



# *The* **St. Nicholas Navigator**

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**In this issue:**

*Pastoral Epistle: Keeping the  
Feast*

*A Saint for Troubled Times*

*A Dream: About My Vision of  
Patriarch Tikhon*

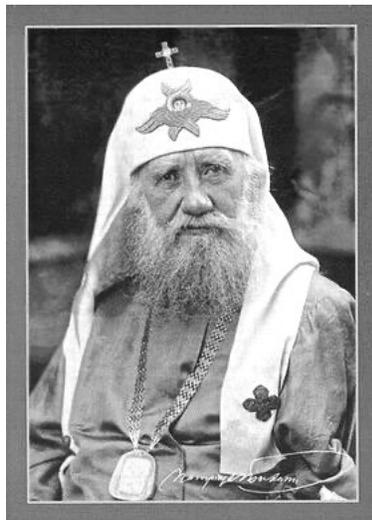
## **Pastoral Epistle: Keeping the Feast**

When we were kids, we would see signs that said, “No skateboarding, no loitering, no chewing gum, no listening to music, no climbing, no walking on the grass,” and we would sarcastically think to ourselves, “yeah, no happiness allowed!” There was a reflection of something true in that rebellious attitude, albeit in an immature and imperfect \*form. The true expression of the true and God-pleasing rebellion is the protest of the human heart against the world’s attempt to crush the festal joy of Christian faith, and the refusal to relinquish that joy.

Christians are feast-lovers! We live in anticipation of the everlasting wedding banquet of Heaven. Already in this life we participate, to the extent possible for us, in that great festival—at every Liturgy, and in every liturgical celebration, every service offered to our gracious God. For those whose hearts belong to Christ, every day is a feast day. Even when we fast as Christians, if our fasting is right, it is with joyful anticipation of the meeting with the Lord for which our fast serves to prepare us.

However, we have an enemy who despises that joy. His perspective is captured vividly in Psalm 73. The Psalmist describes the enemies of God’s people, who hate the Lord and boast against

Him, and attack His holy place, chopping down its doors and profaning it. What is the thought with which they are obsessed? “Come, let us abolish all the feasts of God from the earth.” (Ps. 73:9, Septuagint)



The soul-crushing, despair-inspiring system of this world hates the feasts of God and wants to abolish them. It hates the joyful celebration of Divine love, the Eucharistic banquet, the eager anticipation of the eternal Pascha. It hates both the inward rejoicing of the Christian heart and the outward expression of that rejoicing in the Church’s worship. It wants all of it to stop. We must not give it what it wants. We must not allow the enemy of mankind to steal our joy, on any pretext.

St. Tikhon of Moscow, also known as “Apostle to America,” is a guiding light for us. God called him to lead the Church in Russia during one of the most harrowing periods of the Church’s history. St. Tikhon has feast days in both October and November, and two articles in this issue focus on his remarkable life and example. One incident in particular is worth noting here.

In 1921, a terrible famine befell the Russian people. St. Tikhon took the initiative as Patriarch to direct the faithful to offer whatever help they could to the famine victims. In particular, he

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encouraged the donation of non-liturgical church valuables. However, the following year the government issued a decree that all church goods were subject to confiscation. St. Tikhon now sent a directive out that under no circumstances were the holy things to be handed over. Some 10,000 people were summarily shot for refusing to commit sacrilege by giving up the church's holy things, and St. Tikhon was imprisoned for over a year for having sent that directive.

It is one thing to give Caesar those things that are not consecrated, but it is sacrilege to give him the things that are God's. The Soviet system was seeking a pretext to "abolish all the feasts of God," and the famine made a convenient excuse. St. Tikhon (and countless others) stood against that effort, many of them becoming martyrs in the process. In so doing, they kept the "feasts of God" unquenched in their hearts. Because of them, the enemy failed. May we have their intercessions! As we enter this Nativity Fast, as we celebrate the feasts that follow, and for as long as God keeps us in this world, may we keep the feast of God alive in our hearts!

