



# Sts. Peter & Paul Boulder

## Weekly Bulletin Week of July 8th, 2018



*St. Prokopios*



### Contact Info

**Sts. Peter & Paul  
Greek Orthodox Church**  
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Boulder, CO 80301  
Office: 303-581-1434  
[www.stspeterandpaulboulder.org](http://www.stspeterandpaulboulder.org)  
Rev. Fr. Jordan Brown

### Recurring Services

**Orthros**  
Sunday @ 8:30 am  
**Divine Liturgy**  
Sunday @ 9:30 am  
**Great Vespers**  
Saturday @ 5 pm  
**Confession by appt.**

### Service Schedule & Parish Activities

Saturday, July 14

Great Vespers

5 pm

### Welcome to Our Parish!

The mission of Sts. Peter & Paul is to be a beacon of Orthodox Christian spirituality in the greater Boulder area. We strive together to live our Orthodox Christian Faith by having a devoted prayer life, through fasting and almsgiving, and through regular participation in the services and sacraments of the Holy Orthodox Church.

### Hosts & Volunteers

Ushers

Dion & Kiki Cheronis

### Have an Announcement?

Please contact Aaron Wall:  
[awall609@yahoo.com](mailto:awall609@yahoo.com);  
(720) 400-6579  
Deadline is every Wed. before Divine Liturgy.

# Saint Prokopios the Great Martyr as a Model for our Lives

By Protopresbyter Fr. George Papavarnavas

At the dismissal of the Marriage Service, our Church has appointed the commemoration of the name of the Holy Great Martyr Prokopios, because it wants the newly-married couple to have the blessing of the Saint at the beginning of their common journey in life and to prosper. The name Prokopios was given to him to prosper [*prokoposi* means to prosper or thrive]. And indeed it was given to him from Christ while the Saint was in prison due to his public confession that he was a Christian and his refusal to make a sacrificial offering to idols. Saint Nikodemos the Hagiorite says that Christ loosed him from shackles and named him Prokopios in order for him to thrive in his martyrdom.

Neanias, which was his pagan name, lived in early Christian times during the time when the emperor of Rome was the great persecutor of Christians, Diocletian. His father was a Christian and mother was a pagan. At that time this was not uncommon, for one spouse to be a Christian and another a pagan. During the course of their marriage it happened that one of the spouses would embrace the true faith and then be baptized and become a member of the Church.

The father of the Saint, as it appears in the synaxaria, did not find the opportunity to speak to him about Christ and baptism and make him a member of the Church, because he died when his son was a newborn. Thus Neanias was raised by his mother who, as we said above, was a pagan and even a fanatic, as we shall see.

His mother, of course, loved him and cared for his professional situation. She paid a lot of money to the emperor and his court, with the result that he was appointed Duke of Alexandria.

With the guidance of his mother he became a fanatical pagan, and he furiously persecuted Christians. Once he journeyed to Jerusalem for the purpose of persecuting Christians and something happened to him that happened to the Apostle Paul. He heard Christ asking him why he is persecuting Him, and then he saw a crystal cross in the sky. Like the Apostle Paul, he also believed in Christ and from a persecutor of Christians he became a preacher of the Gospel.

His conversion resulted in a change in his way of life. From a fanatical persecutor of Christians he became their protector. He ceased offering sacrifices to lifeless idols and this, naturally, did not take long to reach the attention of the Emperor. The victory of Saint Prokopios against the Saracens, who were ravaging the outskirts of the city he commanded, resulted in the encouragement of his mother to have him thank the false gods of the idols by offering them sacrifices. He, of course, refused to do this saying that he conquered by the power of Christ. She made a complaint against him and this caused him to be captured and tortured harshly. It is clearly seen where blind fanaticism will lead a person, since the one who gave birth to him and raised him sent him to certain death.

The reaction of Saint Prokopios to the behavior of his mother was as expected. He avenged her... with love. She led him to death and he gave her immortality. His true love, the power of his prayer and the miracles he performed with the power of Christ, made her change her mind and boldly confess her faith in Christ and to seal her confession with blood. She is ranked in the catalogue of holy martyrs as Saint Theodosia and celebrates on the same day as her son.

Saint Prokopios truly prospered in his life. For his great love and divine zeal to live the Gospel in his personal life, but also to pass it on to others, he received as a gift from God the gift of spiritual courage. When he understood, after the revelation from Christ, what great of a sin he committed, out of ignorance of course, he did not lose hope, but sincerely repented and turned to God asking Him to forgive him and have mercy. He showed real courage before the great temptations and the harsh torments to which he was subjected, without bending nor even flinching in the least.

"There are many people nowadays who are preoccupied with hopelessness when they fall into a temptation or when they commit a great sin. On the one hand they see their condition or their weakness and on the other they see the heights of the spiritual life and are frustrated. They fall into despair. Despair is linked with acedia. This is precisely where spiritual courage is needed... A courage of the soul in which even if a person sins, and even when they feel or experience a darkening of the mind, and even when they worship the devil, which is considered the greatest sin, even then they do not despair, but they turn to God and ask forgiveness, certain that God will have mercy on them... It should be noted that it is possible to have courage from hypocrisy or material interest. But true spiritual courage proceeds from within, it is the result of a pure heart. It is not from a strong character, from a strong personality, from a thorough education, but from a heart regenerated by the grace of God" (Metr. Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, *The Constitution of the Cross*, pp. 169-171).

Today also there are many temptations and there are great difficulties when trying to live an authentic spiritual life. This is why we need the blessings and prayers of Saint Prokopios, in order to obtain a courageous spirit. Then we can overcome the obstacles and difficulties and prosper in our lives.

