All Saints' Eve Storybook

Who will be the next . . .

2023



St. Sophia of Thrace

2024



St. John Chrysostom

2025



St. Miguel Pro Juarez

Saint of the Year?

2026



What is a saint? A "holy one", someone who knows they belong to God and who lives that way. An old-fashioned word for holy is someone who is "hallowed". We still use the word *hallowed* when we pray the Lord's Prayer every day — "Hallowed be Thy name" — which means we confess the Name of God to be kept sacred and holy.



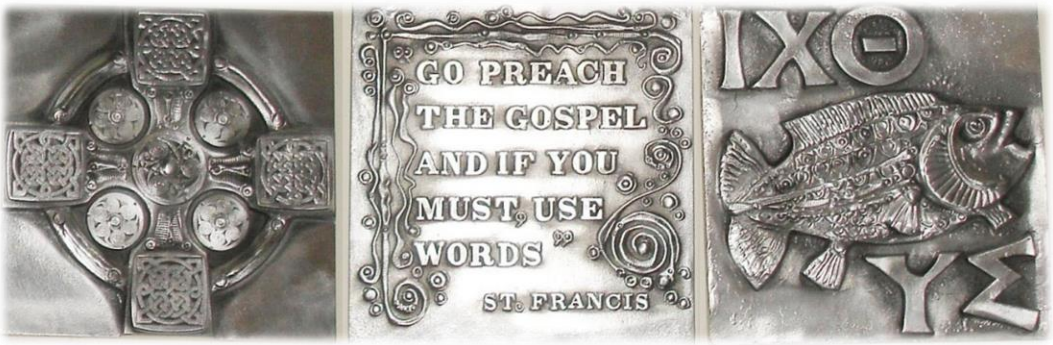
Our All Saints' Eve book was created to help us celebrate the Feast of All Saints, which is observed by Christians in the western churches on November 1. (In the Orthodox Church we observe the Feast of All Saints every year on the Sunday after Pentecost with a Divine Liturgy on that day). Because "hallow" means "holy" the western Feast of All Saints (or Holy Ones) was also called All Hallows. The night before, October 31, became known as All Hallows Evening, or Halloween. You've heard that word before.

You probably think of Halloween as a time when children dress up in all sorts of costumes, some of them scary, but the name *Halloween* is really a Christian name for the evening of All Saints. So, we thought it would be a great time for us Christians to dress up like saints! It makes sense, doesn't it?

It is important for us to always remember the saints. They show us what it is like to follow Jesus our Savior. Some of them were put to death because they were Christians; others preached the gospel in foreign lands; others devoted their lives to prayer, to confession, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, and showing mercy.

We hope you will enjoy reading the stories in this book and remembering the saints. You probably have a saint's name yourself. Do you know the story of your saint? This would be a great time to find out more. Let Jesus inspire you to serve and obey him like the thousands of saints who have lived before us. Let's all pray together and help each other to become more and more like the saints!

Special thanks this year to authors/artists: Ania and Alam Obah / Joseph and Susannah Kishler / Sofia Abraham / Daniel, John and Sophia Schlueter / Sofie Kellar / Susan Letendre / Lorelai Morgen / Richard Coleman / Eva Walter



St. Monica of Thagaste
387



Saint Monica was born AD 331 in the Berber population of Northern Africa.

When she was in her early twenties, she married a pagan statesman named Patricius. He was unfaithful to her and an alcoholic, and although he tolerated his wife's Christianity, he fought her on baptizing their three children.

Besides her famous son St. Augustine, her daughter Perpetua is known for becoming the abbess of a convent in Hippo. St. Monica's third child was Navigius, who followed his father's path into politics.

St. Monica would cry every night for her son Augustine when he was a young man wandering from the faith. When he was explaining his new Manichean beliefs at the dinner table, St. Monica flew into a rage and drove him away.

Later, however, she had a vision which persuaded her to reconcile with him. She visited with a bishop around this time as well, who prophesied to her that "the child of your tears" will never perish.

St. Monica herself was often half hazard and erroneous in her earlier Christian worship. After following her son to Milan, where she saw him converted by St Ambrose, she was also tutored by him and her faith was increased.

Nevertheless, we still remember St. Monica for her stalwart spirit of prayer and patience.

