

Powered by



BYZ*KIDS
byzi kids

<https://www.byzimom.com/>



Sponsored by

**GOD
WITH US**

<https://godwithusonline.org/>

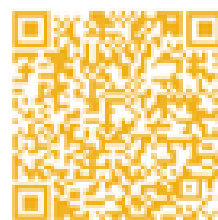


BYZ*KIDS

February 2025

BIRDS

Learn, play, and grow in faith as we journey toward Great Lent!
Explore Birds in the Bible and learn about St. Tryphon through games, coloring, and music!



Scan the QR code to see the links for the activities

February Activities Calendar

This month is filled with so many fun and interesting things to do!
Visit the Activities Index on the ByziKids page at [ByziMom.com](https://www.byzimom.com/byzikids-magazine-extras) for all the links!
<https://www.byzimom.com/byzikids-magazine-extras>

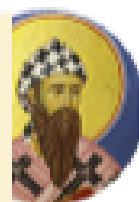
February 1

- Make a Birdfeeder in honor of St. Tryphon, and make your own Flying Falcon!



February 14

- St. Cyril, Teacher of the Slavs, Brush up on your Cyrillic alphabet and get the coloring page!



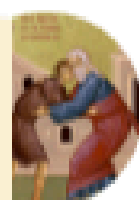
February 2

- Encounter with Simeon: Get the Coloring Page
- Sunday of Zacchaeus!
- Get the Zacchaeus Tree Potted Plant Craft, Maze, & Coloring page
- Whip up the Zacchaeus Tree Cinnamon Roll for Coffee Hour and learn the hymn!
- It's time to print our Countdown to Great Lent 2025 Calendar too!



February 16

- Sunday of the Prodigal Son Study the St. Ephrem Prayer and Prostration lesson



February 17

- Read the story of St Theodore the Recruit
- We have his coloring page!



February 5

- Commemoration of St. Agatha of Sicily.
- Whip up a batch of St. Agatha's Volcanic Chocolate Lava Bark



February 22

- First All Souls Saturday



February 6

- Remember the story of St Dorothy by baking our special Baked Apple Roses!



February 23

- Sunday of Meatfare: The Gospel of the Last Judgment
- Read about the Ways to be a Sheep
- Get the Pantocrator Icon Coloring Page and the Pantocrator Explained printables
- Take a final treat to Coffee Hour with our Meatfare Sunday Sheep Cupcakes



February 9

- We commemorate the REAL tooth fairy! Take care of your teeth with St. Apollonia's Tooth Polish
- Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee!
- Don't forget, this is a *FAST FREE WEEK*
- Try our Publican & Pharisee Cookies if you dare!
- Then pray the Jesus Prayer with our chotki craft



February 24

- 1st & 2nd Finding of the Head of John the Baptist



CHOIR PRACTICE



By Sylvia Dorham

The Bird

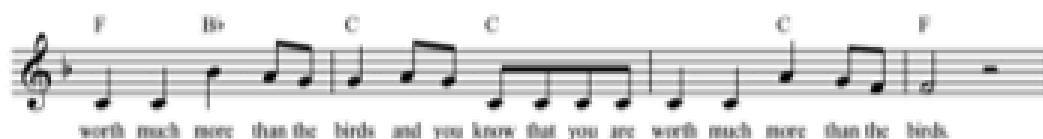
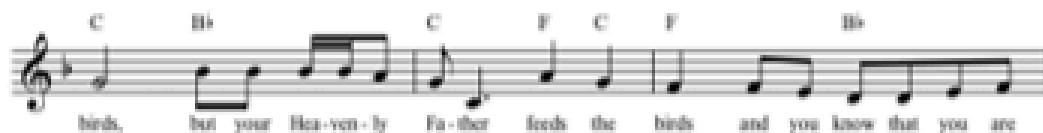
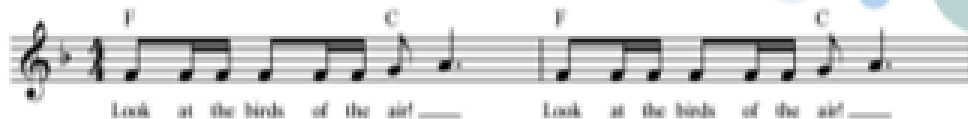
Look at the birds in the air
Look at the birds in the air

