



Archangels Diocese
True Orthodox Church of the Diaspora
631 West Main Street
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Homily for the 2nd Sunday after Pentecost All Russian Saints Tone One Apostles' Fast
Weatherly, Pennsylvania Sunday, June 14 / June 1 (Old Calendar), 2026

Beloved in Christ,

Today the Holy Church celebrates the Synaxis of All Russian Saints on the second Sunday after Pentecost. On this same day we also commemorate the venerable Fathers of the Holy Mount Athos, the venerable Fathers of Bulgaria, the Kaluga Icon of the Mother of God, and many righteous ones from every land where Orthodoxy has taken root. We stand in the Apostles' Fast, a season that calls us to mission, confession, and renewal, and the saints placed before us today reveal what it means to live the Gospel with apostolic courage.

In the Gospel reading, the Lord walks by the Sea of Galilee and calls the fishermen Peter and Andrew, James and John, saying, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." This same call was heard by the saints of Russia, by the martyrs of Rome, by the ascetics of Athos, by the confessors of Bulgaria, and by every righteous soul we honor today. They followed Christ without hesitation. Their lives proclaim that holiness is not an ornament but a vocation. It is not for the few, but for all who desire Christ.

In the Epistle, the Apostle Paul teaches that God will judge the secrets of men according to the Gospel. This reminds us that holiness is not measured by outward appearance but by the inner man. The saints of Russia were not perfect, but they were repentant. They were not strong, but they were faithful. They were not always wise, but they were obedient. Their holiness was the fruit of repentance, humility, and love, the same virtues to which we are called.

The saints of Russia form a living icon of the Kingdom of God. Among them shine the New Martyrs and Confessors who endured prisons, bullets, and camps with the joy of Christ; the monastic saints from St. Sergius of Radonezh to St. Seraphim of Sarov who renewed the spiritual life of the people; the missionary saints such as St. Herman and St. Innocent who brought the Gospel to Alaska; the righteous pastors like St. John of Kronstadt, glorified on

this day, whose love embraced the suffering and the forgotten; and the ascetics of the Kiev Caves, including St. Agapitus the Unmercenary, who healed without payment and prayed without ceasing. Their lives reveal what grace can accomplish in a people who seek first the Kingdom of God.

But today's feast extends beyond Russia. We honor the Fathers of Athos who preserved the flame of hesychasm, the Fathers of Bulgaria who defended Orthodoxy through centuries of trial, the Kaluga Icon which reminds us of the protection of the Mother of God, the martyrs of Rome with St. Justin the Philosopher who witnessed that truth is stronger than empire, and the Georgian martyrs of Gareji who kept the faith under the sword. Holiness is not confined to one land. It is the common inheritance of all who belong to Christ.

The Apostles' Fast calls us to renew our mission, to confess Christ boldly, to strengthen our prayer, to purify our hearts, to serve our neighbor, and to seek first the Kingdom. The saints we honor today did not live in easy times, and neither do we. But they show us that every age is an age of salvation for those who cling to Christ.

The Gospel for the saints gives us the Beatitudes, the portrait of the Kingdom. Every saint is a living commentary on these words. The poor in spirit are the monks of the northern wilderness. The meek are the righteous pastors who bore the burdens of their flock. The pure in heart are the ascetics who saw God. The peacemakers are the hierarchs who reconciled enemies. The persecuted are the new martyrs who shone in the darkness of the twentieth century. The Beatitudes are not ideals; they are the pattern of holiness.

Beloved, the saints of Russia and all the saints we commemorate today stand before us not as distant figures but as living intercessors, teachers, and companions. They call us to repent with sincerity, to pray with attention, to fast with purpose, to love without calculation, to confess Christ without fear, and to live the Gospel without compromise. May their prayers strengthen us in this Apostles' Fast, and may the Lord grant that we too may become, in our measure, fishers of men, bearers of light, and witnesses of the Kingdom.

Through the prayers of all the saints who shone forth in the Russian land, and of all the venerable fathers of Athos and Bulgaria, and of the Most Holy Theotokos, may Christ our God have mercy on us and save us.

ALL GLORYVTO GOD

+Alexios

Amen.