



“КРАСНОЕ СОЛНЫШКО”

“SUNSHINE”

CHURCH BULLETIN

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH “ST. VLADIMIR”, HOUSTON

MAY, 2009



BELIEVE AND REJOICE!

Feast of the Sunday of Thomas (Thomas Sunday)

The Sunday after Pascha is the Sunday of St. Thomas, also known as Second Sunday or Antipascha ("opposite" Pascha, i.e., at the other end of Bright Week). Historically, this day in the early Church was the day that the newly-baptized Christians removed their robes and entered once again into the life of this world.

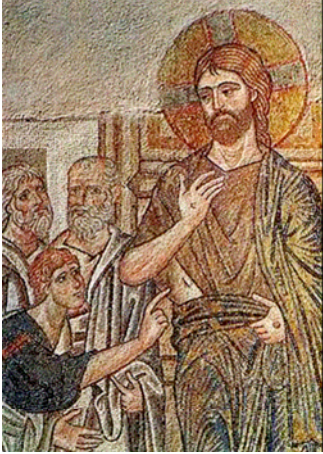
The Orthodox Church dedicates every Sunday of the year to the Lord's Resurrection starting on this Sunday, the eighth day of the paschal celebration, the last day of Bright Week.

Biblical Story

The events commemorated on the Sunday of Thomas are recorded in the Gospel of Saint John 20:19-29. Following the crucifixion and burial of Christ, the disciples were gathered in a room with the doors closed and locked for fear of the Jews. On the evening of the Sunday after Passover, Jesus Christ entered the room and stood in their midst, greeting them with the words, "Peace be with you." (v. 19) He showed the disciples his hands, feet, and side. (v. 20)

Thomas was not present with the disciples when Jesus appeared, and he did not accept the testimony of the other disciples concerning Christ's Resurrection. He stated, "Unless I see the mark of the nails in his hands and put my finger in the mark of the nails and my hand in his side, I will not believe." (v. 24-25)

Eight days later, the disciples were gathered together again with Thomas present, and the Lord appeared in the same manner. Standing in their midst he said, "Peace be with you." He then spoke directly to Thomas and said, "Put your finger here and see my hands.



Reach out your hand and put it in my side. Do not doubt but believe.” (vv. 26-27) Thomas answered, “My Lord and my God!” Jesus replied by saying, “Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.” (v. 29)

Icon of the Sunday of Thomas

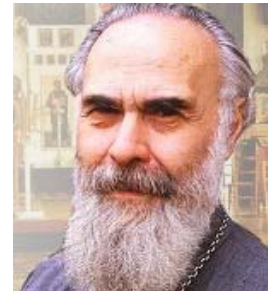
The icon of the Sunday of Thomas depicts Christ standing in the midst of the disciples. He has appeared to the eleven in the upper room, and he is inviting Thomas to come and examine his hands and his side. Thomas is reaching out to touch the side of Jesus. He is also looking to Jesus in a manner that indicates his faith and the proclamation recorded in Scripture.



From the Library

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
Sermons on the Sundays after Pascha.
(www.metropolit-anthony.orc.ru)

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh was born in Lausanne in 1914. He spent his early childhood in Russia and Persia, his father being a member of the Russian Imperial Diplomatic Corps. His mother was the sister of Alexander Scriabin, the composer. During the Russian Revolution the family had to leave Persia, and in 1923 settled in Paris where the future Metropolitan was educated, graduating in physics, chemistry and biology, and taking his doctorate in medicine, at the University of Paris.



In 1939, before leaving for the front as a surgeon in the French army, he secretly professed monastic vows. He was tonsured and received the name of Anthony in 1943. During the occupation of France by the Germans he worked as a doctor and took part in the Anti-Fascist movement of the Resistance. After the war he continued practising as a physician until 1948, when he was ordained to the priesthood and sent to England to serve as Orthodox Chaplain of the Fellowship of St. Alban and St. Sergius. He was appointed vicar of the Russian patriarchal parish in London in 1950, consecrated as Bishop in 1957 and Archbishop in 1962, in charge of the Russian Orthodox Church in Great Britain and Ireland. In 1963 he was appointed Exarch of the Moscow Patriarchate in Western Europe, and in 1966 was raised to the rank of Metropolitan. At his own request he was released in 1974 from the function of Exarch, in order to devote himself more fully to the pastoral needs of the growing flock of his Diocese and all who come to him seeking advice and help.

Metropolitan Anthony is Honoris Causa Divinity Doctor: of Aberdeen University 'for preaching the Word of God and renewing the spiritual life of this country'; of the Moscow Theological Academy for his theological, pastoral and preaching work; of

Cambridge University; and of the Kiev Theological Academy. His first books on prayer and the spiritual life (*Living Prayer, Meditations on a Theme and God and Man*) were published in England, and his texts are now widely published in Russia, both as books and in periodicals.

His Eminence, Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh, died peacefully 4th August, 2003, at the age of 89.

Below are presented some of his sermons at Diocese of Sourozh – Patriarchate of Moscow.

ST THOMAS SUNDAY

To-day we are keeping the day of St Thomas the Apostle. Too often we remember him only as a doubter; indeed he is the one who questioned the message which the other Apostles brought to him when they said: Christ is risen! We have seen Him alive!



But he is not one who doubted throughout his life or who remained unfaithful to the fullness of the divine revelation of Christ. We must remember that when the Apostles and the Lord heard of the illness of Lazarus, Christ said to them: Let us return to Jerusalem. To which the others said: But the Jews wanted to kill you there. Why should we return? Only Thomas the Apostle answered: Let us go with Him and die with Him. He was prepared not only to be His disciple in words, not only to follow Him as one follows a teacher, but to die with Him as one dies with a friend and, if necessary, for a friend. So, let us remember his greatness, his faithfulness, his wholeness.

But what happened then when after the Resurrection of Christ, the Apostles said to the one who had not seen Christ risen, that they had actually seen the risen Christ? Why did he not accept their message? Why did he doubt? Why did he say that he must have proofs, material proofs? Because when he looked at them, he saw them rejoicing in what they had seen, rejoicing that Christ was not dead, rejoicing that Christ was alive, rejoicing that victory had been won. Yet, when he looked at them he saw no difference in them.. These were the same men, only full of joy instead of fear. And Thomas said: Unless I see, unless I probe the Resurrection, I cannot believe you.

Is it not the same thing that anyone can say to us who meets us?

We proclaimed the Resurrection of Christ, passionately, sincerely, truthfully, a few days ago. We believe in it with all our being; and yet, when people meet us in our homes, in the street, in our place of work, anywhere, do they look at us and say: Who are these people? What has happened to them?

The Apostles had seen Christ risen, but the Resurrection had not become part of their own experience. They had not come out of death into eternal life. So it is also with us; except with the saints, when they see them, they know that their message is true.

