

## **SAINTS PETER & PAUL ORTHODOX CHURCH**

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### **BULLETIN OF FEBRUARY 20, 2011**

#### **SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 20**

#### **Sunday of the Prodigal Son (Tone 6)**

9:1a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour; Church School

Teen Class

#### **SATURDAY/FEBRUARY 26**

#### **Memorial Saturday**

9:30a.m. General Memorial Service; Confession

5:30p.m. Vigil; Confession

#### **SUNDAY/FEBRUARY 27**

#### **Meat-Fare Sunday (Tone 7)**

#### **St. Raphael of Brooklyn**

9:10a.m. Hours; 9:30a.m. Divine Liturgy

Coffee Hour

12:30p.m. Baptism of Gabriel

#### **Fast Days**

Wednesday/February 23

Friday/February 25

#### **Meat-Fare Sunday**

February 27 – this is the last day for meat products until Pascha, April 24

#### **Fast Days only from meat**

Wednesday/Mar 2

Friday/Mar 4

#### **Cheese-Sunday**

March 6 – this is the last day for dairy

Products until Pascha, April 24

#### **First Service of Great Lent**

Sunday, March 6: 6:30p.m. Vespers with the Rite of Forgiveness.



#### **Lessons in Divine & Christian Love (46)**

So said the Son of God in the beginning of His saving ministry to mankind. And at the end Jesus said to His disciples: "Behold, the prince of this world comes (i.e. the prince of vain lusts and lies) and has nothing in Me" (John 14:30), that is, none of their deadly lusts. He exists between God and Satan, distance as great as the gulf between vain lust and love.

#### **(47)**

Love is God. It is only through God that the created of God can love...That is why the First Commandment intones: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God," and then the Second Commandment: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Mark 12:30-31). Without love for God all other love is unreal and transitory. As hot weather comes and goes, giving place to frost (unaffected by man), even so, man neither by himself nor with the intellect can love without God. Only through God can man love himself as a creature of God. Of self-love blessed Diadochos of Photiki says: "Whoever loves himself cannot love God."



# BEEKEEPING IN BULGARIA: TRADITIONS AND HABITS

Dimo Dimov and Stefan Bogdanov

Beekeeping exists in Bulgaria since ancient times. It was practised by the Thracians who lived on the territory of Bulgaria from 2000 BC until they merged in the first centuries AC with the Slavs and with the Bulgarians, who came to these lands from Asia at 681. According to the Greek historian Plutarch (205-118 BC) the Thracians used honey in their meals and sold a lot of honey and wax to the Greeks. The Bulgarians and also the Slavs were familiar both with beekeeping.

## Beekeeping in the monasteries until the present times

After the adoption of Christianity in 864 under the Bulgarian king Boris the 2<sup>nd</sup>, beekeeping developed mostly in the Bulgarian monasteries. The first mention of beekeeping was made by Joan Exarch (860-935) a famous ancient Bulgarian writer and philosopher. In his book "Shestodnev" he describes the life of a bee colony and compares it to the life of the humans. According to him the life of the bee kingdom should be a model for the human one. Beekeeping was introduced in the monasteries because honey and beeswax had a high economical value. Monasteries were given royal diplomas by the authorities, called "Chrisovuli" (from the Greek, meaning golden seal). With these diplomas the exploitation of the monastery bee hives were exempted from taxes, thus promoting the development of beekeeping. Such a Chrisovuli was given to different Bulgarian monasteries, e.g. in 1259-1260 to the monastery Sveti Georgi near Skopie and in 1378 to the monastery Ivan Rilski in the Rila mountains.

In the archives of the Troyan monastery of 1833 it is written, that the monastery has 10 hives. Until recently there was a "healing inn" in this monastery, where bee products were used for healing purposes.

After the liberation from the Turkish occupation the first law on beekeeping of 1904 says that all monasteries in Bulgaria have to keep bees in the most modern hives, as prescribed by the beekeeping associations.