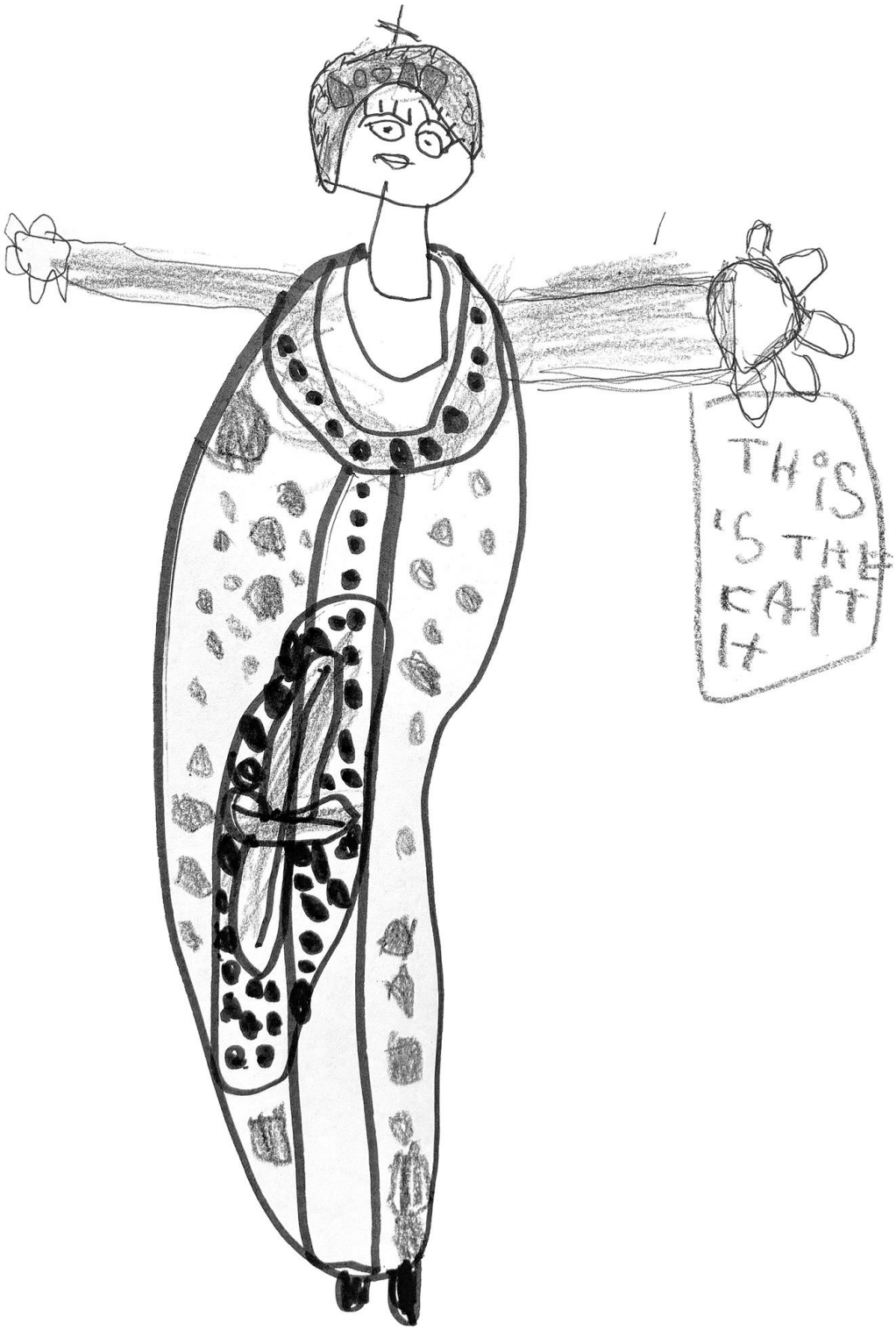
When St. Ambrose permitted they return to Thagaste to found a Christian community, they had to stay for a while in Ostia to wait for their ship. There, St. Monica and her son delved into deep spiritual dialogue.

