

**St. Mary's Orthodox Church
(Dormition of the Mother of God)**

187 Justin Lane Bluefield, WV 24701

www.stmarysbluefield.org---email: fathermark677@yahoo.com

www.ACROD.org YouTube: ACRODDIOCESE and ACROD Facebook

Rev. Mark Tyson, Pastor

(304) 323-2648 Cell: (304) 888-4576 Farm: (276) 988-3921

Sunday September 17, 2017

Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross; Martyr Sophia and her three daughters Faith (Pistis, Vera), Hope (Elpitha, Nadezhda), and Love (Agape, Lyubov) at Rome; Martyr Agathocleia; Martyr Theodota at Nicaea; 156 martyrs of Palestine, including Bishops Peleus and Nilus, Presbyter Zeno, and noblemen Paternuthius and Elias; Martyrs Lucy and her son Geminian of Rome; Hieromartyrs Heraclides and Myron, Bishops of Cyprus; 100 martyrs of Egypt; Martyrs Charalampos, Panteleon, and others; Saint Anastasius of Cyprus, monk; Saint Eusipius of Cyprus, monk; Martyrs Socrates and Stephen; Hieromartyr Lambert of Maastricht; repose of Blessed Agapius, disciple of St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, and Blessed lay-recluse Matthew of Petersburg

Services for the week of September 17

Saturday, September 23: 6:00 pm Great Vespers.

Parish News

WELCOME: to all of our guests today. We are so glad that you have come to enjoy our Orthodox worship. We invite you to come for coffee and sweets in our church hall and to enjoy fellowship with us. May God bless you!

OFFERINGS: September 10: \$1464.01

DEEPEST CONDOLENCES are offered to the family of Randy Bailey on the loss of his mother +Myrtle Louise Bailey who reposed yesterday. May God comfort the family and grant her rest eternal.

PLEASE PRAY for the victims of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. More storms are coming. The IOCC (International Orthodox Christian Charities) is collecting funds for relief to the suffering. We will conduct a collection TODAY to be able to send our help as quickly as we can. Please give generously.

PLEASE REMEMBER Janet Mikel and Martha Smith who are suffering from serious illness. May God continue to bless and strengthen them!

CHURCH WORLD FOOD FESTIVAL is coming up on September 23 from 11am-4pm. Please volunteer your help in any way you can. See Fr. Mark or any of the many people who are helping us to be able to lend a hand.

ANNUAL MEETING was held last Sunday. Thanks to all who made it a success!

The Holy Martyrs Vera, Nada and Lyubov (Faith, Hope and Love) and their Mother Sophia (Wisdom)

They all lived and suffered in Rome during the reign of Emperor Hadrian. Sophia was wise, as her name implies. She was left a widow, and had established herself and her daughters well in the Christian Faith. When the persecuting hand of Hadrian extended even over the virtuous home of Sophia, Vera was only twelve years old; Nada, ten years old; and Lyubov, nine years old. Brought before the emperor, these four held each other's hands ``like a woven wreath," humbly but steadfastly confessed their faith in Christ the Lord and refused to offer sacrifices to the pagan idol Artemis. Before their suffering, the mother encouraged her daughters to endure to the end: ``Your heavenly Bridegroom, Jesus Christ, is eternal health, inexpressible beauty and eternal life. When your bodies are slain by torture, He will clothe you in incorruption and the wounds on your bodies will shine in the heavens as stars." One by one the torturers inflicted cruel torments, first on Vera, then on Nada, and then on Lyubov. They beat them, slashed them, cast them into fire and boiling pitch, and finally beheaded them with the sword one after another. Sophia took the dead bodies of her daughters outside the town and honorably buried them. She remained at their grave for three days and three nights, praying to God. Then she gave her spirit to God, flying off to Paradise, where the blessed souls of her glorious daughters awaited her.

REFLECTION

A faithful and God-fearing ruler is a true blessing for all people. King Vatslav of the Czechs was such a ruler. His zeal for the sanctity of the Faith and his steadfastness remind us of the ancient ascetics. During the day he devoted himself to the affairs of the state, and at night to prayer. In winter, he often walked barefoot to the church for Matins with his old servant Podivoi. He often prepared and baked prosphora himself, especially when he desired to receive Holy Communion. Because of his care for the Faith, many churches were built, in which daily services to God were celebrated. He especially concerned himself with the poor and needy. He was a lover of peace, yet also a great and fearless hero. When the neighboring Prince Radislav attacked the Czech lands, Vatslav sent him a letter asking why he was waging war. The proud Radislav replied that he wanted Vatslav to cede all the Czech lands, and his throne, to him. Vatslav promptly amassed a large army and confronted his enemy. Yet, pondering on the two powerful armies, he mourned that so many men would die, and sent a message to Radislav: ``The quarrel is between you and me; you desire to rule the land of the Czechs and I will not yield. Agree to resolve this matter with a duel between the two of us. Why shed so much blood in a battle between two armies?" Prince Radislav agreed to this duel, and was defeated by Vatslav. On his knees, he begged him for forgiveness.