What is it in our message that is not heard? Because we speak, but are not. We should be so different from people who have no experience of the living Christ, risen, who has shared His life with us, who sent the Holy Spirit to us as, in the words of C.S. Lewis, a living person is different from a statue. A statue may be beautiful, magnificent, glorious, but it is stone. A human being can be much less moving in his outer presence, yet he is alive, he is a testimony of life.

So let us examine ourselves. Let us ask ourselves where we are. Why is it that people who meet us never notice that we are limbs of the risen Christ, temples of the Holy Spirit? Why?

Each of us has got to give his own reply to this question. Let us, each of us, examine ourselves and be ready to answer before our own conscience and do what is necessary to change our lives in such away that people meeting us may look at us and say: Such people we have never seen. There is something about them that we have never seen in anyone. What is it? And we could answer: It is the life of Christ abroad in us. We are His limbs. This is the life of the Spirit in us. We are His temple. Amen.

April 30, 1995



SUNDAY OF THE MYRRH-BEARING WOMEN

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.



We remember today the Myrrh-bearing women, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, people who in the course of the Gospel are hardly mentioned, yet who, when Christ was seemingly defeated, when death, rejection, betrayal and hatred had conquered, proved to be people of faithfulness and courage, the faithfulness of the heart and the courage that can be born only of love. At the moment of the Crucifixion all the Apostles had fled save one, John, who stood at the foot of the Cross with the Mother of God. Everyone else had abandoned Christ, only a small group of women stood at a short distance from the Cross, and when He had died, they came to anoint His Body which Joseph of Arimathea had sought from Pilate, unafraid of being recognised as a disciple, because in life and in death love and faithfulness had conquered.

Let us reflect on this. It is easy to be Christ's disciples when we are on the crest of the wave, in the security of countries where no persecution, no rejection is endured, no

betrayal can lead us to martyrdom, or simply to becoming the victims of mockery and rejection.

Let us think of ourselves not in regard to Christ alone but with regard to one another, because Christ has said that what we have done to any one of us, to the smallest, to the most insignificant, we have done to Him.

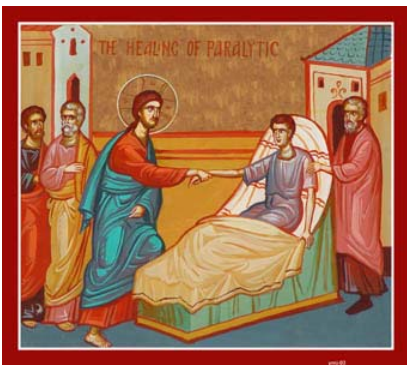
Let us ask ourselves how we behave when someone is rejected, mocked, ostracised, condemned by public opinion or by the opinion of those who mean something to us, whether at that moment our heart remains faithful, whether at that moment we find courage to say, 'He was, and he remains my friend whether you accept or reject him'. There is no greater measure of faithfulness than that faithfulness which is made manifest in defeat. Let us consider this, because we all are defeated, we are defeated in so many ways. We all strive, with whatever energy we have - a little or much, to be what we should be, and we are defeated at every moment. Should we not look at one another not only with compassion, but with the faithfulness of friends who are prepared to stand by a person who falls, falls away from grace, falls away from his own ideal, frustrates all hopes and expectations which we have set on him or her. At that time let us stand by, at that time let us be faithful and prove that our love was not conditioned by the hope of victory but was a wholehearted gift, gratuitous, joyful, wonderful. Amen.

April 21, 1991



SUNDAY OF THE PARALYTIC

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.



How tragic today's story of the life of Christ is. A man had been paralysed for years. He had lain at a short distance from healing, but he himself had no strength to merge into the waters of ablution. And no one - no one in the course of all these years - had had compassion on him.

The ones rushed to be the first in order to be healed. Others who were attached to them by love, by friendship, helped them to be healed. But no one cast a glance at this man, who for years had longed for healing and was not in himself able to find strength to become whole.

If only one person had been there, if only one heart had responded with compassion, this man might have been whole years and years earlier. As no one, not one person, had compassion on him, all that was left to him - and I say all that was left to him with a sense of horror - was the direct intervention of God.

We are surrounded by people who are in need. It is not only people who are physically paralysed who need help. There are so many people who are paralysed in themselves, and need to meet someone who would help them. Paralysed in themselves are those who are terrified of life, because life has been an object of terror for them since they were born: insensitive parents, heartless, brutal surroundings. How many are those who hoped, when they were still small, that there would be something for them in life. But no. There wasn't. There was no compassion. There was no friendliness. There was nothing. And when they tried to receive comfort and support, they did not receive it. Whenever they thought they could do something they were told, 'Don't try. Don't you understand that you are incapable of this?' And they felt lower and lower.

How many were unable to fulfil their lives because they were physically ill, and not sufficiently strong... But did they find someone to give them a supporting hand? Did they find anyone who felt so deeply for them and about them that they went out of their way to help? And how many those who are terrified of life, lived in circumstances of fear, of violence, of brutality... But all this could not have taken them if there had been someone who have stood by them and not abandoned them.

So we are surrounded, all of us, by people who are in the situation of this paralytic man. If we think of ourselves we will see that many of us are paralysed, incapable of fulfilling all their aspirations; incapable of being what they longed for, incapable of serving others the way their heart speaks; incapable of doing anything they longed for because fear, brokenness has come into them.

And all of us, all of us were responsible for each of them. We are responsible, mutually, for one another; because when we look right and left at the people who stand by us, what do we know about them? Do we know how broken they are? How much pain there is in their hearts? How much agony there has been in their lives? How many broken hopes, how much fear and rejection and contempt that has made them contemptuous of themselves and unable even to respect themselves - not to speak of having the courage of making a move towards wholeness, that wholeness of which the Gospel speaks in this passage and in so many other places?

Let us reflect on this. Let us look at each other and ask ourselves, 'How much frailty is there in him or her? How much pain has accumulated in his or her heart? How much fear of life - but life expressed by my neighbour, the people whom I should be able to count for life - has come in to my existence?

Let us look at one another with understanding, with attention. Christ is there. He can heal; yes. But we will be answerable for each other, because there are so many ways in which we should be the eyes of Christ who sees the needs, the ears of Christ who hears the cry, the hands of Christ who supports and heals or makes it possible for the person to be healed.

Let us look at this parable of the paralytic with new eyes; not thinking of this poor man two thousand years ago who was so lucky that Christ happened to be near him and in the

end did what every neighbour should have done. Let us look at each other and have compassion, active compassion; insight; love if we can. And then this parable will not have been spoken or this event will not have been related to us in vain. Amen.