They don't plant
Harvest,
Or store food in barns

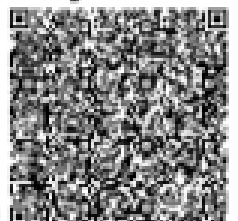
But your heavenly Father
Feeds the birds
But your heavenly Father
Feeds the birds

And you know that you are worth
Much more than the birds
And you know that you are worth
Much more than the birds

Look at the birds in the air
Look at the birds in the air



All Rights Reserved



Scan
To
Listen

KNOW YOUR FAITH

By Lynne Wardak

In Thanksgiving for The Gift of the Eagle

Have you ever traveled somewhere by plane and have been fortunate enough to secure a seat by the window? If you aren't afraid of heights, you'll see the stunning birds-eye view from up there. While you may not be able to see each individual blade of grass, or even each individual person as we can from our usual vantage point on the ground, you can see the landscape as a whole and gain a new perspective and appreciation for the breathtaking beauty of God's creation. It is for the contemplation of this enormous ariel perspective, and several other reasons, that I believe God created the birds of the air.



The eagle, for example, has the enviable ability to see details at 20 yards away that we humans can only observe at 5 yards distance. He can see colors more vividly, even ultraviolet colors, and has a wider peripheral view than we human beings, so he can spot nourishment from way up high and dive with perfect precision to gather it up. God created the Eagle with such a gift to help us understand the abilities of such great minds as St. John the Evangelist and Theologian, who saw visions from God about His heavenly kingdom that others had never seen before while he was in exile on the Island of Patmos. He detailed these visions for us in his Book of Revelation in Holy Scripture, causing us to know and accept that there are many things that we can not know in our present human condition.

Be that as it may, scripture tells us that we shouldn't be content to sit comfortably in our present understanding of God, but like the eagle, we ought to strive to soar higher and higher toward an understanding of heavenly things, understanding that this is a gradual process.



2 Peter 3:18 - But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

While eagles are lucky enough to be born with such magnificent vision, humans must train to see clearly and discern the reality of God's will. How do we do so? With constant striving and practice.



1 Timothy 4:15 - Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress.

Baby eaglets don't just strike out on their own to learn about the great big world but remain in their nests, snuggled securely beneath the loving protection of their parents. Until they are a bit older, eaglets can't thermoregulate, meaning they can't adapt to changing temperatures independently. We all know that our surroundings may go from perfectly comfortable to frigid in a short period of time. As fledglings in the faith, we might also find ourselves in a heated spiritual conversation that is too uncomfortable to navigate without proper formation. Like the baby eagles, we should keep ourselves under the safe guidance of the rightful authority of the Church until we have "earned our wings."

Until they are about twelve weeks of age, baby eaglets don't venture even to try to leave the nest on their own. They don't flap their little wings until they are 10 days old. Like the eaglets, St. Paul tells us that we must not jump too quickly into lofty spiritual understandings before we learn the basics. Faith is something we need to grow into by seeking out good teachers in the faith, surrounding ourselves with the protection of the authority of the Church, and growing in holiness slowly and carefully, one step at a time. This process requires patience and perseverance, but it's the key to a strong and mature faith.

Hebrews 5:12-14 - For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God. You need milk, not solid food, for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness since he is a child. But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.

Even once the little eagles learn to fly, their first few attempts are less than graceful, and they are always supervised by at least one of their parents, just in case the little one needs help.

Proverbs 11:14 Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety.

