. It was at that point that the two received the names of Dmitri and Dimitra.

Dmitri was drafted into the US Army in 1943, after which he underwent intensive training in Japanese and linguistics in Ann Arbor, Michigan and the Military Intelligence Service Language School in Fort Snelling, Minnesota. Following this he served as a Japanese interpreter at the rank of Second Lieutenant on the staff of General Douglas MacArthur. Dmitri was required to undergo the usual training given to all soldiers and was recognized, interestingly enough, as an expert marksman. He was blessed with a strong constitution and good physical abilities: as a teenager he represented his Dallas high school during the tennis state semi-finals. Later as hierarch he would comment that good health and physical strength should also be used in service to Christ. Following his own advice he pushed himself physically, traveling repeatedly by car for years, from one end of his fourteen-state Diocese to the other in the early stages of its inception, visiting parishes and founding missions.

After his military service Dmitri completed his education, receiving a Bachelor's Degree from the (now) University of North Texas in Denton, just outside of Dallas, and a Master's Degree in Spanish in 1949 from Southern Methodist University. He completed two years of post graduate studies at Tulane University in New Orleans whereupon he returned to his home in Dallas.

In 1954, as a subdeacon with the Ukrainian Orthodox Church under Constantinople, Dmitri worked with the Mexican Orthodox Community of Our Lady of San Juan de Los Lagos, at which time he began translations of Orthodox liturgical services into Spanish. In April of 1954 Subdeacon Dmitri, his sister Dimitra and their priest, Fr. Rangel sought permission of the local hierarch, Bishop Bogdan, to establish an English language Orthodox mission in Dallas, the future St. Seraphim Cathedral. Dmitri was ordained to the diaconate and priesthood that same year and assigned as rector of St. Seraphim's. In 1958 permission was sought and given to bring both Fr. Dmitri and the parish into the Russian Metropolia, predecessor to the Orthodox Church in America. During his pastorate Fr. Dmitri served as an instructor of Spanish at Southern Methodist University. He functioned in this capacity for a number of years. Dmitri also taught at Tulane University in New Orleans for a brief period during his tenure as student. While serving in the military, and afterward, particularly in New Orleans, he cultivated a taste for strong, chicory coffee,

which became a characteristic trademark throughout his life. Years later, out of great respect for their hierarch, and with a certain sense of satisfaction, parishes would seek to make the perfect pot of Cafe Du Monde or Community Club Coffee upon a visit from His Eminence.

During the early years of St. Seraphim's Fr. Dmitri continued his missionary activities among the Mexican Americans but was intent on developing the new community placed in his care. As a direct result of his desire that people from all walks of life hear the message of Orthodox Christianity, the Cathedral remains to this day, a multi-ethnic parish, consisting of both cradle Orthodox and converts.

While functioning as both priest and university instructor Fr. Dmitri found time to help his sister with her local restaurant. As children, responsibilities in the family restaurant provided an appreciation for the art of cooking. As adults, the two came to be regarded as gourmet chefs. Not surprisingly celebrations at the Archbishop's home in honor of specific religious holidays were awaited with great anticipation by members of the Church and local Dallas clergy. Following the teaching of St. Paul, His Eminence was enthusiastically "hospitable" (1 Timothy 3:2).

At such gatherings the Archbishop on rare occasions would recall in passing, certain struggles of the Depression. He did not dwell on the subject, but it seemed that the experience of going without, of laboring to put food on the table, was never far from his consciousness. He lived modestly and was generous to a fault, not only giving beyond the tithe to his Cathedral, but donating to seminaries, charities, diocesan missions, and persons in need.

While working outside the Church and tending to priestly responsibilities, Fr. Dmitri found time to print his own original articles in a weekly Church bulletin. In the 1950's and 60's Orthodox theological works in English were scarce, particularly on a popular level of reading. Fr. Dmitri saw a need and sought to address it. Later, his curriculum for catechumens used at St. Seraphim's would be published by the Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America, with the title: Orthodox Christian Teaching. The Dallas community grew steadily. Fr. Dmitri had a unique gift for relating to all people. Both young and old looked to him as a loving father.

From 1966 to 1967 Fr. Dmitri attended St. Vladimir's Orthodox Seminary in New York while concurrently teaching Spanish at Fordham University. He studied with people like Fr. Alexander Schmemmann, Fr. John Meyendorff, and Professor Serge Verhovskoy. In 1969 Fr. Dmitri was elected to the episcopate. On June 22 of that year he was consecrated Bishop of Berkeley, California as an auxiliary to Archbishop John (Shahovskoy) of San Francisco. The consecration of Bishop Dmitri is regarded by some historians as the first consecration of a convert to the episcopate in America (though Ignatius (Nichols) was consecrated in 1932 but subsequently left the Church).

In 1970 Bishop Dmitri was given the title, Bishop of Washington, auxiliary to Metropolitan Ireney. He would later recall the helpful training he received as an auxiliary under both Archbishop John and Metropolitan Ireney, particularly the many periods of instruction in Church Slavonic.