21 May 2000



SERMON ON THE SAMARITAN WOMAN

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost



The Holy Gospel has not given us the name of the Samaritan woman. But the Tradition of the Church remembers, and calls her in Greek - Photini, in Russian - Svetlana, in the Celtic languages - Fiona, in Western languages - Claire. And all these names speak to us of one thing - of light.

Having met the Lord Jesus Christ she has become a light shining in the world, a light that enlightens those who meet her. Every Saint is offered us as an example; but we cannot always emulate the concrete ways in which a Saint lived, we cannot always repeat their way from earth to heaven. But we can learn from each of them two things. The one is that by the grace of God we can achieve what seems humanly impossible; that is, to become a person in the image and likeness of God, to be - in this world of darkness and tragedy which is in the power of lies - a word of truth, a sign of hope, the certainty that God can conquer if we only allow Him access to our souls. Because if the Kingdom of God is not established within us, if God is not enthroned in our minds and hearts, a fire that destroys everything unworthy of ourselves and of Him, we cannot spread God's light around.

And the second thing which the Saints can teach us is to understand the message which their names convey to us. And today's Samaritan woman speaks of light. Christ has said that He is the Light of the world, the light that enlightens all men; and we are called to give shelter within our souls, minds and hearts - indeed, within our whole self - to this light; so that the word spoken by Christ, "Let your light so shine before all men, that seeing your good deeds they may give glory to your Father who is in heaven", may be fulfilled and accomplished in and through us.

It is only through seeing our deeds, through seeing how we live that people can believe that the light is God's light; it is not in our words, unless they are words of truth and of power like those of the Apostles, or of Christ Himself indeed. And let us reflect, each of us, on the meaning of our name and on the way in which we can become what we are called.

The Samaritan woman came to the well without any spiritual purpose; she came, as she came daily, to fetch water - and she met Christ. Each of us may meet our God at any turn in our life, when we are about our most homely tasks, if our hearts are turned in the right

direction, if we are prepared to receive a message, to listen; indeed - to ask questions! Because the Samaritan woman asked a question of Christ, and what she heard transcended her question in such a way that she recognised in Him a prophet, and later - the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

But the light must not be pushed under a bushel. Having discovered that the Light had come into the world, that the word of divine truth was resounding now amidst men, that God was among us, she left behind all concerns and ran to share the joy, the wonder of what she had discovered with others. She brought her fellow-citizens to Christ. She told them first why she believed; and when perhaps curiosity, or the convincing power of her words, and the change that had occurred in her brought them to Christ, they saw for themselves and said to her, It is no longer because of what you say that we believe - we have seen, we have heard.

And this is what the Samaritan woman teaches all of us: be open at every moment of life, while we are busy with the simplest things, to receive the divine word, to be illumined by the divine light, to be cleansed by His purity, to receive it in the depths of our souls, receive it with all our life, so that people seeing what we have become may believe that the light has come into the world.

Let us pray to the Samaritan woman to teach us, to guide us, to bring us to Christ in the way in which she came, and to serve Him in the way in which she served Him, being the salvation of all who were around her. And may the blessing of God be upon you, the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost, now and forever and world without end! Amen.

8 May 1988



SUNDAY OF THE MAN BORN BLIND

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.



At the end of today's reading, words stand that we pass by very often. The blind man says to Christ, "And who is the Son of God?" and Christ answers, "You have seen Him and He is speaking to you".

For us, the first words are so natural; the first event of our life, the first event of a meeting is that we see a person, but what was this wonder of this man who had never seen anything in the world and who, touched by the life-giving hand of Christ, of a sudden saw! And the first person he saw was his Lord and his God, Christ, the Son of Man.

I remember a Romanian writer telling us in his biography what definitive, what profound impression the face of the first man he remembers made. He remembers himself as a

child, and over him - the inexpressibly beautiful face of his father who was a priest, looking at him, with all human love, with all the tenderness, and all the depth of a human gaze. And he says that this was a first vision for him in the icon which a human face can be when it is lit from inside by love and by understanding, by depth and by eternity, a vision of God. Here this man saw God in the features of Him who was God and who had become the Son of Man.

I would like to attract your attention also to something different. On another occasion we read the story of a paralytic healed by Christ; and the Church, singing the praises of God on that occasion says, "As this man found no one to show mercy on him, the Son of Mary, God Himself, stooped down and met his need". Because this man had not found another man to show mercy, to show compassion, to show concern, God has come down to him. Now we live in another time, we live in the time with God truly having become man in our midst, and more than this: He has made us to be living members of His body, an incarnate, concrete presence of His Incarnation, the temples of the Spirit, the place of the Presence. Now any man who is in need should at the same time find in each of us a man stirred to compassion, taught mercy and understanding by God become Man, and at the same time, simultaneously, meeting with us, he should be able to see the love of God in our eyes and to perceive the active, imaginative, creative action of divine charity in our words and in our deeds.

Since Christ has come into the world, the time of man has come; but not of man as severed from God, separated from Him, alien to Him, but a wonderful time when in man, in those who have discovered Christ, who have believed in Him, who have become one with Him - those men to whom God has entrusted the care of His world - people can both receive divine and human mercy and see human compassion, human love, human joy.

Is not this a great call, is not that something which should make us capable of great things? The time of God and the time of man is one, not only in the incarnate Son of God, but in this mysterious incarnate presence which each of us represents, the presence of God in the flesh, in human compassion, in human love, and this is an earnest claim and a challenge which the Gospel presents us with. Are we to one another and to those further afield that kind of humanity? New humanity, new creatures, new men with the newness of a renewed life, the life of God. This is what we are called to be.

Let us then reflect on it, make a decision, make a move and become an icon, a vision of God, not only in the shining of love in our eyes, not only in the words we speak, but also in every action and deed, so that the time of man should have become the day of the Son of Man, the day of the Lord. Amen.

14 May 1972



THE ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven. Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Philip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.

(Acts 1:4-15)



Troparion

Thou hast ascended in glory, O Christ our God,
having made joyful Thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit,
which was announced unto them in the blessing;
for Thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.



THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Throughout the 40 days following the Feast of the Resurrection of Christ, Paschal chants sound within our churches and in the hearts of the faithful. The Risen Christ spent that period of time on earth, demonstrating to His disciples the reality of His Resurrection. But lo, that 40-day period draws to a close, and, the “leave-taking,” as it were, of the Feast of Pascha approaches. In the vocabulary of the Church, the day of leave-taking is known as the Apodosis of Pascha. The service for the Apodosis of Pascha is celebrated in the brilliant white of Paschal vestments, illuminated by the light of the Paschal sun, with that same fullness of joy as on the first day of Pascha. And the Feast of the Ascension approaches: That day enters our lives as a spiritual reality: the day on which the Apostles and the Mother of God gathered around the Risen Savior for the last time, on the Mount of Olives; the day on which, while blessing them, He began his departure from the earth, and as St. Luke the Apostle tells us in the Acts of the Apostles, “and a cloud received Him out of their sight.”