This guidance is not a sign of weakness, but a source of strength and support. Those of us who seek spiritual wisdom should happily accept the guidance of those more advanced, while those who have gained spiritual insights should look out for those weaker in faith!

We note that when the bishop comes to visit, he stands upon a rug with the image of an eagle upon it, flying over a city. The city represents our eparchy, and the eagle stands for the bishop, and his authority to act as that counselor and source of vision over that eparchy.

We thank God for the gift of the majestic eagle, a symbol of striving for new heights and perfect vision and for those to whom God has granted it.

Once Upon a

SAINT

by Rebecca O'Loughlin



My dearest children, on February 15th this year we celebrate the Armenian feast of St. Sarkis. He was born in Greece, and joined the Roman army under St. Constantine. Sarkis was a popular captain. He was young and handsome, but best of all, he was a devout Christian and kind to everyone. He would regularly ask God for guidance, and was as quick as a bird to do whatever he thought God was asking him to do.

After one battle near Persia, the defeated local ruler (who we will call Adhur) invited Captain Sarkis and his officers to a celebratory feast.

"Come, feast with us tonight! Let us quarrel no more!" Adhur seemed eager to please.

"Let us go!" Advised Captain Sarkis' officers, "it will show we are no longer enemies, and that we have good will toward these people."

So they went. They were treated to all sorts of delicious foods and wonderful drinks. After the feast the officers retired to a palace room and fell asleep (they were used to sleeping on the hard ground, and didn't need beds).

Adhur rubbed his hands with glee. He called an assassin to his presence. Her name was Ziba (or "beautiful" in Persian).

"It is time to kill those Christians who have conquered us! Get to it, you and your fellow assassins!"

You see, Adhur had chosen a group of warrior women for their incredible ability to sneak into a room without a sound. They were to kill Sarkis and his officers, and so the Roman army would soon find themselves without leaders and be easily defeated.

The women slipped into the room full of sleeping men without a sound. Ziba snuck up to Sarkis' side. She raised her curved knife, the blade glinting in the moonlight that streamed through the window.

She paused. In Sarkis' face she saw beauty. Not just worldly beauty, but the heavenly glow of holiness. She bent over his face and gently kissed his lips.

Sarkis' eyes popped open. In an instant he took in the scene and knew what was happening. He sounded the alarm, and after killing Adhur, threw Ziba on his brilliant white horse and rode away. As they left, an unusual snowstorm covered the palace and kept the Persian military from following.

Sarkis and Ziba married and had a son, who they named Mardiros, which means "witness." Ziba died before her son reached manhood, but not before becoming a devout and joyful follower of Christ. Sarkis never married again.

Sarkis spread the Christian faith wherever he went.

Emperor Constantine died, and he was replaced by his nephew, the wicked Emperor Julian the Apostate. Christians were persecuted under his command. Sarkis prayed. In a vision he saw Jesus.

Jesus raised His hand in blessing: "You must leave, Sarkis. I have a plan for you."

Sarkis never hesitated, but left immediately. He brought with him his son, and friends who had served in the military with him. King Tiran (Tigranes VII) of Armenia welcomed them. Sarkis and his companions taught about Christ and His love for them to whomever would listen, and converted hundreds to Christ.

Meanwhile, Emperor Julian kept traveling until he reached the outskirts of Armenia. King Tiran begged Sarkis to leave, so Sarkis became general of the army of the Sassanid Emperor named Shapur.

Soon Sarkis and his army went up against Emperor Julian's forces in Persia as well. Sarkis' army was small in number and quite terrified.

"We will die today!" The Persian soldiers said.

"No, we will put our trust in God, and we will not be conquered," General Sarkis replied, "but even if we were to die today, I trust in God's Will. Death is not the end. I will see my beautiful wife in heaven when I die, and there will only be peace and joy, not war."

His men were impressed with these words.

