

Parish Prayer List (Living)

Metropolitan Nicholas	Sharon	Bob	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Joretta
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Kristi
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Andrea & Kirby
Nanette	Michael	Tatiana	Rachael
Michael	Helen	Susan K	

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Francis Dreyer (+2/1)	Mary Louise Blomeley (+12/10)
Josephine Urban (+12/15)	Kristi Cornwell

Thoughts from the Fathers

What am I after when I judge my brother? As long as I do not see him as the Lord sees him, all my judgments will be wrong. Begin rather by prayer for him, by the idea of being obedient, of not judging your brethren. Begin by the desire to serve others with love, like (St.) Silouan, who, on feast days, was grateful to be allowed to serve hundreds of monks in the refectory. He was so happy to see how much Christ loved these people, these children of God. He served them with much love. Everyday tasks, accomplished in such a spirit, can become an extremely pleasant spiritual food. Because of such an attitude of service, in the evening your heart will be very tender, and you will weep before God over your own defects, your own lack of love.

Archimandrite Sophrony, +1993

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There are many manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes [He] is manifested as a breeze and thunder, sometimes as a tongue of flame. Here [at the Lord Jesus' Baptism] He is manifested 'like a dove.' It was not a dove, but it seemed like, [and] had the form of a dove. And this is connected with the fact that the Holy Spirit is not created, but uncreated like all the Persons of the Holy Trinity. The manifestation of the Holy Spirit 'like a dove' reminds us of Noah's flood. At that time, the dove which Noah sent out of the Ark returned with an olive branch in its beak and reported the end of the flood. The Holy Spirit 'like a dove' at the moment of Christ's Baptism indicates release from the flood of sin. It did not have an olive branch in its beak, but it suggested the oil of God's mercy, which is Christ, the beloved Son of the Father.

Metropolitan Hierotheos of Nafpaktos, "The Divine Theophany," The Feasts of the Lord, Esther Williams (tr), p. 109.

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Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Nina, Enlightener of Gruzia (Georgia) (Commemorated January 14), was born in about the year 280 in the city of Kolastra in Cappadocia, where many of the Gruzian people had gathered. Her father Zabulon happened to be a kinsman to the holy GreatMartyr George (23 April). He was descended of illustrious lineage and of pious parentage, and he stood in good favour with the emperor, Maximian (284-305). Zabulon, a Christian, served in the military under the emperor, and he took part in the setting free of Christian captives from Gaul (modern France). Saint Nina's mother, Susanna, was a sister of the Jerusalem Patriarch, Juvenalios.

At twelve years of age Saint Nina went to Jerusalem together with her parents. By their mutual consent and with the blessing of the Jerusalem Patriarch, Zabulon devoted his life to the service of God at the Jordan, and Susanna was made deaconness in the church of the Sepulchre of the Lord. The upbringing of Saint Nina was entrusted to the pious woman-elder, Nianphora. Saint Nina displayed diligence and obedience over the space of two years: with the help of the grace of God, she got into the firm habit of fulfilling the rule of faith and she read the Holy Scripture zealously.

One time, while in tears reliving the experience of the Gospel passages describing the Crucifixion of Christ the Saviour, the thought would not leave her mind over the fate of the Tunic of the Lord (Jn. 19: 23-24). To the questioning of Saint Nina as to where the Tunic of the Lord had gone, the woman-elder Nianphora declared that the undecayed Tunic of the Lord, by tradition, had been carried off by the Mtskheta rabbi Eleazar and taken with him back to a place named Iveria (Georgia), and called the Appanage (i.e. the "allotted portion") of the Mother of God. The All-Pure Virgin Herself during Her earthly lifetime had received the Apostolic allotment for the enlightening of Georgia, but an Angel of the Lord in appearing to Her foretold, that Georgia would become Her earthly appanage only afterwards upon Her Repose, and that the Providence of God had prepared for Her Apostolic service too at Athos (likewise called the Appanage of the Mother of God).

And learning further from the woman-elder Nianphora, that Georgia had not then yet been enlightened by the light of Christianity, Saint Nina both day and night in prayer besought the Theotokos, that She might grant her to see Georgia converted to Christ, and indeed too might enable her to find the Tunic of the Lord.

The Queen of Heaven heard the prayer of the young righteous one. One time, when Saint Nina was taking rest after long prayer, the All-Pure Virgin appeared to her in a dream, and entrusting her a cross plaited together of vineyard sprigs, She said: "Take thou this cross, for it wilt be for thee a shield and protection against all enemies both visible and invisible. Go thou to the land of Iveria, proclaim there the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ and spread forth His grace: and I wilt be thine Protectress".