Ordinary human consciousness, drawing only on the experience of earthly existence and its physical laws, can no more comprehend Christ’s Ascension than it could His Incarnation or His Glorious Resurrection from the dead. Even the disciples who saw the empty Tomb, who saw the Risen Christ, who witnessed His Ascension, had mixed feelings about everything they had seen. They vacillated between exaltation over the miracles they had witnessed and misunderstanding and doubt. Toward the end of the Gospel according to Matthew, we read that the 11 Disciples saw the Risen One in Galilee, “and when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.” The laconic words of the Gospel say nothing about the nature of their doubts. But the Apostles’ doubt makes their state close to that feeling familiar to anyone striving to find a conscious and faith grounded in understanding.

The true, religious order, beyond wisdom, reveals itself to us in response to our effort to touch it, but only with the assistance of the grace of God, which heals the infirmities and fills what is growing scant. Only with the miracle of Pentecost, the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles that took place 10 days after the Savior’s Ascension, were the Apostles completely freed from their doubts. We see them as fearless and untiring witnesses to, and preachers of, the Word, fearless even in the face of persecution and martyrdom. From a human perspective, they could have been expected to mourn upon their being parted from the Lord. Yet, in the Gospels it says that they returned to Jerusalem with joy.

Why did Christ, the Miracle Worker Who had conquered death, not remain on earth to lead and rule over His people? The reply is found in the Gospel according to John, which records for us Christ’s talk with His disciples before His Passion, and His High-priestly prayer to His Father. In speaking to his disciples about his coming departure from them, he had in mind not only His Passion and death on the Cross, but His Ascension to Heaven that was to follow. As long as Christ was still on earth, the work of the salvation of man

and all creation had not been accomplished. For Christ came so that those who are on earth might be united to the heavens and that end of that podvig, which is for us unto salvation, is His Ascension. In it our human existence, having gone through the crucible of suffering, and shown that it is more powerful than death, is brought into the fullness of divine life: In His Ascension, Christ did not become dis-embodied, dis-Incarnate. He remains forever, perfect God and perfect Man. By His earthly path in obedience to that Truth He had revealed to us, we can unite our life with His perfect and eternal existence, and thereby enter into the Kingdom of Glory which He revealed to us.

In His Ascension, Christ left the world different from what it was when the miracle of His entry into the world, His birth of the Most-pure Virgin Mary, took place. Most of the human race then remained in darkness, and only individual select prophets lived in hope and anticipation of the coming of the Savior and Messiah into the world. Now it was a different world, and a new people of God. That earth had witnessed the miracle of the birth in Bethlehem, had seen Christ's Transfiguration, and had been illumined by the light of His Resurrection from the dead. It was for that reason that Christ ascended, blessing that earth which He was leaving for a time, but from which He was henceforth to be eternally inseparable. Parting from Christ at His Ascension is at the same time a joyous anticipation of His victorious Second Coming.

Archpriest Victor Potapov



SUNDAY OF THE FATHERS OF THE FIRST COUNCIL



The First Ecumenical Council was held in Nicaea in A.D. 325 and set a pattern for all later Ecumenical Councils. It primarily addressed the issue of Arianism (producing the original version of the Nicene Creed) and set a universal pattern for calculating the date of Pascha—the Paschalion. It is also referred to as the First Council of Nicaea.

The Commemoration and eulogy of the holy fathers of the First Ecumenical Council, which was held in Nicaea in 325 in the reign of Constantine the Great—held during the week before Pentecost, or the seventh week after Easter. It was summoned to remove the confusion which Arius, an Alexandrian priest, had created by his false teaching. He had been spreading the teaching that Christ was created from God in time, and that He is not the pre-eternal Son of God, equal in being with God the Father. Three hundred and eighteen holy fathers took part in this Council. It condemned the Arian teaching, and anathematized Arius when he would not repent. This Council also definitively confirmed the Symbol of Faith (the Creed) which was later amplified at the Second Ecumenical Council. Many bishops were present at the First Ecumenical Council, among whom the following stood out: St Nicolas of Myra in Lycia, St Spiridon, St Athanasius, St Acillius,

St Paphnutius, St James of Nisibis, Macarius of Jerusalem, Alexander of Alexandria, Eustathius of Antioch, Eusebius of Caesarea, Mitrophanes of Constantinople, John of Persia, Aristarchus of Armenia and many others from the East. And from the West: Hosius of Cordova, Theophilus the Goth, Cecilianus of Carthage, and others. The most important work of this Council was the confirmation of the Symbol of Faith. The Council also confirmed the time of the celebration of Pascha, and prescribed twenty Canons.

From OrthodoxWiki

“On this Sunday in between the feast of the Ascension and the upcoming feast of Pentecost, we also commemorate the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council - a gathering of the bishops of the Orthodox Church in the year 325 in the town of Nicea. They had gathered to meet in council to clarify and more clearly define the truths of our Holy Faith. This was done in response to many false teachings which were beginning to be seen in the early life of the Church. These great fathers were guided by the Holy Spirit to rightly define the word of truth and codified this into what we know as the Nicene Creed (I believe in one God, the Father Almighty...). The creed clearly states what we believe – about the God the Father, about God the Son, and about God the Holy Spirit. All Orthodox Christians should know this great statement of faith by heart and we would do well to reflect upon it often. The recognition and celebration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council is a reminder of the precious pearl of our Orthodox faith and of the triumph of the Orthodox faith over all falsehood.

If we may characterize the feast of Holy Ascension as a message of Christian unity and the commemoration of the Holy Fathers as a message of the triumph of the truth of Orthodoxy – then surely the upcoming feast of Holy Pentecost is the key which binds this unity and triumphant truth together.”

From "The Prologue from Ochrid", by Bishop Nikolai Velimirovic



HOLY GREAT-MARTYR GEORGE, THE VICTORY-BEARER



Holy Great-Martyr George, the Victory-Bearer, was a native of Cappadocia (a district in Asia Minor), and he grew up in a deeply believing Christian family. His father accepted a martyr's death for Christ, when George was still a child. His mother, owning lands in Palestine, resettled there with her son and raised him in strict piety.

Having grown up, Saint George joined the Roman army. He was handsome, brave and valiant in battle, and he came to the notice of the emperor Diocletian (284-305) and was admitted into the imperial guards with a high military officer rank-title.