"Make us Christian!" They replied, "if we die, we want to go to heaven too!"

So they became Christian and they fought a miraculous battle, successfully pushing back the Roman army.

Some of the Sassanians were jealous, and they went to Emperor Shapur.

"Emperor," they said, "that General Sarkis you put in charge of your armies is a Christian. That means that he believes his real king is Jesus, not you. He worships only one God, who Sarkis says is more powerful than all the other gods."

Emperor Shapur frowned. "Is this true? Let us hold a feast in honor of our own two mighty gods. Then we will see for ourselves where General Sarkis' loyalties lie."

The day of the feast arrived. The Persian Sassanians believed in two gods, one good and one evil. They worshiped them both and believed that both good and evil was necessary for balance in the world. They

believed fire was the manifestation for the good god, so there was a large bowl ready to be lit from the fire from their eternal flame.

"Sarkis!" Emperor Shapur gestured with a smile, "please have the honor of lighting the fire to our god as a celebration of your victories against the Roman armies and Emperor Julian."

"I cannot," Sarkis replied, "I worship the one true God. This god of fire is not real."

Shapur's face turned red with anger. "So it is true! You are a Christian!!! Cursed be the Christian God!"

"No, cursed be this fake idol you have set up!" Sarkis ran over to the eternal flame stand, and even though it was as heavy as an elephant, he pushed it over. The flame went out.

Shapur was furious. He killed Sarkis, his son and his companions. Sarkis' body shone with light and there were angels at his death, so that many people followed Christ.

After Sarkis died he went straight to Heaven. His beautiful wife Ziba was waiting for him. She hugged him and told him she was very proud of him for remaining loyal to the true God, even though it can be frightening to be a martyr.

Do you remember how Sarkis met his wife, that she came to him in the night? In Armenia there are a variety of traditions surrounding his feast. I will name two. The first is that the three days prior to St. Sarkis Day, the people fast. Then in the evening before the feast, single men and women eat Aghablit, which is a salty bread, and ask St. Sarkis to show them their future spouse. The Aghablit is so salty that the person who eats it will be thirsty in their sleep, so the idea is that whoever they see bringing water to them in their dreams is their beloved to be. Of course this isn't really true, although it might just so happen to be true every once in a while.

Another tradition is to feed birds on this day. One of St. Sarkis' titles is "Arakahas" which means, "one who arrives quickly." He is said to answer prayers very fast, just as he always responded to God's wishes immediately.

People pray for their future spouses while feeding the birds on this day. The birds fly away and carry the peoples' prayer to St. Sarkis, who in turn presents the prayers to God.

St Sarkis feast changes every year. The next few St. Sarkis Days will be on January 31, 2026; January 23, 2027; February 12, 2028; January 27, 2029; February 16, 2030.

I SPY IN MY LITTLE ICON



By Kim Fritzes



St Tryphon

Our icon this month is of St Tryphon of Campsada. You may find icons identifying him as Trypho, Trifon, or Triphon. Tryphon comes from the Greek word *tryphe* which means softness or delicacy. He is venerated as a holy martyr and holy unmercenary. A holy unmercenary is a saint who would not accept payment for prayers or good works they did. He was born in the third century in Campsada, Phrygia which is now Turkey. From a young age Tryphon was able to cast out demons, heal animals, and cure diseases all through the grace of God.

In our icon we see Tryphon holding a bird with various birds around him. He seems to be a young man in his 30s with a beard. Tryphon is typically holding a bird, usually a falcon, or holding a cross and a scythe. A scythe is a sharp hand tool that was used for harvesting grains. Often Tryphon wearing a red cape will be on a white horse with a falcon on his shoulder or on his hand.

This iconography is from a dream that the Tsar's falconer, Tryphon Patrykiev had when he lost one of the tsar's

falcons. He hunted for three days to find the falcon, after praying to St. Tryphon, who was his patron saint for help, fell asleep and having his dream of St Tryphon on the white horse with the falcon, he woke to find the missing falcon perched in a tree. He is a patron saint of birds and also one of the patron saints of Moscow, Russia.