## Beekeeping in the religious traditions

The saint Haralampi (Greek Haralambos) was a Greek Christian saint from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AC. The Greek word "haralambos" means "glowing with joy". Haralambos, persecuted very severely by the Roman emperor of that time, survived the Roman tortures and helped many persecuted brothers by healing them with the use of honey, propolis and herbs. He lived until he was executed at the age of 112 years. Before the execution Haralampi said the following prayer: "May God bless the fruit of our labour and may there be abundance of milk and honey, by which all beekeepers can make their living by caring for their harvest and for life in general". Then, before the executioner could touch his neck with his sword, he passed away. The 10<sup>th</sup> of February, the day of Saint Haralampi, is celebrated in Bulgaria as the Day of the Beekeepers. On that day honey sanctification ceremonies are carried out in churches. Honey and other bee products are brought on that day to the church for sanctification. Water, mixed with honey has healing powers on humans and is also given to the bee colonies for optimal health.

The icon St. Haralampi in the St. Haralampi and St. Marina church in Assenovgrad is famous in all Bulgaria. According to the tradition honey is brought to the icon on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February. On the next day there is a special prayer on honey and health. People believe that honey, but also the water that has been sanctificated on that day, have special healing powers. Honey sanctificatons are carried out in other Bulgarian churches.

Today, on major beekeeping festivities a high religious official will mostly opens the festivities by a bee and honey blessing ceremony.

St. Haralampi, the protector of the beekeepers. The 10<sup>th</sup> of February is the day of Saint Haralampi and is celebrated in Bulgaria as the Day of the Beekeepers.





## Praising God through our Church Worship

Our Church has made every part of the day holy by its prayer. The plan of the daily services is based upon the words of David, the psalm writer: "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of Thy righteous judgements." In monasteries there are daily services, where monks and nuns gather in church several times every day to praise God. Though we cannot attend as often as they do, the Church prays for us, too. Bells always announce each service.

The church services follow the order of certain events in the life of Jesus Christ and the Apostles. We remember these events because they are part of the history of our salvation. In the time of Jesus Christ, the day was divided into eight parts which corresponded to the guard duties, or watches, of the Roman soldiers.

Praising God night and day helps build in us an inner attention. Our Lord cautioned us, "Be wakeful and pray, that you may not enter into temptation." (Matt. 26:41) In this way we can keep vigil, watch, awaiting our Lord's Second Coming.

Our day of worship begins in the evening. This follows the tradition of the Old Testament which says in the story of creation: "And the evening and the morning were the first day..." (Genesis 1:5) Following is the chart on the watches, times, the services, and their meanings.

Liturgical Service	Time of Service	Theme of Service	Ancient Roman Time Roman Watch	Modern Time
Vespers	7 P.M.	Creation of the World	Evening Watch	6-9 P.M.
Compline	8 P.M.		Midnight Watch	9-12 P.M.
Midnight Service	12 P.M.		Resurrection	Rooster-crowing Watch
Matins	6 A.M.	Preparation for Christ	Morning Watch	3-6 A.M.
1st Hour	7 A.M.	Creation of the Light of Day	1st Hour	6-9 A.M.
3rd Hour	9 A.M.	Descent of Holy Spirit	3rd Hour	9-12 Noon
6th Hour	9:30 A.M.	Crucifixion of Christ	6th Hour	12 Noon to 3 P.M.
Divine Liturgy	10:00 A.M.	The Mystical Supper		
9th Hour	5:30 P.M.	Death of Christ on Cross	9th Hour	3-6 P.M.

**What do the soldier watches and church services have in common?**



## PSALM 118 – REJOICING IN THE LAW OF THE LORD

*The 118 Psalm (or the 17<sup>th</sup> Kathisma) is sung at the Sunday Matins Service from Cheese-Fare Sunday until the Leave-taking of the Holy Cross (in 2011 from March 6 thru September 27)*

*It is the custom in our parish to sing sections (40 verses) each week rather than the entire 176 verses.*

Psalm 118 is the longest of all the psalms written by David. It has 176 verses. This psalm is an expression of the way to follow the law of the Lord. "Blessed are the blameless in the way, who walk in the law of the Lord," (verse 1). We stay on the path or way to God by keeping to His plan for our life. The very content of our life is found in God. This strengthens us and helps us to grow. The Church understands this psalm as being the praises of the righteous man. There is a deeper meaning. The words of the psalm actually can be said to be the words of Jesus Christ Himself.

