

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

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*Sunday May 13, 2018
Sunday of the Blind Man*

Virgin-Martyr Glyceria at Heraclea, Propontis (ca.138-161); Martyr Laodicius, jailer of Saint Glyceria (ca.138-161) Saint Theoctistus, monk from Tekoa, Palestine; Saint Pausicacius, Bishop of Synnada (606); Saint Nicephoros, Presbyter of the monastery of Ephapsios; Saint Sergius (George) the Confessor of Constantinople, with his wife Irene and children (ca.829-842); Saint Euthymius the New (the Illuminator) (1028), founder of Iveron Monastery, and his fellow Georgian saints of Mount Athos: his father monk-martyr John of Iveron (998), his cousin monk-martyr George of Iveron (1065), and monk-martyr Gabriel of Iveron who took the Holy Icon "Portaitissa" from the sea (10th c.); Saint Abban of Ireland, baptized in 165 AD, missionary in Abingdon, Oxfordshire (2nd c.); Martyr Alexander of Rome (284-305); Saint Valerian of Auxerre, third Bishop of Auxerre, and defender of Orthodoxy against Arianism (350); Saint Onesimus of Gaul, fifth Bishop of Soissons in France (361); Saint Servatius, Bishop of Tongres, defender against Arianism in the Netherlands (384); Saint Agnes of Poitiers, chosen by St. Rade Gund to be Abbess of Holy Cross at Poitiers in France (588); Saint Mael (Mahel), Ascetic on the Isle of Bardsey (6th c.); Saint Natalis (Natale), Bishop of Milan in Italy (751); Saint Anno (Hanno, Annon), Bishop of Verona in Italy (780); Saint Merwenna of Rumsey (Merwinna, Merewenna), first Abbess of Rumsey convent, in Hampshire (ca.970); Blessed Fortis Gabrielli, Ascetic (1040); Venerable monk-martyrs of Iveron Monastery, martyred by the Latins (1259, or 1276-1280); Repose of Saint Macarius, Abbot of Glushitsa Monastery, Vologda (1480); Righteous Virgin Glyceria of Novgorod (1522); New Hieromartyrs Basil, Alexander and Christopher, Hieromartyr Macarius and Martyr Sergius (1922); 103 New Hieromartyrs of Cherkassk (Cherkas') (20th c.); **Other Commemorations:** Consecration of the Monastery of Panagia Pantanassa (Most-Holy Queen of All), on the small island of Hagia Glykeria (Incirli Adasi) in the Bay of Tuzla (12th c.); Translation of the relics (1688) of Hieromartyr Saint Macarius, Archimandrite of Ovruch and Pinsk, from Kaniv to Pereyaslavl (1678); Repose of righteous Priest Alexis of Bortsurmany, disciple of St. Seraphim of Sarov (1848); Repose of Rassophore Monk John, of St. Nilus of Sora Monastery (1863); Repose of Eldress Sepfora of Klykovo (1997).

Services for the week of May 13

Wednesday, May 16: 6:30 pm Vigil for the Feast of the Ascension

Thursday, May 17: 9:00 am Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Ascension

Saturday, May 19: 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: May 6: \$816.00

HAPPY MOTHERS' DAY: To all of our mothers, aunts, big sisters, female mentors...to ALL the women in our lives, we wish a wonderful day! May all of our precious ladies follow the holy example of our female saints and especially the Mother of God. Many years!

HOMILY

About how God uses the unbelievers in order to punish the believers

"Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylon, my servant" (Jeremiah 25:9).

Is not this a difficult saying? Who can be fed by it? The pagan king, the idolatrous king, the Lord call him His servant. If the servant of God is one who knows the True God and who adheres to the law of God, how then can one be a servant of God who does not know the True God and who does not adhere to the law of God? Truly, the true servant of God is he who knows the True God and who keeps the law of God but when he, to whom God has given the knowledge about Himself and His law, perverts knowing into unknowing and law into lawlessness, then God takes as His servant that ignorant one so as to punish the apostates. For, an apostate from God is worse than a pagan and an apostate from the law of God is lower than an idolater by birth.

Therefore, when Israel, as the ancient Church of God, alienated itself from God and the law of God, God chose Nebuchadrezzar for His servant to punish Israel, the Apostate.

Therefore, when the Christian peoples in Asia and Africa through numerous heresies alienated themselves from God, God took as His servant the Arabs to punish Christians in order to bring them to their senses.

And when the Christian peoples in the Balkans alienated themselves from God and God's law, God invited the Turks as His servants to punish the apostates that by punishment to bring them to their senses.

Whenever the faithful alienate themselves from God, God weaves a whip from the unbelievers to bring the believers to their senses. And, as the faithful consciously and willingly turn away from God, so the unbelievers unconsciously and unwillingly become servants of God; the whip of God.

But God takes the unbelievers only temporarily in His service against the believers. For the land of Nebuchadrezzar, the same Lord says, He will visit it for its lawlessness and "make it perpetual desolations" (Jeremiah 25:12), then will a servant against a servant be found? For God did not take the Babylonians for a servant because of their goodness and faith, rather because of Israel's wickedness and unbelief.

O Righteous Lord, help us by Your Spirit Most-high, to always adhere to You, the One, True God and Your saving law.