On October 19, 1971, Bishop Dmitri was elected Bishop of Hartford and New England. In 1972 the Holy Synod of Bishops brought Mexico under the auspices of the Orthodox Church in America, which had received its autocephaly (the right to govern itself) in 1970 from the Moscow Patriarchate. Given his knowledge of and fondness for Mexican culture and the Spanish language, Bishop Dmitri took on additional responsibilities from the Holy Synod as Exarch of Mexico. He was as much beloved by the Mexican people as by those in his own Diocese.

In 1977 at the 5th All American Council convened in Montreal, Bishop Dmitri received a majority of popular votes in an election for a new Metropolitan of the Orthodox Church in America. For the

sake of continuity -- a cradle Orthodox occupying the Primatial See was viewed as more in keeping with the contemporary challenges of a young territorial Church -- the Holy Synod chose instead The Right Reverend Theodosius (Lazor), Bishop of Alaska, who became an advocate and supporter of missionary work in the southern United States.

In 1978 the Synod of Bishops took an important step by creating the Diocese of Dallas and the South. His Eminence became its first ruling hierarch, taking St. Seraphim Church as his Episcopal See. Christ the Saviour Church in Miami, Florida, a prominent Orthodox community in the South, became the second Cathedral of the newly formed Diocese. The Archpriest George Gladky, a veteran missionary and rector of Christ the Saviour, was named Chancellor. He and Bishop Dmitri worked admirably with others to establish Churches and teach Orthodoxy in a region of America where Orthodox Christianity was relatively unknown. The first Diocesan Assembly of the South was convened in Miami, August 25-26, 1978.

In 1993 the Holy Synod elevated Bishop Dmitri to the rank of Archbishop. During his tenure as hierarch the Archbishop chaired various departments of the Orthodox Church in America. Early on he was instrumental in speaking with representatives of the Evangelical Orthodox Church seeking entrance into canonical Orthodoxy. His understanding of Christ as central to the Faith, helped guide these discussions. As an example, an episode occurred in which members of the EOC wanted to focus on particulars of worship during initial dialogues. It is said they were cautioned by the Bishop: "Let's first discuss our approach to Jesus Christ, since everything that we have in Orthodoxy proceeds from that core set of teachings."

On September 4, 2008, following the retirement of Metropolitan Herman, the Holy Synod named Archbishop Dmitri as the locum tenens. Archbishop Seraphim (Storheim) assisted him as administrator. In November of 2008, Archbishop Dmitri's role as OCA locum tenens ended with the election of Bishop Jonah (Paffhausen) of Fort Worth as Metropolitan. On March 22, 2009, the Archbishop requested retirement from active duty as a Diocesan Bishop effective March 31, 2009. Under his leadership the Diocese of the South grew from approximately twelve communities to over seventy at the present time and remains one of the most vibrant Dioceses in the OCA.

During the past two years the Archbishop has lived quietly at his home, writing, making occasional visits to Diocesan communities, and maintaining a quiet involvement with the life of St. Seraphim Cathedral. He was blessed in his last days to have many parishioners who visited and cared for him at home twenty-four hours a day as well as medical professionals who came to his bedside to treat and evaluate his condition. The community in turn received a great blessing from the love and courage with which the Archbishop welcomed them and approached his illness. He remained courteous, hospitable and dignified throughout, even attending Church when his strength allowed. These unexpected visits to the Cathedral by the Archbishop were sources of joy and inspiration to the faithful.

For his former Diocese and the Orthodox Church in America, His Eminence leaves behind a progressive vision of evangelism and ecclesial life, a solid foundation upon which to develop future communities and schools. He leaves the faithful the experience of having had a compassionate father whose enthusiasm was contagious, inspiring many to look profoundly at their own vocations in the Church.

Archbishop Dmitri's greatest joys as well as sorrows were connected to his episcopal ministry. The establishment of new missions, the ordinations of men to the priesthood or diaconate, and the reception of others into Orthodoxy were continual sources of delight. In addition he patiently dealt with clergy and laymen during his tenure who needed correction. In fact, it would be difficult to recall an instance where he strongly reprimanded anyone, at least publicly. Private, gentle advice when needed was more "his style." At times his approach confused and frustrated some who

believed that his manner of oversight should be stricter; that he should be more demanding in his expectations. Again, this was never the Archbishop's way. It was not in his character to remind people bluntly of their responsibilities. The Archbishop chose to lead by example rather than by decree. Ultimately and personally this became a source of his extraordinary influence and popularity. Mere suggestions were readily received as directives because of people's fondness for His Eminence. More than once the comment was made: "you cannot buy that kind of authority," authority that proceeds from integrity and proven dedication, from a loving relationship between a father and his children.

As stated, Archbishop Dmitri's episcopacy was strongly characterized by a single-minded devotion to the person and work of Jesus Christ. His publications are testimony to this dedication. They include commentaries on: The Sermon on the Mount, The Parables of Christ, The Miracles of Christ, St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and to the Hebrews, The Epistle of St. James, and the Gospel of St. John. His works also include the aforementioned Introduction to Orthodox Christian Teaching, as well as A Layman's Handbook on The Doctrine of Christ. Some of these have been translated into other languages, enthusiastically received as instructional tools by the faithful abroad. When asked to document his personal thoughts concerning evangelism or American Orthodoxy the Archbishop consistently hesitated, preferring instead to dwell on the teachings of the fathers regarding Scripture and Church doctrine.