The pagan emperor, while having done much for the restoration of the Roman might, and who was quite clearly concerned, as to what sort of danger the triumphing of the Crucified Saviour might present for pagan civilization, in especially the final years of his reign intensified his persecution against Christians. Upon the advice of the Senate at Nicomedia, Diocletian granted all his governors full freedom in their court proceedings over Christians and in this he promised them all possible help.

Saint George, having learned about the decision of the emperor, handed out all his wealth to the poor, set his servants free, and then appeared in the Senate.

The brave soldier of Christ spoke out openly against the emperor's designs, he confessed himself a Christian and appealed to all to acknowledge the true faith in Christ: "I am a servant of Christ, my God, and trusting on Him, I have come amidst ye at mine own will, to witness the Truth." "What is Truth?" - one of the dignitaries said, repeating the question of Pontius Pilate. "Truth is Christ Himself, persecuted by you" - answered the saint.

Stunned by the bold speech of the valiant warrior, the emperor - who loved and had promoted George, attempted to persuade him not to throw away his youth and glory and honors, but rather to make a sacrifice to the gods by the Roman custom.

This was followed by a resolute reply of the confessor: "Nothing in this inconstant life can weaken my resolution to serve God."

Then by order of the enraged emperor the armed-guards began to jostle Saint George out of the assembly hall with their spears, and they then took him to prison. But the deadly steel became soft and it would bent, just as the spears touched the body of the saint, and it hurt him not. In prison they put the feet of the martyr in stocks and placed an heavy stone on his chest.

At an interrogation on the next day, powerless but firm in spirit, Saint George again answered to the emperor: "Torturing me will exhaust you sooner then I will get exhausted with the tortures."

Then Diocletian gave orders to subject Saint George to some very intense tortures. They tied the Great-Martyr to a wheel, beneath which they set up boards with sharp pieces of iron inset. With a turning of the wheel the sharp edges tore the bared body of the Saint. At first he suffered and cried out to the Lord loudly, but soon he quieted, not letting out even a single groan. Diocletian decided that the tortured one was already dead, and he gave orders to remove the battered body from the wheel, and then set off to the

pagan temple to make a thank-offering. But at that very moment it got dark all over, thunders rolled, and a voice was heard: "Fear not, George, for I am with you."

Then a wondrous light shone, and an Angel of the Lord appeared at the wheel in the form of a radiant youth. And just as he laid his hand upon the martyr, saying to him: "Rejoice!" - Saint George stood up healed. And when the soldiers led him off to the pagan temple where the emperor was, the latter could not believe his own eyes and thought, that some other man or even a ghost was in front of him. In confusion and terror the pagans looked Saint George over carefully, and convinced themselves, that indeed had a miracle occurred.

Many thereupon came to believe in the Life-Creating God of the Christians. Two illustrious officials, Saints Anatolios and Protleon - secretly Christians - therewith openly confessed Christ. And right away, without a trial, by order of the emperor they were beheaded with the sword. Among others present in the pagan temple was the Empress Alexandra, the wife of Diocletian, and she too knew the truth. She was on the point of glorifying Christ, but one of the servants of the emperor took her and led her off to the palace.

The emperor became even more furious. He had not lost the hope to overcome Saint George and gave him up to new quite fierce torments. They threw him down in a deep pit and covered it with lime-stone. Three days later they dug him out, but found him cheerful and unharmed. They shod the Saint in iron sandals with red-hot nails, and they drove him with blows back to the prison.

In the morning as they took him back to interrogation, cheerful and with healthy feet, he said to the emperor, that the sandals fit him. Then they beat him with ox-thongs so much, that his body and blood became mingled with the ground, but the brave sufferer, strengthened by the power of God, remained unyielding.

Having decided, that sorcery was helping the Saint, the emperor summoned the sorcerer Athanasias, so that he would try to deprive the Saint of his miraculous powers, or to poison him. The sorcerer gave Saint George two goblets with poisonous ingredients, the one of which was supposed to quite him, and the other - to kill him. But the drugs did not work either - and the Saint continued to denounce the pagan superstitions and glorify the True God as he did before.

When emperor asked the Saint what sort of power it was that helped him, Saint George answered: "Think not, that the torments do me no harm thanks to human powers - I am saved only by calling upon Christ and His Power. Whoso believeth on Him hath no regard for tortures and is able to do the deeds, that Christ did" (Jn 14:12). Diocletian asked, what sort of deeds Christ did. - "To give sight to the blind, to cleanse the leprous, to enable the lame to walk, the deaf - to hear, to cast out devils, and to raise up the dead."

The emperor knew that never had they been able to resurrect the dead neither with sorcery nor with any known to him; thus wanting to test the Saint the emperor commanded him to raise up a dead person right in front of his eyes. To this the Saint

replied: "Thou wouldst tempt me, but for the salvation of the people which shalt see the deed of Christ, my God wilt work this sign."

And when they led Saint George down to the graveyard, he cried out: "O Lord! Show to those here present, that Thou art the One - Only God throughout the entire world, let them know Thee as the Almighty Lord." And the earth did quake, a grave opened up, the dead came alive and emerged from it. Having witnessed the Almighty Power of Christ, the people wept and glorified the True God. The sorcerer Athanasias, falling down at the feet of Saint George, confessed Christ as the All-Powerful God and besought forgiveness of his sins, committed in ignorance.

The obdurate emperor in his impiety thought otherwise: in a rage he commanded to behead both the new-believer Athanasias and likewise the resuscitated, and he had Saint George locked up in prison again. The people, burdened with their infirmities, began in various ways to get into the prison and they received there healings and help from the Saint. A certain farmer named Glycerios whose ox had collapsed also resorted to him. The Saint consoled him with a smile and assured him, that God would bring his ox back to life. Seeing the ox alive at home, the farmer started to glorify the God of the Christians throughout the entire city. By order of the emperor, Saint Glycerios was arrested and beheaded.

Exploits and miracles of the Great-Martyr George had increased the number of Christians, and therefore Diocletian decided to make a final attempt to compel the Saint to make sacrifice to idols. They began to set up a court at the pagan temple of Apollo. On the last night the Holy Martyr prayed fervently, and when he dozed off, he beheld the Lord Himself, Who raised him up with His hand, and hugged him in giving him a kiss of greeting. The Saviour placed a crown on the head of the Great-Martyr and said: "Fear not, but rather make bold and be vouchsafed My Kingdom."

In the morning at the court the emperor offered Saint George a new test - he proposed him to become his co-emperor. The holy martyr with a feigned willingness answered, that from the very beginning the emperor had seemed inclined not to torture him but rather to show mercy, and with this he expressed the wish to go forthwith into the pagan temple of Apollo. Diocletian decided, that the martyr was accepting his offer, and he followed after him into the pagan temple with his retinue and the people. Everyone was waiting, whether Saint George would make sacrifice to gods. He, however, made the sign of the Cross approaching an idol and turned towards it, as though it were alive: "You wishest to receive from me sacrifice befitting God?" The demon inhabiting the idol cried out: "I am not God and none of those like me are God. The One-Only God is He Whom thou preachest. We are of those servant-angels of His, which became apostate, and in the grips of jealousy we do tempt people." "How dare ye to be here, when hither have come I, the servant of the True God?" - asked the saint. Then was heard a crash and wailing, and the idols fell down and were shattered.