As St. Augustine describes in his Confessions, "*she and I stood alone, leaning against a certain window, from which the garden at the house in Ostia could be seen… we opened wide the mouth of our heart, from which Your streams pour forth…*"

Shortly after, St. Monica died in Ostia, full of gratitude towards God. "*I don't know what there is left for me to do,*" she said, "*now that my hopes have all been fulfilled.*"

~ Sofie Kellar

St. Theodora the Empress
548



Holy Empress Theodora, Restorer of Orthodoxy, was born in the 9th century in Paphlagonia, in the ancient region of the Black Sea coast of north-central Anatolia. Our Holy Empress was descended from an aristocratic Armenian family. She was given the name Theodora, meaning "gift of God", a fitting name, as she was not only a pious mother and ruler, but was also responsible for restoring the veneration of iconography to Orthodoxy.

As a young woman, she married Theophilus and had seven children, five daughters and two sons. Theophilus ruled the Byzantine Empire and maintained the iconoclastic policies of his predecessor, Leo V. Theophilus heavily persecuted icon venerators, torturing and exiling those who defended sacred images.

Saint Theodora and her husband had a difference of opinion regarding iconography within the Orthodox faith. While Theophilus viewed icons as idols, Theodora maintained that they were windows to the divine that honored Christ's Incarnation. Throughout her marriage, Theodora secretly venerated her icons and taught her children to do so as well. She had inherited a deep Orthodox faith from her mother, Theoktiste of Phlorina, which stood in direct conflict to both the Byzantine Empire and to her own husband.

Following Theophilus' death in 842, Empress Theodora ruled as regent for her young son, Michael, for fifteen years. Upon becoming Empress, she sought the church's support in ending the ruthless iconoclastic policies within her empire. She convened a council, at which the iconoclasts were anathematized. Iconoclastic policies were put to an end with the Proclamation of 843, officially reinstating the veneration of icons. Saint Theodora established the celebration of this restoration, The Triumph of Orthodoxy, observed on the first Sunday of The Great Fast.

When her son, Michael, came of age, Saint Theodora moved to the monastery of Saint Eurphrosyne, where she spent eight years in asceticism, dying peacefully around the year 867.

Her feast day is February 11th.

Apolytikion:
As a right worthy namesake of gifts bestowed of God, and a divinely-wrought image of holy wisdom and faith, thou didst make the Church to shine with godly piety; for thou didst demonstrate to all that the Saints in every age have shown honor to the icons, O Theodora, thou righteous and fair adornment of the Orthodox.

Kontakion:

We sing thy praises as the gem and fairness of the Church, and as a diadem and pattern of all Christian queens, O all-lauded and divinely-crowned Theodora; for in bringing back the icons to their rightful place, thou didst cast usurping heresy out of the Church. Hence, we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Sovereign most ven'rable

~ Lorelai Morgen

St. Dymphna
650



Long ago, during the seventh century, a baby girl was born in Ireland to a king named Damon and his wife, a Christian queen. Her name was Dymphna (pronounced *DIM-fnah*). Although her father followed different beliefs, her mother loved Jesus Christ and taught her daughter about the Christian faith from an early age.

Dymphna grew into a kind, gentle, and loving young girl. She loved God and tried to follow His teachings. Her mother taught her the importance of prayer, kindness, and caring for others. As Dymphna grew older, she promised to dedicate her life to God.

Sadly, when Dymphna was still young, her mother died. Her father was heartbroken, and over time, he began to behave in ways that frightened Dymphna. He wanted her to marry him, but she knew this was wrong. She could not agree to something that went against her faith and what she knew was right. Dymphna faced a difficult choice. With courage, she decided to follow God and seek safety rather than give in to her father's wishes.

She left Ireland with a trusted priest named Gerebernus, who had helped guide her in the Christian faith. Together, they travelled across the sea to what is now Belgium, hoping to find a peaceful place to live. They settled in a village called Geel, where Dymphna continued to pray and help people who were poor, sick, or in need.

For a time, Dymphna was safe and able to live peacefully. But her father eventually discovered where she had gone and travelled to Geel to find her. He asked her to return with him, but Dymphna bravely refused to abandon her faith.

Sadly, her father became very angry. According to the traditional story, he ordered Gerebernus to be killed. When Dymphna still would not change her decision, her father took her life too. She was believed to be about fifteen years old. Christians remember Dymphna as a *martyr*—someone who remains faithful to God even when faced with great suffering. Although her life ended in sadness, the kindness and courage she showed were never forgotten.