For many years His Eminence was the editor of the first diocesan newspaper in the Orthodox Church in America: The Dawn. This modest publication was a primary means of education and an instrument of unity amongst members of a Diocese spanning over one million square miles. One full page in The Dawn was regularly devoted to making available his translations of Orthodox Spanish material. Later the Archbishop included a Russian page as well to minister to the needs of new immigrants.

The dignity that he brought to his episcopacy was well known. People commented on his bearing, the way he carried himself as a bishop of the Orthodox Church. Some found it surprising that such an august figure possessed great love and respect for others, that he presented himself as one of the people.

Without exaggeration it can be said that His Eminence was a rarity, a unique combination of faith, talent, intelligence and charisma. For the Diocese of the South, indeed for the Orthodox Church in America, he was the right person at the right time.

Forty- two years a bishop, each day offered in service to Christ with Whom he now enjoys the blessedness of the Kingdom. We pray for his continued prayers and we thank the Lord for having given His flock the gift of Archbishop Dmitri. May his Memory Be Eternal!

"Remember those who rule over you, who have spoken the Word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct" (Hebrews 13:7).

"For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel..." (I Corinthians 4: 15)

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The Chariot of Israel and Its Horsemen – *Repose of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas*

~ by Fr. Stephen Freeman, August 28, 2011 ~ *Glory to God for All Things Blog*

And so it was, when they had crossed over, that Elijah said to Elisha, “Ask! What may I do for you, before I am taken away from you?” Elisha said, “Please let a double portion of your spirit be upon me.” So he said, “You have asked a hard thing. Nevertheless, if you see me when I am taken from you, it shall be so for you; but if not, it shall not be so.” Then it happened, as they continued on and talked, that suddenly a chariot of fire appeared with horses of fire, and separated the two of them; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven. And Elisha saw it, and he cried out, “My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and its horsemen!” So he saw him no more. And he took hold of his own clothes and tore them into two pieces. (2 Kings 2:9-12)

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These verses came to mind when I heard the news this morning of the repose of Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas. There are a number of saints within Orthodox history who are given the title: “Equal to the Apostles.” I cannot rush beyond the Church and declare a saint where the Church has not done so, but I can think of no better description of the life and ministry of Vladika Dmitri here in the South than “equal to the Apostles.”

Many people whose familiarity with the presence of the Orthodox faith in English-speaking lands are unaware that until 1962 there was no particular standard work of introduction to Orthodoxy available in English. Thus pioneers, such as Met. Kallistos Ware in England (who wrote that first standard work), or Archbishop Dmitri (who entered the faith along with his sister – as teenagers – in 1941) were extremely rare individuals and generally found conversion a nearly impossible feat.

Vladika Dmitri began life as a Texas Baptist, and, in my experience, never spoke ill of his background. I can recall him saying, “I like Baptists – they make great Orthodox!” accompanied by a sly smile. Indeed, I frequently heard him caution converts to Orthodoxy to refrain from disparaging their roots: “Most likely, it’s where you first heard of Christ.” His conversion as a teen led to a life as a scholar, missionary, teacher, leader, pastor – all in the context of kindness and love.

He cared deeply about the Christian faith and expressed concern, even dismay, as he saw many surrounding Churches that once would have been considered “traditional,” moving away from many of the primary teachings of the Christian faith. He was particularly expressive about the weakening of the doctrine of Christ’s Incarnation. He insisted that the understanding of God becoming Man was the only *possible* foundation for the dignity of human beings. It was a thought shared by men such as C.S. Lewis.

His advice to priests was very clear: “When you have opportunity to speak about the faith, never turn it down. And when you speak, don’t waste time on ethnic concerns. Preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ – that is the great treasure of Orthodox and that is what you have to offer.”

In 1977 he was almost elected as the Metropolitan of the newly-autocephalous Orthodox Church in America. The Holy Synod seemed less than sure that the OCA was ready for a convert-bishop to be Metropolitan. In 1978, the Holy Synod formed the Diocese of the South, with Dallas as its see city. Bishop Dmitri was appointed as its first diocesan bishop. The new diocese had little more than a half dozen parishes, strung from Florida to Virginia to New Mexico (mostly Florida). Vladika Dmitri would always smile and call it his "consolation prize."

However, it became a great apostolic opportunity for a man uniquely suited to its apostolic task. He saw the Diocese grow over ten-fold with a remarkable spirit of kindness and hospitality. During World War II he met an Orthodox priest in California who spoke about a vision of an American Orthodox Church. It was the first time the young Dmitri had encountered the concept. It became his vision as well. In the course of a life-time, he saw that vision mature in his beloved South. Having been its apostle, he now becomes its intercessor. May his memory be eternal!

The Ever-Memorable + Archbishop Dmitri

