



St. Vladimir Orthodox Church

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Icon of the Mother of God “Our Lady of Sitka” and Greatmartyr Procopius of Caesarea, in Palestine July 8, 2018

Troparion – Tone 5

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin; for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

Troparion – Tone 4

Thy holy martyr Procopius, O Lord, through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from Thee, our God. For having Thy strength, he laid low his adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons// Through his intercessions save our souls!

Kontakion – Tone 5

Thou didst descend into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death. Thou hast delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of man, // and we cry to Thee: O Lord, save us!

Kontakion – Tone 2

Set ablaze by divine zeal for Christ and protected by the might of the Cross, thou didst cast down the insolence and boldness of the Enemy, O Procopius, Thou didst exalt the honorable Church, // excelling in faith and giving light to us all!

Prokeimenon – Tone 5

Thou, O Lord, shalt protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.

v: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly.

Icon of the Mother of God “Our Lady of Sitka”

The Sitka Icon of the Mother of God, located at the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska is one of the most revered Icons in North America: the Sitka Mother of God.

This Icon has been attributed to a famous Iconographer, Vladimir Lukich Borovikovsky (1758-1826), a protégé of the Empress Catherine II who was instructed at the Academy of Arts in Saint Petersburg, Russia. In addition to being a great portrait painter, Borovikovsky also painted many of the Icons for the Cathedral of the Kazan Icon in Saint Petersburg.

Painted in the style of the Kazan Mother of God Icon, on canvas, the Sitka Mother of God Icon is 36 x 17-1/2 inches in size. An exceptionally beautiful and detailed riza of silver covers the Icon of the Theotokos and Christ child, and the Image of God the Father blessing from above.

The Cathedral received the Icon as a gift from the laborers of the Russian American Company in 1850, two years after the Cathedral was completed. Even with their meager wages, these men generously made their contribution to the Church.

Miracles have been attributed to the Sitka Mother of God Icon over the years. It is believed that the gaze of the eyes of the Theotokos have led to the restored health of those who prayed before the Icon.

Because of the peaceful gaze of the Theotokos, the Icon has been described as a “pearl of Russian ecclesiastical art of ineffable gentleness, purity and harmony....” And “...the most beautiful face of the Mother of God with the Divine Child in her arms is so delicately and artistically done that the more one looks at it the more difficult it is to tear one’s gaze away.”

Originally part of the main Iconostasis at the Cathedral of Saint Michael the Archangel in Sitka, Alaska, the Icon is now permanently located on the far left side of the Iconostasis in a special place of honor.

Greatmartyr Procopius of Caesarea, in Palestine

The Holy Great Martyr Procopius, in the world Neanius, a native of Jerusalem, lived and suffered during the reign of the emperor Diocletian (284-305). His father, an eminent Roman by the name of Christopher, was a Christian, but the mother of the saint, Theodosia, remained a pagan. He was early deprived of his father, and the young child was raised by his mother. Having received an excellent secular education, he was introduced to Diocletian in the very first year of the emperor’s accession to the throne, and he quickly advanced in government service. Towards the year 303, when open persecution against Christians began, Neanius was sent as a proconsul to Alexandria with orders to mercilessly persecute the Church of God.

On the way to Egypt, near the Syrian city of Apamea, Neanius had a vision of the Lord Jesus, similar to the vision of Saul on the road to Damascus. A divine voice exclaimed, “Neanius, why do you persecute Me?”

Neanius asked, “Who are you, Lord?”

“I am the crucified Jesus, the Son of God.”

At that moment a radiant Cross appeared in the air. Neanius felt an inexpressible joy and spiritual happiness in his heart and he was transformed from being a persecutor into a zealous follower of Christ. From this point in time Neanius became favorably disposed towards Christians and fought victoriously against the barbarians.

The words of the Savior came true for the saint, “A man’s foes shall be those of his own household” (Mt. 10:36). His mother, a pagan herself, went to the emperor to complain that her son did not worship the ancestral gods. Neanius was summoned to the procurator Judaeus Justus, where he was solemnly handed the decree of Diocletian. Having read through the blasphemous directive, Neanius quietly tore it up before the eyes of everyone. This was a crime, which the Romans regarded as an “insult to authority.” Neanius was held under guard and in chains sent to Caesarea of Palestine, where the Apostle Paul once languished. After terrible torments, they threw the saint into a dark prison. That night, a light shone in the prison, and the Lord Jesus Christ Himself baptized the suffering confessor, and gave him the name Procopius.

Repeatedly they led Saint Procopius to the courtroom, demanding that he renounce Christ, and they subjected him to more tortures. The stolidity of the martyr and his fiery faith brought down God’s abundant grace on those who witnessed the execution.

Inspired by the example of Procopius, many of the holy martyr’s former guards and Roman soldiers went beneath the executioner’s sword together with their tribunes Nikostrates and Antiochus. Twelve Christian women received martyr’s crowns, after they came to the gates of the Caesarea Praetorium.

Struck by the great faith and courage of the Christians, and seeing the firmness of her son in bearing terrible sufferings, Theodosia became repentant and stood in the line of confessors and was executed. Finally the new procurator, Flavian, convinced of the futility of the tortures, sentenced the holy Great Martyr Procopius to

beheading by the sword. By night Christians took up his much-tortured body, and with tears and prayers, they committed it to the earth. This was the first martyrdom at Caesarea (303).

Epistle: Romans 12:6-14

Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.

Gospel: Matthew 9:1-8

So He got into a boat, crossed over, and came to His own city. Then behold, they brought to Him a paralytic lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer; your sins are forgiven you." And at once some of the scribes said within themselves, "This Man blasphemes!" But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Arise and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins" – then He said to the paralytic, "Arise, take up your bed, and go to your house." And he arose and departed to his house. Now when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such power to men.

Service Schedule for the week of July 8

Today – 8:45 AM Hours, 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy followed by Coffee Hour in Daria Hall

Saturday July 14 – 5:00 PM Vespers followed by Potluck Reception in Daria Hall

Sunday July 15 – 9:00 AM Hierarchical Divine Liturgy followed by St. Vladimir Feast Day banquet in Daria Hall

Weekly Giving

July 1 – 37 adults, 6 youth, \$2,252

Parish Announcements

Sign-up sheets are in the back of the church for our St. Vladimir Day celebrations: Potluck Reception on Saturday July 14 after Vespers, and the banquet on Sunday July 15. The cost is \$20/adult, \$10 for children 6-12, and free for children 5 and under. Archbishop Michael will be in attendance both Saturday and Sunday.