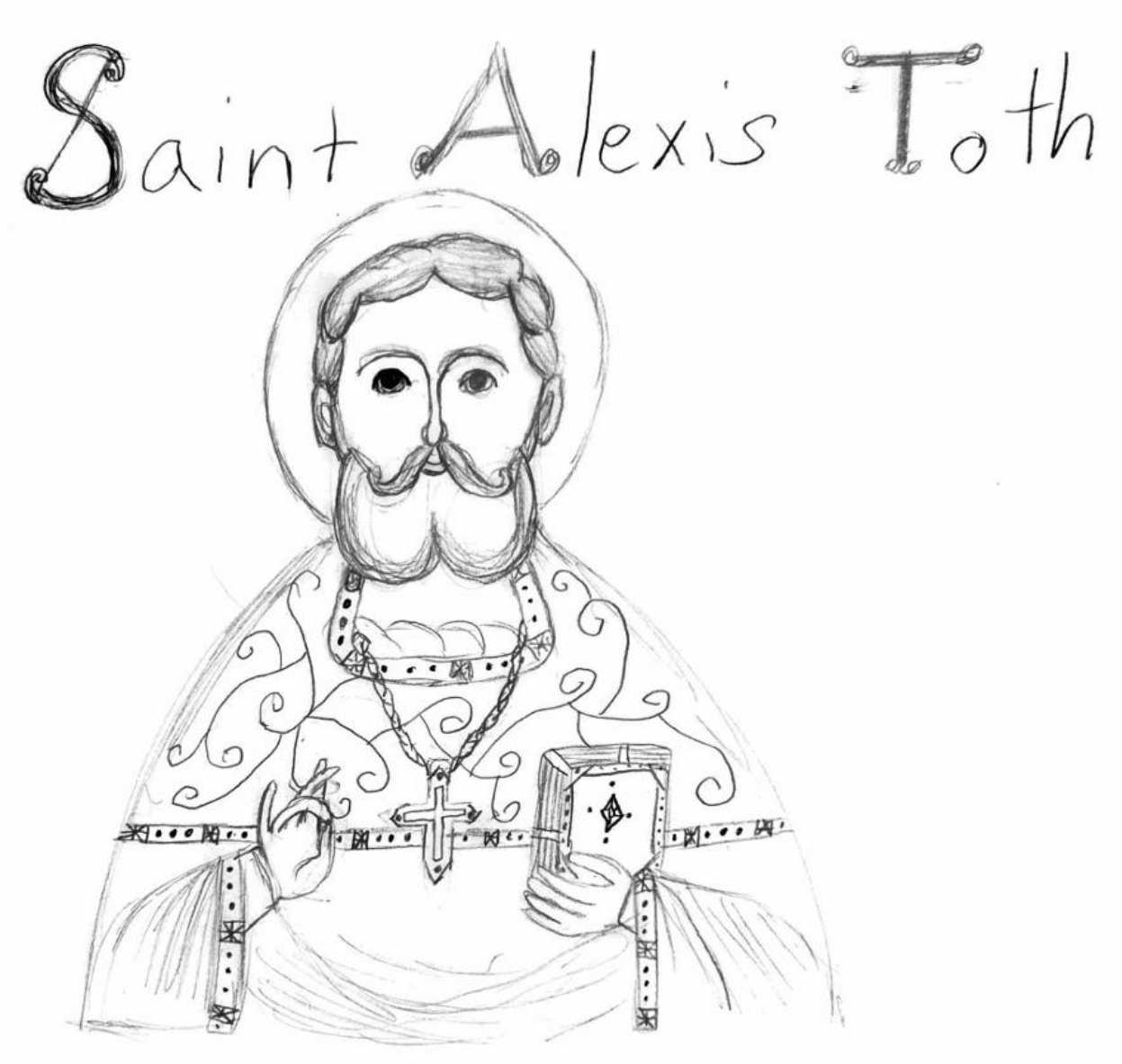
Over the centuries, many people travelled to Geel to pray at Dymphna's resting place. Christians came to honor her as a special protector of people experiencing mental illness, sadness, and emotional distress. Geel became known for welcoming and caring for people who struggled with their mental health. Saint Dymphna's story helped inspire a tradition of treating those who suffer with patience, kindness, and understanding.