With love in Christ,  
Fr. Daniel

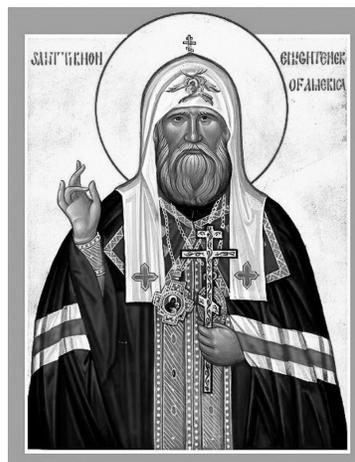
### **A Saint for Troubled Times: Part 1**

*St. Tikhon of Moscow is claimed by both Russian and American Orthodox Christians as "their" Saint. He came to North America as a missionary bishop in 1898, for what was then the "Diocese of the Aleutians and Alaska." He became the spiritual leader for Orthodox Christians in America for the next 9 years, consecrating St. Raphael of Brooklyn to assist him (particularly for the Syro-Lebanese communities in North America), and leaving a lasting mark on Orthodoxy in America. In 1907 he returned to Russia. There, in the tumult of 1917, as the Bolsheviks were carrying out the revolution that would produce all the horrors of the Soviet Union, St. Tikhon was chosen by God, through the council of bishops, as Patriarch of All Russia. Thus he shepherded*

*the faithful during the unleashing of unparalleled persecutions against the Church in Russia. He reposed in 1925, it was said of heart attack, though rumors were he had been poisoned. Though his relics were believed to have been lost, he was glorified as a Saint by the Russian Church in 1989. Then, just three years later, in 1992, his relics were discovered, hidden in the Donskoy Monastery. St. Tikhon is commemorated on October 9, November 18, and April 7.*

*The following interview, with Archpriest Vladimir Vorobiev, Rector of the St. Tikhon's University in Moscow, shows St. Tikhon as a remarkable witness to God's love as expressed in the midst of the most troubled times.*

—Fr. Vladimir, what role did Holy Patriarch Tikhon play in the history of the Russian Church and the history of Russia?



—This year [2015] marks the ninetieth anniversary of Patriarch Tikhon's repose, which occurred on the feast of the Annunciation of the Mother of God—April 7, 1925. He died in the Bakuniny

hospital, not far from the Monastery of the Conception on Ostozhenka Street. When he died, everyone suspected that he was poisoned. Although it was written many times that he "had not been poisoned," he died "simply from a heart attack," nevertheless, the version that he had been poisoned has not been dismissed because it is highly probable. This version has never been proved. I do not know whether it can be proved, but there has never been any attempt to investigate it. If it is poisoning, then Patriarch should be called a hieromartyr. If his death was from a heart attack, then it is anyway the death of a confessor.

St. Tikhon lived under conditions of serious persecutions against the Church and went through seven years of Patriarchal service as truly a way of the cross, the path to Golgotha. These very years led to his untimely end. He died at sixty years of age; that is, he did not live a very long life.

Today, looking back at the history of the twentieth century, we can say that Patriarch Tikhon is one of the greatest Russian saints, and he undoubtedly stands among the greatest universal saints. He was chosen by the most remarkable Council in the history of the Russian Church.

*—Please remind us how this election took place.*

—Preparation for the Council of 1917 went on for eleven years. The delegates were chosen democratically, without any political pressure. It was very representative [of society]—over 500 delegates.

The Patriarch was also chosen in a remarkable way. First, twenty-eight candidates were chosen. Then three were chosen out of these according to the number of votes. Then the Vladimir icon of the Mother of God was brought from the Dormition Cathedral of the Moscow Kremlin. The Kremlin had already been occupied by the communists, and therefore no services could be held there, so the icon was brought to the Church of Christ the Savior. In this church, the holy hieromartyr Vladimir served the Liturgy; he was the first hieromartyr of the new martyr bishops. After the Liturgy and a special molieben before the Vladimir icon, Elder Alexey of the St. Zosima Hermitage drew the lot with the name of Patriarch Tikhon. Operating in the election was an amazing unity of the people's active participation and God's will.

Patriarch Tikhon headed the Church during the most terrifying persecutions against Christians in world history. We have more than sufficient grounds to say that Patriarch Tikhon stands at the head of the army of new martyrs.

He himself suffered persecutions from the very first days of his Patriarchy.

