

Saint Vladimir, Equal to the Apostles, Enlightener of Russia

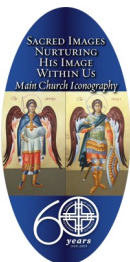
July 15



The holy and right-believing Vladimir (Svyatoslavich), Baptizer of Kievan Rus' (958-1015) was the Grand Prince of Kiev when Orthodoxy was introduced into present day Russia and Ukraine. He is also the grandson of St. Olga, and the father of Sts. Boris and Gleb the Passion-Bearers . Vladimir was a devout pagan in his early life. He was a great conqueror who had many wives and erected many pagan statues. Upon finding out that other faiths existed beyond his own paganism, he decided to send envoys out into the world to find out what was true faith. His envoys met with Muslims, but felt that there was no joy among them, and that their faith was very mechanical. The envoys also met with Jews and Catholics, but were still unimpressed.

Everything changed, however, when the envoys arrived in Constantinople. Upon attending Divine Liturgy in Hagia Sophia, the envoys said, "We no longer knew whether we were in heaven or on earth." Taking the word of his envoys, St. Vladimir had himself and his nation baptized into the Orthodox Church. Changing completely after his baptism in 988, Vladimir destroyed all the pagan statues that stood in Kievan, Russia and replaced them with churches. He also attempted to live in peace as much as possible with his neighbors, and had only one wife.

Apolytikion: Thou wast like a merchant who seeketh a goodly pearl, O glorious Sovereign Vladimir, sitting on the height of the throne of the mother of cities, God-protected Kiev. Searching and sending to the imperial city to know the Orthodox Faith, thou didst find Christ, the priceless Pearl, Who chose thee as a second Paul, and Who did shake off thy spiritual and bodily blindness in the holy font. Wherefore, we who are thy people celebrate thy falling asleep. Pray that thy land of Russia be saved, and that Orthodox people be granted peace and great mercy.



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