Today, Saint Dymphna reminds us that courage does not depend on how old we are. Her story teaches us to stand up for what is right, to seek help when we feel unsafe, and to treat everyone with compassion. It also reminds us that people who experience difficulties with their mental health deserve love and care, never shame or unkindness.

Saint Dymphna is commemorated in the Orthodox Church on May 15.

~ Richard Coleman & Eva Walter

St. Alexis Toth
1909



Saint Alexis Toth was born in Presov, Hungary. He was an Eastern-rite Catholic, and, after his normal schooling, he went to a Greek Catholic seminary and received a degree in theology. He married Rosalie Mihalics and was ordained to the priesthood by Bishop Nicholas Toth. Following the death of his wife and child, he served in local parishes and served as a professor at the Greek Catholic seminary.

His Bishop received a petition from a church in the United States that he be sent as a priest to Minnesota. On his arrival, he found the church barely furnished and deeply in debt, and he set about fixing the situation. He fixed everything, including paying off the debt.

He paid a visit to the Catholic bishop in Minneapolis, whose name was John Ireland. John Ireland was trying to Americanize a lot of Eastern Catholic immigrants and was hostile to parishes like Alexis Toth's.

Alexis Toth later said that during the meeting, the discussion became heated, and both he and John Ireland became angry, and John Ireland refused to allow Alexis to serve as a priest. He also ordered the other parishes in the area to not have anything to do with Alexis' parish. Toth wrote letters to his bishop in Hungary asking for instructions, but never received a reply.

Eventually, he and the other Eastern Catholic priests in the area contacted the local Russian Orthodox bishop. They all became Orthodox, and Toth brought his parishioners into the Orthodox church as well. He continued to serve immigrants in Minnesota for his whole life. It is estimated that he brought over 20,000 immigrants to the Orthodox Church before his death.

He died in 1909 in Pennsylvania and has a shrine at Saint Tikhon's monastery.

~ Sophia, Daniel and John Schlueter

St. Raphael of Brooklyn
1915



Saint Raphael Hawaweeny was born in the year 1860 to Syrian parents who had fled to Beirut, Lebanon to escape persecution in their homeland. He was a smart and hard-working young man, who excelled in his studies in spite of his family's difficult circumstances.

Raphael studied for the priesthood at the Theological Academy on the Turkish island of Halki, and later moved to Russia, where he served as the Church of Antioch's representative to the Church of Moscow. Everywhere he went, Raphael mastered new languages, taught theology, and became an excellent and well-known preacher.

In 1895, Raphael moved to America as a priest, because he heard that there were many Orthodox Christians scattered throughout the land with very few churches and priests. Raphael travelled across North America from New York to San Francisco, from Canada to Mexico. Wherever he went, his mission was to find Arabic-speaking Orthodox Christians who desperately needed a priest. He served the Divine Liturgy, often in homes of the faithful. He performed baptisms and weddings, blessed homes, and heard confessions. He started new churches and recruited new priests. Many of these churches still exist today and form the backbone of our Antiochian Archdiocese! In 1904, he was consecrated bishop of Brooklyn, the first Orthodox bishop to be consecrated in America.

Bishop Raphael would later say: "*I am an Arab by birth, a Greek by primary education, an American by residence, a Russian at heart, and a Slav in soul.*"

After many long years of travel and faithful service to our Lord Jesus Christ, Bishop Raphael died on February 27, 1915. He was buried in New York but was later moved to Antiochian Village in Pennsylvania. Raphael was canonized as a saint by the Orthodox Church in America in May 2000.

Then in July 2024 – just a few years ago! – Metropolitan Saba had St. Raphael's body removed from the ground. He believed that the saint's relics should not be left underground, but in the church available to all the faithful for veneration. The problem was that when his body was moved to Pennsylvania, he was buried in a common grave with several other priests and bishops. How would we know which bones belonged to the saint? Priests and bishops are always buried in their vestments, and when they started removing the bones from the vestments in the grave, one of them began to smell like fragrant flowers! They knew it was St. Raphael, and this was confirmed when they identified his cross and other things that were buried with him.