*—Could you cite some little-known episodes from the period of his persecution?*

—One day the Patriarch was informed that a whole train car of sailors was coming from Petrograd to arrest him, and he was asked to leave the Troitsky podvorye where he was living until 1922. This was in the evening, when Patriarch Tikhon was going to bed. He listened and then answered, "I'm not going anywhere." The sailors arrived the next morning, disembarked, had a meeting on the platform, got back into the train, and went back to Petrograd. God Himself preserved His saint.

Everyone knows the testimonial Patriarch Tikhon wrote to the Bolsheviks; they know about his epistle with the anathema against iniquitous Bolsheviks. He tried through his epistles to protect the Church from the persecutors and bandits. In 1922 he was arrested. He was interrogated in court. A brochure of this interrogation with his comments survives. Then there was a year of strict imprisonment in Donskoy Monastery. From there he was taken for interrogations to the Lubyanka. He spent some time in the Lubanka prison. There is very little known about this.

The Politburo pronounced the death sentence on him. Not the judge, but the Politburo itself made this secret decision. The sentence was not carried out, because the people's commissar for foreign affairs G. Chicherin convinced the Politburo that the murder of Patriarch Tikhon will not be useful to the soviet government. The entire Christian world—in Europe and America—rose to protect the Russian Patriarch. The world "abroad" threatened the Soviet Union with what would now be called economic sanctions. It was decided not to shoot the Patriarch, but to demand a letter of repentance from him instead. Having received what they wanted, they released him.

*—Couldn't this be viewed as a sign of weakness?*

—Patriarch Tikhon, of course, could not in any way have known what was going on in the upper echelons of the Bolshevik government—after all, he was a prisoner. How do Christians act in such cases? They ask God’s will. The guards who were watching him wrote in their diaries, “The old man is good to everyone, only he prays all night.” He prayed, and the Lord instructed him on what to do. Patriarch Tikhon agreed to sign the “repentance letter” that compromised him.

When he was released, the provocation activities of the “Living Church” [an organization claiming to be the “church” while collaborating with the Soviet government] immediately collapsed. A huge number of people understood what was going on, stopped going to the Living Church churches, and returned to Patriarch Tikhon. The clergy that had joined the Living Church came to the Patriarch with repentance. The Patriarch’s “repentance letter” did not damage his authority in the people’s estimation. The people knew that Patriarch Tikhon was a holy man.

*To be continued...*

*Interview conducted by Alexander Filipov,  
speaking with Archpriest Vladimir Vorobiev.  
Translation by OrthoChristian.com  
From: <https://orthochristian.com/88587.html>*

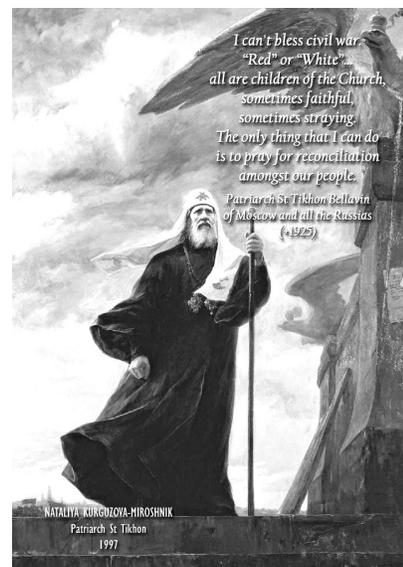


### **About My Vision of Patriarch Tikhon by Metropolitan Benjamin (Fedchenkov)**

Generally we should not believe in dreams.

The holy fathers even talk about the special “virtue of not believing in dreams” (Blessed Diadodochos, in *The Philokalia*). However, sometimes they can be true in an obvious way.

I will very briefly tell you about my vision of Patriarch Tikhon.



It was the year of Metropolitan Anthony’s falling out with Metropolitan Evlogy. I had left Paris for Cannes, where I served daily. One night I had a dream.

It was as if I was in some very large city. It seems it was Moscow... but on the very outskirts. There were no streets, only houses scattered here and there... an uneven place... clay pits. Beyond it were grasses and an endless field. I found myself in one of those houses, basically a peasant’s hut. I was dressed in a ryassa, without my bishop’s panagia, although they all knew that I am a bishop. There are ten or fifteen people in the hut, all simple peasants without exception. No rich, famous, or scholarly people.

