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## **Commemorations of the Day:**

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The holy New Martyr Archbishop Hilarion, an outstanding theologian, an eloquent preacher, and a fearless defender of Christ's holy Church, was born around 1885. Vladika Hilarion wrote many books and articles on various topics, including "The Unity of the Church." His Master's thesis, "An Outline of the History of the Church's Dogma," was over five hundred pages long, and was a well-documented analysis of the subject.

During the Council of 1917 he delivered a brilliant address calling for the restoration of the Moscow Patriarchate, which had been dissolved by Tsar Peter I in the eighteenth century. When Saint Tikhon (April 7) was chosen as Patriarch, Saint Hilarion became his fervent supporter. Saint Hilarion was consecrated as bishop on May 20, 1920, and so the great luminary was placed upon the lampstand. From that time, he was to know less than two years of freedom. He spent only six months working with Patriarch Tikhon. Vladika was arrested and exiled in Archangelsk for a year, then he spent six years in a labor camp seven versts from Solovki. There at the Filomonov Wharf he and at least two other bishops were employed in catching fish and mending nets. Paraphrasing the hymns of Pentecost, Archbishop Hilarion remarked, "Formerly, the fishermen became theologians. Now the theologians have become fishermen." Archbishop Hilarion was one of the most popular inmates of the labor camp. He is remembered as tall, robust, and with brownish hair. Personal possessions meant nothing to him, so he always gave his things away to anyone who asked for them. He never showed annoyance when people disturbed him or insulted him, but remained cheerful.

In the summer of 1925, Vladika was taken from the camp and placed in the Yaroslav prison. There he was treated more leniently, and received certain privileges. For example, he was allowed to receive religious books, and he had pleasant conversations with the warden in his office. Saint Hilarion regarded his time at the Yaroslav Isolated Detention Center as the best part of his imprisonment. The following spring he was back at Solovki. In 1929 the Communists decided to exile Archbishop Hilarion to Alma-Atu in central Asia. During his trip southward from the far north, Saint Hilarion was robbed and endured many privations. When he arrived in Petrograd, he was ill with typhus, infested with parasites and dressed in rags. When informed that he would have to be shaved, he replied, "You may now do with me whatever you wish." He wrote from the prison hospital, "My fate will be decided on Saturday, December 15. I doubt I will survive."

Saint Hilarion died at the age of forty-four in the hospital of a Petrograd prison on December 15, 1929. His body was placed in a coffin hastily made from some boards, and then was released to his family. The once tall and robust Archbishop Hilarion had been transformed by his sufferings into a pitiful white-haired old man. One female relative fainted when she saw the body.

(Adapted from OCA website)

## **Announcements**

December charity will be directed to the IOCC relief effort for those suffering from hurricanes Helene and Milton that recently struck the United States.

Please remember that the Advent fast continues. Fish, wine and oil are officially permitted on the weekends. We are nearing the end of the fast, and our Sunday observances now focus more directly on the expectation of Lord's Nativity.

2025 Calendars are available and were donated in memory of the Chichilla family.

Please note the upcoming services for Nativity Eve and Christmas. Additionally we will be hosting services for the Feast of St. Basil the great, and the Circumcision of Our Lord on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

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### **Spiritual Food for Thought:**

"Prayer is food for the soul. Do not starve the soul, it is better to let the body go hungry. Do not judge anyone, forgive everyone. Consider yourself worse than everyone in the world and you be saved. As much as possible, be more quiet."

-St. Joseph of Optina

## Prayers for the Sick:

Archbishop Nathaniel  
Archpriest Vladimir  
Priest John  
Archpriest Gregory  
Archpriest John  
Matushka Gloria  
Matushka Myra  
John  
Thom

Nancy  
Joan  
James  
Thomas  
Diane  
William  
Oliver  
Timothy

## Upcoming Services:

December 21<sup>st</sup> – Great Vespers – 5:00pm

December 22<sup>nd</sup> – Divine Liturgy – 9:30am

December 24<sup>th</sup> – Vigil for the Feast of the Nativity – 6:00pm

December 25<sup>th</sup> – Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity – 9:30am

## Contact Information:

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## 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost: Sunday of the Holy Forefathers, Hieromartyr Hilarion of Vereya December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024



## St. Nicholas Orthodox Church

OCA Diocese of Eastern Pennsylvania  
Archbishop Mark – Hierarch

Fr. Nathan Clausson – Rector  
Fr. Vladimir Fetcho – Attached  
Fr. John Nightingale – Attached  
Mark Howanetz – Choir Director  
Thomas LaTournous – Parish President