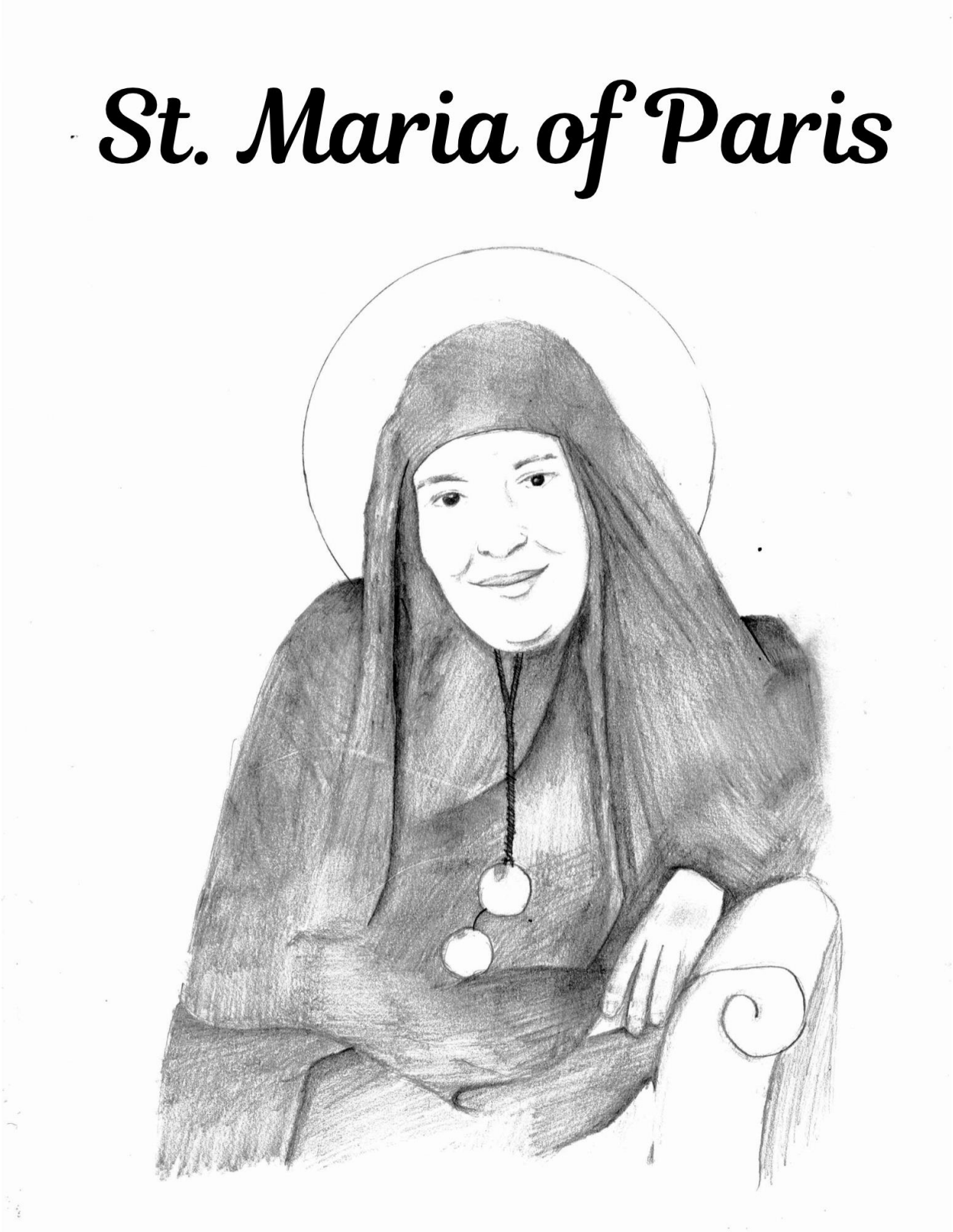
Bishop Raphael's relics now reside in the retreat center chapel at Antiochian Village. We are also blessed at All Saints to have a small fragment of one of St. Raphael's bones in our reliquary!

In the Antiochian Archdiocese, we commemorate St. Raphael on the first Saturday of November, around the time we think he was born. The Orthodox Church in America and other traditions remember him on the date of his death, February 27.

Rejoice, O Father Raphael, adornment of the Holy Church! Thou art champion of the true Faith, seeker of the lost, consolation of the oppressed, father to orphans, and friend of the poor, peacemaker and good shepherd, joy of all the Orthodox, son of Antioch, boast of America: intercede with Christ God for us and for all who honor thee.