They are silent. They move around languorously, just like autumn flies on a window before the winter frosts... I say nothing, I cannot talk—they haven’t the strength to hear reproach or instruction, or anything about God for that matter. Their souls are wounded by both sins and troubles, and they are incapable of rising from their fall, they are people with burnt skin, and can’t be touched even lightly... Sensing this, I say nothing. It is sufficient that I am in their midst, that they not only “bear” me, but even feel comfortable around me (not familiar or impudent, however), are not timid, and consider me one of them.

Only be silent,” their hearts say silently to me, “it is enough that we are together... Don’t touch us—we have no strength.”

I am sad for myself that I cannot do anything, and even sadder for them because they are so miserable.

Suddenly, someone says, “The Patriarch is coming.”

It was as if they were expecting him. We all went outside. I was with the group.

We looked, and Patriarch Tikhon was moving almost above the earth, in his hierarchical mantle and a black monastic klobuk (not in a white, Patriarchal kukol). Behind him was an assistant, holding the end of his mantle. There was no one else in his entourage...

And there was no need for one—these were sick souls, and extra pomp would have been too much for them to bear.

We looked at the holy hierarch approaching us and saw how his face was shining with an extraordinarily tender smile of love, sympathy, and consolation. Well, it was such a sweet smile that I could almost feel a sweet taste in my mouth...

He was sending all of this sweetness of love and affection to these people! He didn’t notice me at all... And he approached nearer.

Suddenly I felt that something was changing in the hearts of all the peasants around me; they were beginning to “come to themselves”, to melt, like flies at the first rays of the spring sun. I could even feel within my body as if something in both me and them, “under the heart”, began to “unloose”, relax. It was as if something was falling away. Later I learned that in that spot is located a nerve center called the “solar plexus” (where people feel the onset of grief)...

I began to read their thoughts through their eyes: “Look, His Holiness is smiling... It means that we can breathe easier!”

Then all became easier and lighter for them—the poor, downtrodden ones.

His Holiness came closer and closer, smiling more and more. His face was framed by a reddish beard.

When he had come quite near, I could see that my neighbors were also smiling, but still very, very little.

“So, only now,” a thought struck me, “now something can be said to them, now they are capable of hearing it, for their souls have melted. But there in the hut there could be no thought of teaching.”

I understood that we must first warm the sinful soul, and correct it only afterwards. His Holiness could do this—he greatly loved these sinful but miserable children of his. And he warmed them with his love.

I understood that earlier it was not possible (for me) to talk to them, and therefore it was not necessary. That is why we were silent in the hut. I marveled at the great power that love has!

His Holiness came closer. It seems that we—in any case, I—bowed at his feet. When I arose I kissed his hand. It seemed soft and tender to me.

I presented myself to him first, as a bishop. But strangely, he did not ascribe any importance to this at all, as if he did not notice me. This seemed very upsetting to me. All his love was directed to these sorrowful, downtrodden, simple people.

Finally, unable to restrain myself any longer, I decided to ask him a silent question (without words—with the heart, but his heart already felt what I was thinking):

“Vladyka! What should we do there (outside of Russia)?” That is, about the division in the

Church between Metropolitan Anthony and Metropolitan Evlogy. “Where should I go?”

He immediately understood my question, but apparently he was not the least bit interested in it; in fact, it seemed to trouble him. His previously shining smile disappeared.

I waited for an answer... What answer? I could have said to him, “Should I go to Met. Anthony, or to Met. Evlogy”—or something to that effect, or about the division in general... But his answer was totally unexpected, something I could never have thought up:

“SERVE THE PEOPLE...”

Those were the astounding and unexpected words His Holiness said to me. Not about metropolitans, not about divisions, not about jurisdictions, but about serving the people... Precisely the people, that is, the simple people... It was no coincidence that there were only peasants in the hut (and my father, who was a serf)...

He did not use the plural form of the word “serve”, but the singular, which meant me personally. Then the meaning of the Patriarch’s words became clear to me:

“Why are you bishops arguing amongst yourselves? Is it all about you? The issue is the people’s salvation, and specifically the simple people. If they are saved, then all will be well. If they are not saved, then it is all over. What is a general without his soldiers?”