Jesus Christ our Saviour is the only one faithful to the law and to the way to it. He Himself lived it perfectly. At the Matins Service of Great and Holy Saturday, this psalm is majestically chanted before the Shroud of the Lord. The words of the psalm are put on the lips of Jesus Christ, as the one who has delighted in and fulfilled to His very death, the law and the way of life.

In another sense, psalm 118 expresses the mind of all of us who walk in the ways of the Lord. What does it mean to walk in the law of the Lord? It means to keep His commandments, His law. It means to ponder, delight,

meditate on, hold to, and love the law of God. The law of God is given a variety of names by the psalmist: testimonies, statutes, commandments, judgments, words. God gives us the law as a kind of rule. We need it to keep us on the path or way to Him.

In the psalm we find desire for the way of the Lord:

*"I will keep Thy statutes; do not utterly forsake me." (verse 8)*

*"My soul has longed to desire Thy judgments at all times." (verse 20)*

*"With my whole heart have I sought after Thee, cast me not away from Thy commandments." (verse 11)*

The blameless, walking in the way of the Lord, find strength in the Lord:

*"My helper and protector art Thou; on Thy words have I set my hope." (verse 114)*

*"It is time for the Lord to act; for they have dispersed Thy law." (verse 126)*

*"My soul has slumbered from despondency,, strengthen me with Thy word." (verse 28)*





Finally, the righteous man rejoices in the Lord for he receives an abundant life for being faithful to the Lord's way.

*"Goodness and discipline and knowledge teach Thou me, for in Thy commandments have I believed. (verse 66)*

*"Above mine elders have I received understanding for after Thy commandments have I sought." (verse 100)*

*Much peace have they that love Thy law, for them there is no stumbling-block.' (verse 165)*

Psalm 118 is a wonderful testimony of the man who is blessed and happy in life. He values the treasure of the Lord's way. It is the most precious thing on earth. What is the way to the Lord? The way to the Lord is the way of Jesus Christ. He is the Author and Fulfiller of the way of life. Those who follow the Lord find great delight in His blameless way and continually say:

*"I will never forget Thy statutes, for in them Thou has given me life." (verse 93)*



#### **PRAYERS TO THE MOTHER OF GOD FOR DELIVERANCE FROM ADDICTION**

O most merciful Sovereign Lady, we run now to your holy protection. Despise not our petitions but mercifully hear us – wives, children, husbands, parents and all those bound by various additions. Hearken unto us for the sake of our Mother, the Church of Christ, for the salvation of our brothers and sisters who have fallen away and for the healing of the members of our families. O gracious Mother of God, touch their hearts and raise those up who are fallen in sin; establish them on the path of saving temperance. Implore your Son, Christ our God, to forgive us our sins and not to turn His mercy away from His people but that He would strengthen us in sobriety and chastity. Accept, O most holy Theotokos, the petitions of mothers shedding tears over their children, wives weeping over their husbands, children, orphans, the destitute, those under delusion, as well as all of us who venerate your icon. May your prayers carry our petitions to the throne of the Almighty. Cover us and preserve us from the snares and intrigues of the evil one and at the dreadful hour of our death enable us to pass through the trials without stumbling. By your prayers deliver us from eternal condemnation so that God's mercy may be upon us unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O most merciful Mother of our Sweetest Lord Jesus Christ, hear this our prayer: deliver us from every infirmity of soul and body and especially free your servant(s) / handmaiden(s) \_\_\_\_\_, suffering from alcoholism (and all manner of addition), that he (she, they) may not perish but be saved and thus always sing to God: Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