There began a general confusion. Pagan-priests and many of the throng pounced upon the holy martyr in a frenzy, they tied him up and began to beat him and demand his immediate execution.

Into the noise and the shouts rushed the holy empress Alexandra. Pushing her way through the crowd, she cried out: "Thou God of George, help me, in as Thou Alone art All-Powerful." At the feet of the Great-Martyr the holy empress glorified Christ, Who had humiliated the idols and those worshipping them.

Diocletian in a rage immediately pronounced the death sentence against the Great-Martyr George and the holy Empress Alexandra, who without being accompanied, followed Saint George to execution. Along the way she collapsed and slumped senseless against a wall. Everyone thought that the empress was dead. Saint George offered up thanks to God and he prayed that he should end his path worthily. At the place of execution the saint in heated prayer besought the Lord, that He would forgive the torturers of those who knew not what they did, and that He would lead them to the knowledge of Truth. Calmly and bravely, the holy Great-Martyr George bent his neck beneath the sword. This occurred on April 23, 305.

In confusion the executioners and the judges catch glimpse of their Conqueror. In a bloody agony and mindless thrashing about ended the era of paganism. It lasted for all of ten years more - up until the time of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Constantine, who was one of the successors to Diocletian upon the Roman throne, and who gave orders to imprint the Cross on his military- banners, as a testament also sealed by the blood of the Great-Martyr George and thousands of other unknown martyrs: "By this sign thou wilt conquer."



Of many miracles, worked by the holy Great-Martyr George, the most famous are depicted in iconography. There were many idol-worshippers in the native land of the saint - at the city of Beirut. Outside the city, near Mount Lebanon, there was a large lake, in which lived an enormous dragon-like serpent. Coming out of the lake, it devoured people, and there was nothing people could do as it infected air with one of its nostrils.

On the advice of the demons inhabiting the idols, the ruler there made a decision: each day people would draw lots to give over their own children as food, and when his turn would come, he promised to hand over his only daughter. That time did come, so the ruler dressed his daughter in her finest attire and sent her off to the lake. The girl wailed bitterly, awaiting the moment of death. Unexpectedly the Great-Martyr George rode up on his horse with a spear in his hand.

The girl implored him not to leave her, lest she would perish. But the saint, having caught sight of the serpent, made the Sign of the Cross and with the words "In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," he rushed off after it. The Great-Martyr George pierced the throat of the serpent with his spear and trampled it with his horse. Then he bid the girl to bind the serpent with her sash, and like a dog, lead it into

the city. The people fled in terror, but the Saint halted them with the words: "Be not afraid, but rather trust on the Lord Jesus Christ and believe in Him, since it be He Who hath sent me to you, to save you." Then the Saint killed the serpent with a sword, and the people burned it outside the city. Twenty-five thousand men, not counting women and children, were then baptized, and there was later built a church in the name of the Most Holy Mother of God and the Great-Martyr George.

Saint George became a talented military officer and continued to amaze the world by with his military exploits. He died, when he was not even 30 years old. Hastening to unite with the Heavenly army, he entered into the history of the Church as the Victory-Bearer ["Pobedonosets"]. With this title he was glorified in early Christianity and Holy Rus'.

Saint George, the Victory-Bearer was the patron Saint and protector of several of the great builders of the Russian state and Russian military. The son of the holy Equal-to-the-Apostles Vladimir, Yaroslav the Wise - in holy Baptism Georgii (+ 1054), much advanced the veneration of the Saint in the Russian Church. He built the city of Yur'ev [i.e., "of Yurii" - "Yurii" being the diminutive of "Georgii", as "Ivan" is to "Ioann" (John)], he founded likewise the Yur'ev monastery at Novgorod, and he erected the Church of Saint George, the Victory-Bearer in Kiev. The day of the consecration of the Kiev Georgiev temple, which took place on November 26, 1051 by Sainted Ilarion, Metropolitan of Kiev and Russia', entered forever into the liturgical treasury of the Church as a special churchly feastday - Yur'ev Day, beloved by the Russian people as an "Autumn Saint George's Day".

The name of Saint George was indeed also borne by the founder of Moscow - Yurii Dolgoruky (+1157), who was the builder of many churches of Saint George, and the builder of the city of Yur'ev-Pol'sk. In the year 1238 the heroic fight of the Russian nation against the Mongol Horde was headed by the Vladimir Great Prince Yurii (Georgii) Vsevolodovich (+1238, commemorated 4 February), who fell into eternal rest in the Battle at Sita River. His memory, just like that of Egor [Igor] the Brave, and defender of his native-land, was reflected in Russian spiritual versification and ballads. The first great-prince of Moscow, in the period when Moscow became the center of the Russian Land unification, was Yurii Danilovich (+1325) - son of Saint Daniel of Moscow, and grandson of Saint Alexander Nevsky. From that time Saint George, the Victory-Bearer - a horseman, smiting the serpent - became the coat of arms of Moscow and the emblem of the Russian state. And this has strengthened the connections with Christian peoples more deeply and especially with the same-believing Iveria (Gruzia, or Georgia - the Land of Saint George).

*The English translation of the life of the Saint George is taken from the website
"Feasts and Saints of the Orthodox Church"*



St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

Our father among the saints Ignatius Brianchaninov (1807-1867), was a Russian bishop and ascetical writer. His feast day is celebrated on May 13.

St. Ignatius Brianchaninov was born Dimitri Alexandrovich Brianchaninov, on the February 15, 1807, in the province of Vologda, the son of an aristocratic landowner. Intellectually gifted, peaceful and reflective by character, from early childhood he was drawn to a life of prayer and stillness. However, his father planned a military career for Dimitri, and so, when Dimitri was 15 years of age, his father enrolled him in the Imperial School of Military Engineers in St. Petersburg. There Dimitri excelled, even attracting the attention of Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich, the future Tsar Nicholas I. Nonetheless, Dimtri felt called to the monastic life (uncommon for a Russian aristocrat at that time), and he became deeply depressed at the seemingly inevitable prospect of a career as a military officer.

In 1826, Dimitri fell gravely ill, but nonetheless graduated first among all candidates at the School of Engineers and received his commission. Immediately, Dimitri attempted to resign this commission, but his resignation was refused on orders of Tsar Nicholas. However, in 1827, Dimtri became critically ill once more, and this time his resignation was accepted by the imperial authorities.