Then suddenly the whole argument about authority paled...

Then, an answer was required of me...

But—to my shame!—I felt the difficulty and boredom of the everyday work of those people with whom I had been silent in the hut. I was overcome by some kind of temptation, and like a slave with no will of his own, I made an attempt to refuse the cross...

“Vladyka!” I “said” in my heart, “They are offering me a bishopric!”

Then an enormous church appeared to me. I was in my mantle. They were singing... but the church was empty. I went to the altar...

But His Holiness became suddenly sad, and I could read in his gaze:

“You are foolish, foolish! What benefit comes from being a bishop if there is no one to serve? After all, the people are not for the bishop, but the bishops are servants of God for the people”...

I felt very ashamed... And I was ready to take my words back, but—alas!—it was too late. They had already been uttered. Then the Patriarch added, “Well then go to Anthony...”

“Well then go,” that is, out of those two paths (as compared with serving the people) choose what is relatively better...

Then something was said about a monastery, something forgotten... the mist... the end, and he was no longer seen.

The Patriarch disappeared.

I found myself in a house (perhaps the same hut, I don’t know).

I looked, and there were the relics of St. Joasaph of Belgorod, covered with a cloth... I walked over to venerate them. After me came Archbishop Vladimir (in Nice). A priest I knew, Fr. A., lifted the cloth. I looked, and the holy hierarch was lying there as if alive. I venerated and said to Archbishop Vladimir, “Look, look, the saint is alive.”

I walked to the head, and St. Joasaph stretched his hand back and affectionately patted me on the right cheek.

The dream ended. I awoke.

Such was my dream. Several months passed afterwards. I read the dream to an acquaintance (the notes are lost). Then suddenly a question came to me:

“How did St. Joasaph fit in?”

I looked at the time of that dream, and it turned out to be his commemoration day (September 4, O.S.) A remarkable concurrence.

This strengthened my thoughts that this was not an ordinary dream. I sent it to the elders on Mt. Athos, who answered, “A significant dream!” but did not explain the details...

I understood it to mean that I should go to Russia to “serve the people”.

So I got ready to go... I had already received permission, when suddenly Metropolitan Evlogy (with whose knowledge I was secretly making preparations) sent me a letter pleading me “in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” to cancel the trip, so that there “would be no scandal” amongst the emigration, and promised to somehow arrange something for me.

I stopped not before “the emigration” but before the name of God... And I answered him by telephone that I have to obey... He thanked me.

I went out into the garden of the St. Sergius metochion and... wept bitterly. I had refused to “serve the people”.

And I still grieve when I remember this. I should have prayed for three days, and the answer would probably have been different...

*From Metropolitan Benjamin (Fedchenkov), God's People. My Spiritual Meetings (Moscow, 2004).  
Translated by OrthoChristian.com.*



### October Birthdays

7	James Worthington, Gia Frank
8	Will Wise
15	Michael Busada
16	Nancy Bourdaras
17	J.J. Frank, Elias Filipek
23	Donna Triperinas
31	Haley Filipek

### October Name Days & Anniversaries

11	Floyds
17	Edmistons
18	Luke Williams

### November Birthdays

2	Natalia Hand
3	Juliette Gill, John Olsen
7	Ethelyn LaHaye
8	Dustin Walker, Syra Walker
10	Sophia Johnston
18	Jessica Busada
19	Tina Edmiston
22	Nadia Johnston, Halim Aboufaycal
25	Liz Gouletas, Anna Bloss
26	Anna Vargo
29	Rick Mansfield

### November Name Days & Anniversaries

8	Michael Busada, Michaela Filipek, Michael Allen, Michael Baluna, Angela Benson, Kiki Casten
13	John Hunter Berry
14	Philip Johnson, Philip LaHaye,
16	Charlie Berry, Matthew Baker
23	Marti/Newmans
25	Katherine Allen, Jan Johnson, Presv. Ashley Foster, Cheryl Floyd, Maya Aboufaycal, Kathy Mansfield



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“However many and however great and burdensome your sins may be, with God there is greater mercy. Just as His majesty is, so likewise is His mercy.”

“God descends to the humble as waters flow down from the hills into the valleys.”

*St. Tikhon of Moscow*