He is shown with the scythe in some icons based on his saving the grain fields from a plague of locusts in a village. As a result, he is a patron saint of gardeners and winegrowers. He is sought out in prayer to prevent rodents and locust infestations.

St Tryphon suffered a martyr's death in the year 250 in Nicea under the persecution of the emperor Decius. Tryphon was arrested, interrogated, and tortured, while confessing his faith. He was beheaded.

Tryphon's feast day is celebrated on February 1 and February 14 on the old calendar.

TROPARION TONE 4

Your holy martyr Tryphon, O Lord,

through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God.

For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries,
and shattered the powerless boldness of demons,

Through his intercessions, save our souls!

KONTAKION TONE 8

By the power of the Trinity you destroyed polytheism to the ends of the earth,

and you were honored by Christ, all-glorious Tryphon;

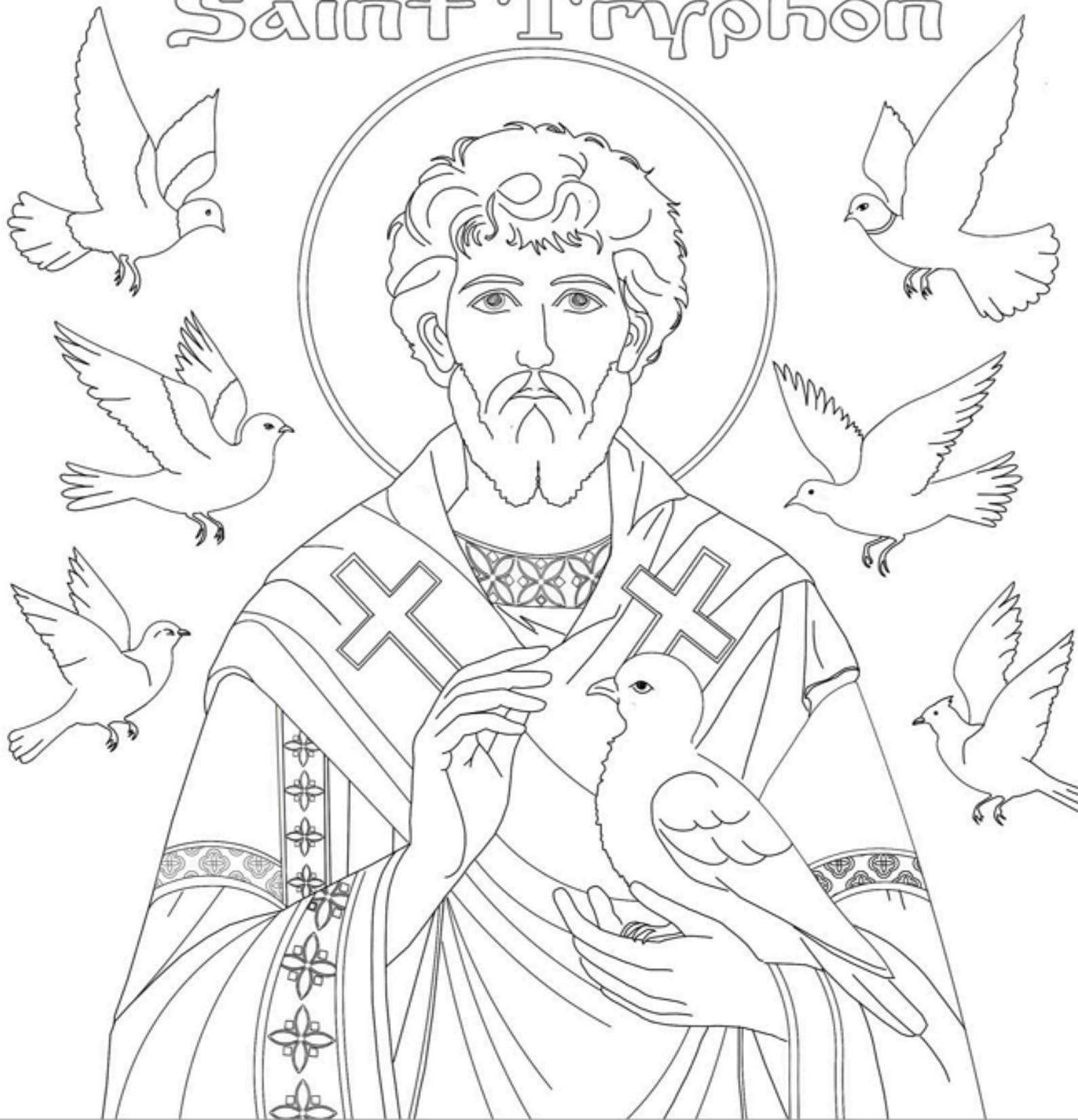
having conquered tyrants through Christ the Saviour,

