

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

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Sunday September 24, 2017

Holy Protomartyr and Equal-to-the-Apostles Thekla; Saint Coprius of Palestine; Venerable Nicander, hermit of Pskov; Saint Abramius, Abbot of Mirozh (Pskov); Saints Stephen (in monasticism Simon), David, and Vladislav of Serbia; Saint Dorothy of Kashin; Saint Mawgan, Abbot of Cornwall; New-Martyr Ahmed; Venerable Silouan of Mount Athos; martyrdom of Saint Galacteon, monk of Vologda; repose of Schema-archimandrite Gabriel of Pskov-Eleazar Monastery; synaxis of all saints of Alaska (see also December 12): Hieromartyr Juvenal the Protomartyr of America, Peter the Aleut, and New-Martyrs Anatole of Irkutsk and Seraphim of Uglich

Services for the week of September 24

Saturday, September 30: 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 17: \$714.00

WORLD FOOD FESTIVAL was held yesterday. So much work was done by so many that it is impossible to thank all by name. Our collective gratitude is great... Thanks to all who made this huge project a big success!

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

The Holy Protomartyr Thecla, Equal to the Apostles

Thecla was born in Iconium of eminent but pagan parents. As a girl of eighteen, she was betrothed to a young man at the same time that the Apostle Paul arrived in Iconium with Barnabas to preach the Gospel. Hearing Paul's testimony for three days and nights, Thecla converted to the Christian Faith, and vowed to live in virginity. Her mother, seeing that she was now ignoring her betrothed and no longer thought of marriage, tried to dissuade her, and then beat her and tortured her by starvation. Finally, this wicked mother turned Thecla over to the judge and demanded that Thecla be burned. The judge threw her into the fire, but God preserved her unharmed. Then, Thecla followed the Apostle Paul, and went to Antioch with him. Attracted by Thecla's external beauty, a certain elder of the city wanted to take her for himself by force, but Thecla escaped his grasp. The pagan elder accused her to the eparch as a Christian who disdained marriage. The eparch condemned her to death, and had her thrown to wild beasts, but the wild beasts did not touch the body of this holy virgin. Amazed by this, the eparch asked her: "Who are you and what kind of power is in you, that nothing can harm you?" Thecla replied: "I am a servant of the Living God." The eparch then released her, and she departed to preach the Gospel. She succeeded in converting many to the true Faith, among whom was Tryphena, a prominent and honorable widow. Then, having received the blessing of the Apostle Paul to do so, Thecla withdrew to a secluded place near Seleucia. There she lived a life of asceticism for a long time and, by healing the sick with wonderworking power, she converted many to Christianity. The doctors and soothsayers in Seleucia were envious of her, and sent some young men to defile her, hoping that the loss of her virginity would also mean the loss of her miraculous power. Thecla fled from these arrogant young men, but as they were about to catch her, she prayed to God for help. A large rock opened up and hid this holy virgin and bride of Christ. This rock was her refuge and her tomb. St. John Chrysostom says of this wonderful Christian heroine and saint: "It seems to me that as I see this blessed virgin, in one hand she offers Christ virginity, and in the other hand, martyrdom."