~ Joseph and Susannah Kishler

St. Maria of Paris
1945



Saint Maria was born in Riga, Latvia in 1891. Her parents were Orthodox Christians. She had a deep love for God and His Church. But when she was fourteen, her father died. Maria lost her faith. She became an atheist (a person who does not believe in God). When she got older, she became involved with political groups and artists of the left. These people hated the Tsar (king) of Russia. They wanted a revolution in Russia

Maria soon began to notice that these people never did anything to really help the poor. All they did was talk. All this time, God kept working in her heart. Her faith in Christ began to return. She wanted to learn theology. Eventually she became the first woman to attend the Theological Academy of the Alexander Nevsky Monastery.

In the years that followed, Maria married twice, had three children, and was mayor of her hometown. She was jailed for "collaboration with the enemy" at the beginning of the Russian Revolution. Her family had to flee Russia. They settled in Paris. There were many other Russians living there who had fled the revolution. They were very poor.

Maria believed that the most important work for a Christian was a caring for other people. She began doing everything she could to help those in need. When she was in her forties, her bishop asked if she were willing to become a nun. Maria said yes, but she did not want to go to a convent. She wanted to stay in the world so she could care for others. She wanted to connect the spiritual life with works of service. Maria believed that theology and service to the poor went hand in hand. The bishop agreed and she became a nun.

Maria made a rented house her "convent". A priest named Dmitri Klepinin was their chaplain. The house was opened to refugees, the poor and the homeless. It also became a place for theological teaching and discussion. She opened numerous hostels, rest homes, schools, and camps. She worked in hospitals, helped the unemployed, and assisted the elderly. She visited the mentally ill in asylums.

When the Nazis invaded France, they began to arrest Jews and send them to concentration camps. Maria and Fr. Dmitri helped Jews escape the Nazis. Sometimes they would give Jewish people fake baptismal certificates. Once, Maria helped captive Jewish children escape by having sanitation workers sneak them out in trash cans.

Maria and Fr Dmitri were eventually arrested. Mother Maria was sent to a concentration camp. Her health rapidly deteriorated from the harsh treatment. On Good Friday of 1945, Mother Maria was executed in the gas chamber and entered eternal life. She was canonized on January 16, 2004.

~ Susan Letendre and Sofia Abraham

St. Olga of Alaska
1978



Saint Olinka “Olga” Arrsamquq Michael, known as Olga of Alaska, was born February 3, 1916 to Native American parents of the Yup’ik people in Kwethluk (kweth-lok). She was given her baptismal name, Olga, which soon became her commonly known name.

When she was nineteen she married Nicolai Michael through an arranged marriage, earning her name, “Olga Micheal”. Nicolai owned a general store and a post office but was not particularly religious. But through Olga’s prayers, he entered back into the church and soon became a priest, the first priest of Kwethluk. He later became archpriest. Olga became a matushka (meaning mother in Russian), usually used for a priest’s wife. She was known for being full of generosity, cooking and sewing for all people and giving freely. Olga and Nicolai had thirteen children, eight who lived to be adults. Her main work was as a midwife of the village, a healer using her traditional Yup’ik medicine to attend to any sick person. She became a teacher, instructing adults in learning English as their second language, and also giving counsel to many women of the village, especially those suffering abuse.

On November 8, 1979, Olga Michael died from cancer in her hometown of Kwethluk. After she died, many people told of miracles that were thought to be related to the event. Stories of birds flocking around her grave during the cold, when they should have flown south, and of the river thawing, allowing river travel to her funeral.

Later, many people told of having seen Olga in dreams and visions and of her healing them. Michael Oleksa, an Orthodox priest, spoke of a non-Christian woman telling him about how Olga had visited her in a dream and healed her from her previous abuse. She provided distinct details about her, which matched typical Yup’ik traditions, even though she knew nothing about Alaska prior to that. That woman eventually converted to Orthodoxy, after having her eyes opened by Olga.

St. Olga was glorified in 2025, becoming the first female saint canonized in North America. Her feast day is now commemorated on October 27th.

~ Alam & Ania Obah

Find the Saints

There are 7 saints nominated in this story booklet. You can find their names in the grid below. Names can go down, across, and in two diagonals, both forwards and backwards.

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MONICA
THEODORA
DYMPHNA
ALEXIS
RAPHAEL
MARIA
OLGA



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