you received your crown of martyrdom and the gift of divine healing, for you are invincible.

Special thanks to Ikonen-Mautner for the permission to use the icon of St Tryphon. My apologies for the very top being cut off, they links were both short.



Saint Tryphon



MEANWHILE, BACK IN BYZANTIUM

by Kathryn Reetzke

Have you ever seen an eagle with two heads in nature? Probably not, yet I'm sure you may have seen one on a flag, like the Serbian flag featured in this article. You may have even seen one at your church or carved onto the side of a building. Stone carvings of the double headed eagle have been found in Mesopotamia and Anatolia (Turkey) many years before Constantinople was a capital city and the Byzantine Empire was founded. However, it has become well known as a symbol of the Byzantine Empire. In 1259 AD, the Palaiologos family brought this heraldic symbol (to identify their family on banners, clothing, or shields) with them when they became leaders of the Byzantines. The Palaiologos family intermarried with the Komnenos family (Byzantine rulers) and served as military leaders rose to power after the fall of the Latin/Catholic ruler John IV Laskaris (4th Crusade) in 1259. This family ruled the Byzantine Empire until Constantinople fell to the Ottomans in 1453.

The niece of the last Palaiologos Emperor, Zoe, was married to Ivan III of Russia in 1472, bringing the symbol of the double headed eagles to the Russian ruling class. There is also archaeological evidence that Serbia used this symbol as well from as early as the 12th century. The symbol continued to be used by other governments after the fall of Constantinople in 1453 amongst Orthodox Christian countries and church offices.

The two heads on the eagle symbolize the political and spiritual authority of the ruling family. The symbol was typically embroidered on clothing, banners, and items owned by the ruling family, only later in Russia and the Greek Orthodox Church is it depicted on flags. The Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople also uses this symbol on the outside of the building that houses Patriarch Bartholomew in modern day Istanbul.



Photo of Double Headed Eagle on the Basilica of St George of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople. 19th Century facade



Double-headed eagle emblem of John VIII Palaiologos (r. 1425-1448). Open Access.



Republic of Serbia flag. Open Access.

Birds of the Bible

Matching Game

God loves birds! He created them on the fifth day, and there are nearly 300 scripture verses about them.

Matthew 6:26 Look at the birds. They don't plant, harvest, or save food in barns, but your heavenly Father feeds them. Don't you know you are worth much more than they are?

Many times, the various species of birds symbolize different things. Can you match the bird with the correct symbolic description?



Vulture

This great bird symbolizes the ability to see from God's vantage point. It is used as a symbol of the Evangelist John, who wrote the book of Revelation.



Owl

This bird, known for burying its head in the sand, is mentioned in the Book of Job as being negligent to the point of stupidity. He says it has wings but can not fly, and that it lays its eggs and abandons them without care.