# Saint Michael Paknanas the Gardener from Athens (+ 1771)

By John Sanidopoulos

Michael Paknanas (or Baknanas) was born to very poor but pious and faithful parents in the famous city of Athens, Greece in 1753 near Thisseio. Consequently, he did not go to school but learned gardening instead. A devout Orthodox Christian, Michael was a parishioner at the church of Panagia Vlassarou, which today is in ruins in Ancient Agora near Thisseio. During the harvest season Michael would load his donkey with products and peddle them in the villages surrounding the city of Athens.

One day when he was eighteen years old, as he was returning from such a journey in the villages of Attica with his donkey, he was seized by some Muslims and accused falsely of transporting gunpowder to some rebel Greeks (klefts) who had become allies of the Russians. [This occurred during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1768-1774.] The Muslims beat him up and brought him before the kadi who had him put in jail. There, he was visited by other Muslims who threatened Michael and attempted to convert him to the Islamic faith.

A pious and zealous Christian named George, who found out about Michael, was able to visit him in prison and give him much needed support, for Michael was a rather simple and uneducated individual. George feared that Michael may deny his Orthodox faith, seeking to spare his life since he was only 18 years old. After bribing the guards, George saw Michael in his prison cell on his knees praying with tears. For many hours they stayed together and prayed and sang hymns. After giving the young Michael words of encouragement to make firm his faith for martyrdom, they embraced and he departed.

After thirty days of incarceration, he was returned to the kadi who began to flatter Michael and promised not only to spare his life, but to reward Michael with all kinds of good things if only he would consent and embrace Islam. Michael, however, refused saying: "I will not become a Muslim! I will not become a Turk!" (Δεν τουρκεύω!). Consequently he was sent to the so-called kalopasha (good pasha) from Ioannina to decide on his fate. Then the same thing occurred: the same threats and promises, but also the same refusal from Michael, who, though simple, was mighty in faith: "I will not become a Muslim! I will not become a Turk!" As a result, Michael was sentenced to death.

On the way to his execution, Michael asked forgiveness from all the Orthodox Christians he encountered. The site of his execution was to be the Temple of Olympian Zeus. At the site of his execution Michael knelt and bent his head, being tied to one of the pillars of the Temple. The executioner, to frighten and cause him to weaken at the last minute, hit him with the blunt edge of the sword asking the martyr to reconsider. The martyr responded: "I told you, I am a Christian. I refuse to become a Muslim." It is said that this was done a few times to induce fear in Michael. But Michael, full of the Holy Spirit, shouted with courage: "Strike for the Faith!" (Χτύπα για την πίστη!) This outburst infuriated the executioner who struck off Michael's head with one fatal swing of the sword.

Thus Michael the Gardener from Athens, Greece gave his life for the love of Jesus Christ in Athens on July 9, 1771

# Events & Announcements

## **Women's Retreat, August 9 & 10**

We are planning a Women's Retreat to the Holy Protection Monastery during the Dormition Fast, Friday, August 9 thru Saturday, August 10. We will be staying at the Monastery Friday night. The monastery is about an hour from Colorado Springs. Mother Cassiana is the Gerontissa serving the Monastery, and will be offering spiritual reflections during the retreat. Space is limited. Please contact Dana Gall to sign up.

## **Sunday School Teachers & Parent Retreat**

**New date: Saturday, September 22, 9 am - 12 noon**

One of the most important and vital church ministries is ministering to our youth. On Saturday, September 22, Sts Peter Paul will host a morning retreat for Sunday School Teachers, Youth Worker and Parents. If you have a calling to serve the youth, please visit with either Father Jordan or Bruce Geerdes, Sunday School Director. There will be a special event in the evening, Saturday, September 22, for all parents and their children. We have a special speaker who will be leading the retreat.

## **Altar Boy Mountain Retreat**

Mark your calendars for a special overnight mountain retreat for the young men of our parish. Father Jordan, and a few dads, will be taking the altar boys for an overnight retreat located at Hot Sulphur Springs. We are planning a great weekend. August 24- 25.

## **Rocky Mountain Orthodox Youth Camp - July 25 - 28**

Where: Camp Buckhorn (near Ft Collins in the mountains)

Registration Material is available in the parish hall or visit with Dena Tinsley.

Scholarships are available (please contact Father Jordan).

## **15th Annual Sts Peter Paul Greek Festival, September 7 - 9, 2018**

Planning is underway for our 15th annual festival. If you would like to be involved in the planning, please contact Nicole Tsiouvaras, [tsiouvaras@msn.com](mailto:tsiouvaras@msn.com) or Nick Karis, [nickandsandy77@gmail.com](mailto:nickandsandy77@gmail.com)

## **Help Promote This Year's ToO on Facebook!**

Visit our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/TasteofOrthodoxy> and click on the "Like", "Follow", and "Recommend" buttons below the cover photo. Rate the event by clicking "Review" in the left-hand column. Post photos from past years and "tag" your family and friends! As the event approaches, we will be posting reminders that you should also like and share with friends.

## **Young Adult Conference**

The Metropolis of Denver will host the 2018 Young Adult Conference, Labor Day Weekend, August 31 - September 3. The Conference will take place in Salt Lake City. All Orthodox Young Adults from across the nation, ages 19-35, are invited to attend. REGISTER NOW AT [metofdenveryaconf.org](http://metofdenveryaconf.org). Questions, [MetofDenverYA@gmail.com](mailto:MetofDenverYA@gmail.com).