During the next four years, Dimitri lived as a novice in various monasteries, without settling permanently in any of them, partly because of ill health, and partly because he failed to find a spiritual father in whom he could place unreserved trust. For the remainder of his life, St. Ignatius would lament the scarcity of true spirit-bearing elders in his day. Finally, in 1831, Dimitri was professed monk by the ruling hierarch of his home province, Bishop Stephen of Vologda, and he received the monastic name of "Ignatius." Shortly after that, Monk Ignatius was ordained deacon, then priest. All this took place without the approval of his parents. In 1832, Hieromonk Ignatius was appointed superior of a small monastery in the Vologda diocese. However, the damp climate brought about ill-health which quickly forced his resignation.

Then, in autumn of 1833, the most unexpected thing happened. Tsar Nicholas, during a trip to the School of Military Engineers in St. Petersburg, enquired into what had become of the promising student Dimitri Alexandrovich. Upon learning of his monastic profession and hieratic ordination, the tsar ordered Hieromonk Ignatius to return to the imperial capital, where, aged 26, he was raised to the rank of Archimandrite and made igumen of the St. Sergius Monastery, one of the most important in St. Petersburg, and one which enjoyed great imperial patronage. Tsar Nicholas entrusted Archimandrite Ignatius with the task of transforming this monastery into a model community, where visitors to the Imperial Court could see monasticism as it should be.

Over the next 24 years, and amid what was often taxing circumstances, Archimandrite Ignatius fulfilled his duties as igumen of the St. Sergius Monastery, giving particular

attention to the beauty of the Liturgy. During this time he was a prolific author, writing much of the material in the five volumes of his collected works.

Finally, however, in 1857, and exhausted by his responsibilities as igumen, Archimandrite Ignatius was elevated to the episcopacy, to serve as Bishop of the Caucasus and Black Sea—a vast, unorganized diocese, whose administrative burdens were particularly difficult for someone afflicted with Bp. Ignatius' ill-health.

Thus, it was no surprise when, after four years of episcopal service, Bp. Ignatius submitted his resignation in 1861. The resignation was accepted, and Bp. Ignatius was allowed to retire to spend the remaining six years of his life in seclusion at the Nicolo-Babaevsky Monastery of the Kostroma diocese, where he devoted his time to writing and a wide correspondence with spiritual children. He reposed in the Lord on April 30, 1867.

Bp. Ignatius was glorified as a saint by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1988, and is commemorated on May 13/April 30.



On Practicing the Jesus Prayer

by St. Ignatius Brianchaninov

"LORD JESUS CHRIST, SON OF GOD, HAVE MERCY ON ME, A SINNER."

THE CORRECT PRACTICE of the Jesus Prayer proceeds naturally from correct notions about God, about the most holy name of the Lord Jesus, and about man's relationship to God.



God is an infinitely great and all-perfect being. God is the Creator and Renewer of men, Sovereign Master over men, angels, demons and all created things, both visible and invisible. Such a notion of God teaches us that we ought to stand prayerfully before Him in deepest reverence and in great fear and dread, directing toward Him all our attention, concentrating in our attention all the powers of the reason, heart, and soul, and rejecting distractions and vain imaginings, whereby we diminish alertness and reverence, and violate the correct manner of standing before God, as required by His majesty (John 4:23-24; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27). St. Isaac the Syrian put it marvelously: "When you turn to

God in prayer, be in your thoughts as an ant, as a serpent of the earth, like a worm, like a stuttering child. Do not speak to Him something philosophical or high-sounding, but approach Him with a child's attitude" (Homily 49). Those who have acquired genuine prayer experience an ineffable poverty of the spirit when they stand before the Lord, glorify and praise Him, confess to Him, or present to Him their entreaties. They feel as if they had turned to nothing, as if they did not exist. That is natural. For when he who is in prayer experiences the fullness of the divine presence, of Life Itself, of Life abundant and

unfathomable, then his own life strikes him as a tiny drop in comparison to the boundless ocean. That is what the righteous and long-suffering Job felt as he attained the height of spiritual perfection. He felt himself to be dust and ashes; he felt that he was melting and vanishing as does snow when struck by the sun's burning rays (Job 42:6).

The name of our Lord Jesus Christ is a divine name. The power and effect of that name are divine, omnipotent and salvific, and transcend our ability to comprehend it. With faith therefore, with confidence and sincerity, and with great piety and fear ought we to proceed to the doing of the great work which God has entrusted to us: to train ourselves in prayer by using the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The incessant invocation of God's name," says Barsanuphius the Great, "is a medicine which mortifies not just the passions, but even their influence. Just as the physician puts medications or dressings on a wound that it might be healed, without the patient even knowing the manner of their operation, so also the name of God, when we invoke it, mortifies all passions, though we do not know how that happens" (421st Answer).

Our ordinary condition, the condition of all mankind, is one of fallen ness, of spiritual deception, of perdition. Apprehending—and to the degree that we apprehend, experiencing—that condition, let us cry out from it in prayer, let us cry in spiritual humility, let us cry with wails and sighs, let us cry for clemency! Let us turn away from all spiritual gratifications, let us renounce all lofty states of prayer of which we are unworthy and incapable! It is impossible "to sing the Lord's song in a strange land" (Ps. 136:5), in a heart held captive by passions. Should we hear an invitation to sing, we can know surely that it emanates "from them that have taken us captive" (Ps. 136:3). "By the waters of Babylon" tears alone are possible and necessary (Ps. 136:1).

This is the general rule for practicing the Jesus Prayer, derived from the Sacred Scriptures and the works of the Holy Fathers, and from certain conversations with genuine men of prayer. Of the particular rules, especially for novices, I deem the following worthy of mention.

St. John of the Ladder counsels that the mind should be locked into the words of the prayer and should be forced back each time it departs from it (Step XXVIII, ch. 17). Such a mechanism of prayer is remarkably helpful and suitable. When the mind, in its own manner, acquires attentiveness, then the heart will join it with its own offering—compunction. The heart will empathize with the mind by means of compunction, and the prayer will be said by the mind and heart together. The words of the prayer ought to be said without the least hurry, even lingering, so that the mind can lock itself into each word. St. John of the Ladder consoles and instructs the coenobitic brethren who busy themselves about monastic obedience's and encourages them thus to persevere in prayerful asceticism: "From those monks who are engaged in performing obedience's," he writes, "God does not expect a pure and undistracted prayer. Despair not should inattention come over you! Be of cheerful spirit and constantly compel your mind to return to itself! For the angels alone are not subject to any distraction" (Step IV, ch. 93). "Being enslaved by passions, let us persevere in praying to the Lord: for all those who have reached the state of passionless ness did so with the help of such indomitable prayer.