Ostrich

This gentle white bird is the one who is most frequently mentioned in scripture because it represents the Holy Spirit. It is seen to fly above Noah's Ark and above the head of Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan.



Raven

Jesus talks about this sweet little bird to describe how even the littlest of us are immensely valuable to God!



Rooster

Mentioned only three times in the Old Testament as having been brought from Tarshish as an exotic treasure, this bird has "eyes" all over its many feathered tail, just like the Cherubim and Seraphim.



Eagle

This elegant black bird symbolizes God's grace. One was sent to feed the prophet Elijah in the wilderness.



Peacock

This bird crowed loudly three times as a signal to Peter that the Lord knew of his betrayal.



Sparrow

Because this bird is a scavenger, it represents the enemy spirits who gather to collect the souls of those who are dead in sin. We see this in Jesus' discussion of the end of days in Matthew 24.



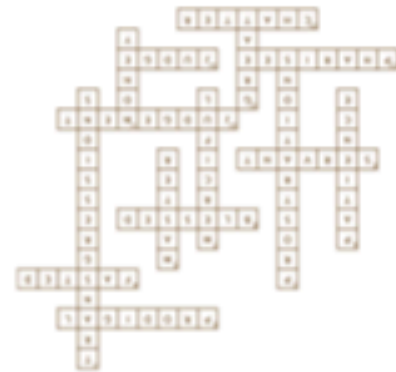
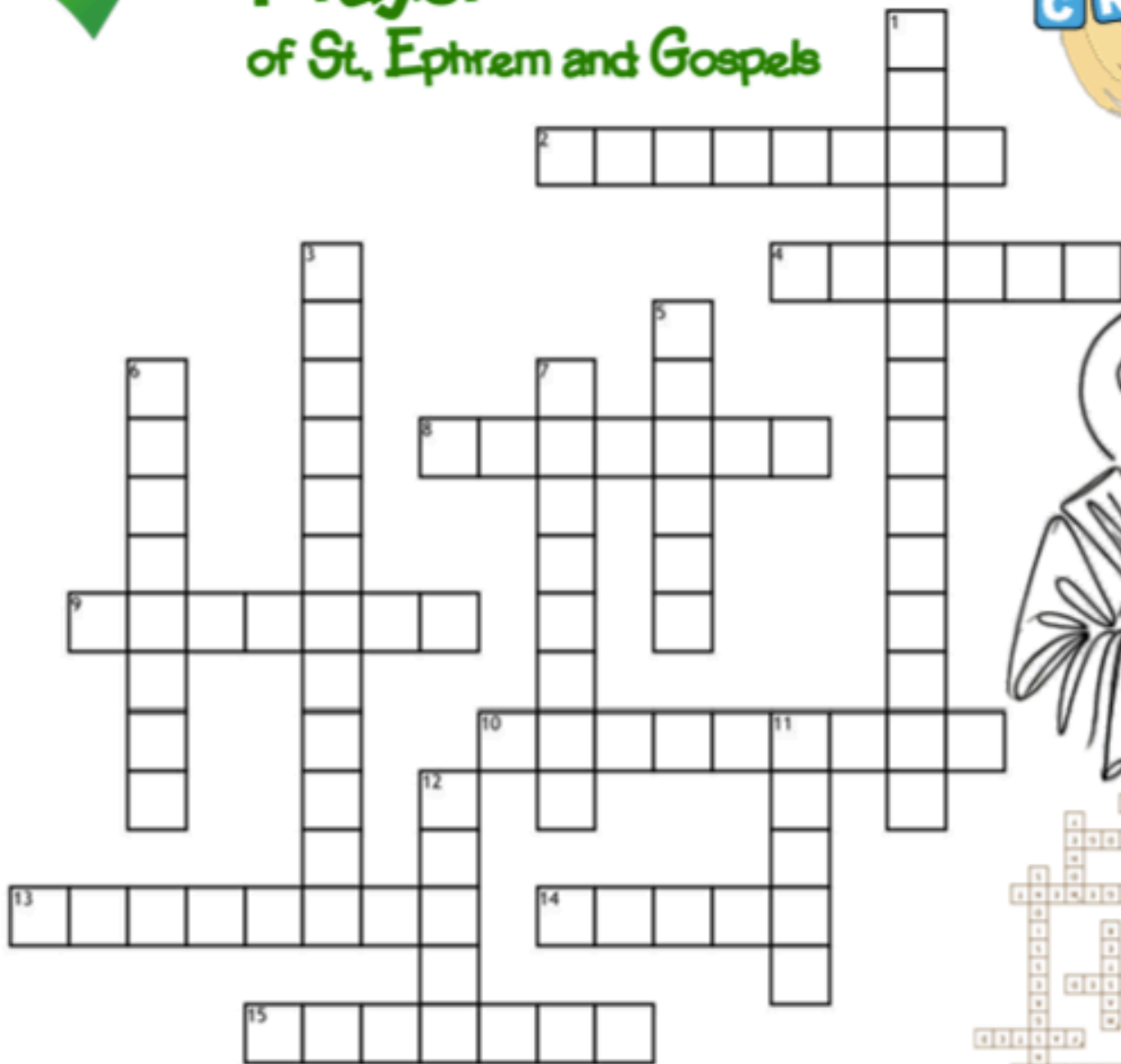
Dove