Awakening, Saint Nina saw in her hand the cross (now preserved in a special reliquary in the Tbilisi cathedral). Rejoicing in spirit, she went

to her uncle, the Patriarch, and told him about her vision. The Patriarch thereupon blessed the young virgin in her deed of Apostolic service.

On the way to Georgia, Saint Nina in miraculous manner escaped a martyr's death under the Armenian emperor Tiridates, which however befell her companions. Bolstered in spirit by visions of an Angel of the Lord, appearing the first time holding a censer, and the second time a scroll in hand, Saint Nina continued on her way and appeared in Georgia in the year 319. News about her soon spread through the surroundings of Mtskheta, where she lived an ascetic life, with numerous signs accompanying her preaching. Thus on the feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord, during the time of a pagan sacrificial offering made by pagan priests in the presence of the emperor Mirian and a multitude of the people, through the prayers of St. Nina were toppled down from an high mountain the idols -- Armaz, Gatsi and Gaim. This apparition was accompanied by a strong storm.

Having entered Mtskheta, the ancient capital of Georgia, St. Nina found shelter in the household of a childless imperial official, the wife of whom, Anastasia, was delivered from her infertility through the prayers of St. Nina, and she came to believe in Christ.

St. Nina healed from grievous infirmity the Georgian empress Nana, who upon accepting holy Baptism, ceased with her idol-worship and became instead a zealous Christian (Comm. 1 October). In spite of the miraculous healing of his wife, the emperor Mirian (265-342), in heeding the complaints of the pagans prepared tortures for St. Nina. "At that very moment, when they did contrive execution for the holy righteous one, the sun darkened and an impenetrable mist covered the place where the emperor was". The emperor suddenly fell blind, and seized by terror his retainers began to beseech their pagan idols for a return of the light of day. The false gods were deaf, and the darkness did intensify. Then with one voice the terrified cried out to God, Whom Nina did preach. Instantly the darkness dissipated, and the sun shone in all its radiance". This event occurred on 6 May in the year 319.

Emperor Mirian, healed from his blindness by St. Nina, accepted holy Baptism together with all his retainers. Over the course of several years, by 324 Christianity had ultimately consolidated itself in Georgia.

The chronicles relate, that through her prayers it was revealed to Saint Nina, where the Tunic of the Lord was hid. At this place was built the first Christian temple in Georgia (at first a wooden church, but now the stone cathedral, in honour of the Twelve Holy Apostles, the "Svetitskhoveli").

During this period at the request of the emperor Mirian, with the assistance of the Byzantine emperor St. Constantine (306-337), there was dispatched to Georgia the Antioch bishop Eustathios, with two priests and three deacons. Christianity took an definite hold upon the land. The mountain regions of Georgia however remained without enlightenment. In the company of the Priest James and one of the deacons, St. Nina set off to the upper regions of the Aragva and Iori Rivers, where she preached the

Gospel to the pagan hill-people. Many of them came to believe in Christ and accepted holy Baptism. From thence Saint Nina proceeded to Kakhetia (Eastern Georgia) and settled in the village of Bodbe, in a small tent aside a mountain. Here she led an ascetic life, dwelling in constant prayer, and converting to Christ the surrounding inhabitants. Amidst all these was the empress of Kakhetia, named Sodzha (Sophia), who accepted Baptism with all her court and a multitude of the people.

Having completed her Apostolic service in Georgia, St. Nina was divinely told of her impending end. In a letter to the emperor Mirian, she requested him to send bishop John, so that he might prepare her for her final journey. But it was not only bishop John that came, but also the emperor together with all the clergy set off to Bodbe, where at the deathbed of St. Nina were occurrences of many an healing. For the edification of the people that had come, and at the request of her students, St. Nina told about her origin and life. This narration, written down by Solomia of Udzharm, has served as the basis of the Vita of Saint Nina.

Reverently having communed the Holy Mysteries, St. Nina gave final instructions that her body be buried at Bodbe, and then she peacefully reposed On January 14, 335.

The emperor, together with the clergy and the people -- grieving over the death of St. Nina, wanted to transfer her remains to the Mtskheta cathedral church, but they were not able to remove the coffin of the ascetic from her chosen place of rest. And on this place in the year 342 emperor Mirian started with the foundations, and his son the emperor Bakur (342-364) completed and dedicated the church in the name of Saint Nina's kinsman, the holy GreatMartyr George. Later on at this place was founded a women's monastery in the name of St. Nina. The relics of the saint, at her command concealed beneath a crypt, were glorified by many miracles and healings. The Georgian Orthodox Church designated St. Nina the Enlightener of Georgia as in rank Equal-to-the-Apostles.