This solitary bird represents desolation. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of the desolation of the land due to God's punishment so that only this kind of bird would live there.

-
- Rooster: This bird crowed loudly three times as a signal to Peter that the Lord knew of his betrayal.
 - Dove: This gentle white bird is the one who is most frequently mentioned in scripture because it represents the Holy Spirit. It is seen to fly above Noah's Ark and above the head of Jesus at his baptism in the Jordan.
 - Eagle: This great bird symbolizes the ability to see from God's vantage point. It is used as a symbol of the Evangelist John, who wrote the book of Revelation.
 - Owl: This solitary bird represents desolation. The Prophet Isaiah speaks of the desolation of the land due to God's punishment so that only this kind of bird would live there.
 - Raven: This elegant black bird symbolizes God's grace. One was sent to feed the prophet Elijah in the wilderness.
 - Vulture: Because this bird is a scavenger, it represents the enemy spirits who gather to collect the souls of those who are dead in sin. We see this in Jesus' discussion of the end of days in Matthew 24.
 - Peacock: Mentioned only three times in the Old Testament as having been brought from Tarshish as an exotic treasure, this bird has "eyes" all over its many feathered tail, just like the Cherubim and Seraphim.
 - Ostrich: This bird, known for burying its head in the sand, is mentioned in the Book of Job as being negligent to the point of stupidity. He says that it has wings but can not fly, and that it lays its eggs and abandons them without care.
 - Sparrow: Jesus talks about this sweet little bird to describe how even the littlest of us are immensely valuable to God!

Key:

Prayer of St. Ephrem and Gospels



Across

2. The _____ son was forgiven by his father
4. The Pharisee was proud that he _____ twice a week.
8.for _____ are You, unto ages of ages. Amen.
9.But rather give to me your _____
10. Meatfare Sunday is also called the Sunday of the Last _____
13. The proud _____ thought he was holier than the Publican
14.and not to _____ my brother...
15. ...take from me the spirit of sloth, despair, lust of power, and idle _____

Down

1.Yes, O Lord and King, grant me to see my own _____
3. We make many _____ or deep bows during the prayer of St Ephrem
5. O Lord and _____ of my life....
6.the spirit of chastity, humility, _____, and love.....
7. The Publican prayed, " O God, be _____ to me, a sinner."
11. The prodigal son spent all the _____ his father gave him.
12. We call the fasting season before Pascha " _____ " Lent because it is very important