If, therefore, you tirelessly train your mind never to stray from the words of the prayer, it will be there even at mealtime. A great champion of perfect prayer has said: 'I had rather speak five words with my understanding . . . than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue' (I Cor. 14:19). Such prayer," that is, the grace-given prayer of the mind in the heart, which shuns imaginings, "is not characteristic of children; wherefore we who are like children, being concerned with the perfection of our prayer," that is, the attentiveness which is acquired by locking the mind into the words of the prayer, "must pray a great deal. Quantity is the cause of quality. The Lord gives pure prayer to him who, eschewing laziness, prays much and regularly in his own manner, even if it is marred by inattention" (The Ladder, Step XXVII1, ch. 21).



Епископ Игнатий (Брянчанинов)

Novices need more time in order to train themselves in prayer. It is impossible to reach this supreme virtue shortly after entering the monastery or following the first few steps in asceticism. Asceticism needs both time and gradual progress, so that the ascetic can mature for prayer in every respect. In order that a flower might bloom or the fruit grow on a tree, the tree must first be planted and left to develop; thus also does prayer grow out of the soil of other virtues and nowhere else. The monk will not quickly gain mastery of his mind, nor will he in a short time accustom it to abide in the words of the prayer as if enclosed in a prison. Pulled hither and thither by its acquired predilections, impressions, memories and worries, the novice's mind constantly breaks its salvific chains and strays from the narrow to the wide path. It prefers to wander freely, to stroll in the regions of falsehood in association with the fallen spirits, to stray aimlessly and mindlessly over great expanses, though this be damaging to him and cause him great loss. The passions, those moral infirmities of human nature, are the principal cause of inattentiveness and absentmindedness in prayer. The more they are weakened in a man, the less is he distracted in spirit when praying. The passions are brought under control and mortified little by little by means of true obedience, as well as by self-reproach and humility—these are the virtues upon which successful prayer is built. Concentration, which is accessible to man, is granted by God in good time to every struggler in piety and asceticism who by persistence and ardor proves the sincerity of his desire to acquire prayer.

The Russian hieromonk Dorotheus, a great instructor in spiritual asceticism, who was in this respect very much like St. Isaac the Syrian, counsels those who are learning the Jesus Prayer to recite it aloud at first. The vocal prayer, he says, will of itself turn into the mental.

"Mental prayer," he continues, "is the result of much vocal prayer, and mental prayer leads to the prayer of the heart. The Jesus Prayer should not be said in a loud voice but quietly, just audibly enough that you can hear yourself.' It is particularly beneficial to practice the Jesus Prayer aloud when assailed by distraction, grief, spiritual despondency and laziness. The vocal Jesus Prayer gradually awakens the soul from the deep moral

slumber into which grief and spiritual despair are wont to thrust it. It is also particularly beneficial to practice the Jesus Prayer aloud when attacked by images, appetites of the flesh, and anger; when their influence causes the blood to boil. It should be practiced when peace and tranquility vanish from the heart, and the mind hesitates, becomes weak, and—so to speak—goes into upheaval because of the multitude of unnecessary thoughts and images. The malicious princes of the air, whose presence is hidden to physical sight but who are felt by the soul through their influences upon it, hearing as they mount their attack the name of the Lord Jesus—which they dread—will become undecided and confused, and will take fright and withdraw immediately from the soul. The method of prayer which the hieromonk suggests is very simple and easy. It should be combined with the method of St. John of the Ladder: the Jesus Prayer should be recited loud enough that you can hear yourself, without any hurry, and by locking the mind into the words of the prayer. This last, the hieromonk enjoins upon all who pray by Jesus' name.

The method of prayer propounded by St. John of the Ladder should be adhered to even when one is practicing the method which was explained by the divine St. Nilus of Sora, in the second homily of his monastic constitution. The divine Nilus borrowed his method from the Greek Fathers, Symeon the New Theologian and Gregory of Sinai, and simplified it somewhat. Here is what St. Nilus says: "Experience will soon confirm as correct and very beneficial for mental concentration the recommendation of these holy fathers regarding restraint in breathing, i.e. that one should not breathe with great frequency." Some, without understanding this method, exaggerate its importance and restrain their breath beyond reasonable measure, thereby injuring their lungs and at the same time inflicting harm upon their souls by assenting to such a mistake. All impulsive and extreme actions are but obstacles to success in prayer, which develops only when nurtured by the tranquil, quiet and pious disposition of both soul and body. "Whatever is immoderate comes from the demons," says St. Pimen the Great.

The novice who is studying the Jesus Prayer will advance greatly by observing a daily rule comprising a certain number of full prostrations and bows from the waist, depending upon the strength of each individual. These are all to be performed without any hurry, with a repentant feeling in the soul and with the Jesus Prayer on the lips during each prostration. An example of such prayer may be seen in the "Homily on Faith" by St. Symeon the New Theologian. Describing the daily evening prayers of the blessed youth George, St. Symeon says: "He imagined that he was standing before the Lord Himself and prostrating himself before His holy feet, and he tearfully implored the Lord to have mercy upon him. While praying, he stood motionless like a pillar and bade his feet and the other parts of his body to stay still, especially the eyes, which were restrained from moving curiously in all directions. He stood with great fear and trepidation and denied himself sleep, despondency and laziness." Twelve prostrations suffice in the beginning. Depending upon one's strength, ability and circumstances, that number can be constantly increased. But when the number of prostrations increases, one should be careful to preserve the quality of one's prayer, so that one not be carried away by a preoccupation with the physical into fruitless, and even harmful, quantity. The bows warm up the body and somewhat exhaust it, and this condition facilitates attention and compunction. But let us be watchful, very watchful, lest the state pass into a bodily preoccupation which is

foreign to spiritual sentiments and recalls our fallen nature! Quantity, useful as it is when accompanied by the proper frame of mind and the proper objective, can be just as harmful when it leads to a preoccupation with the physical. The latter is recognized by its fruits which also distinguish it from spiritual ardor. The fruits of physical preoccupation are conceit, self-assurance, intellectual arrogance: in a word, pride in its various forms, all of which are easy prey to spiritual deception. The fruits of spiritual ardor are repentance, humility, weeping and tears. The rule of prostrations is best observed before going to sleep: then, after the cares of the day have passed, it can be practiced longer and with greater concentration. But in the morning and during the day it is also useful, especially for the young' to practice prostrations moderately—from twelve to twenty bows. Prostrations stimulate a prayerful state of the mind and mortify the body as well as support and strengthen fervor in prayer.

These suggestions are, I believe, sufficient for the beginner who is eager to acquire the Jesus Prayer. "Prayer," said the divine St. Meletius the Confessor, "needs no teacher. It requires diligence, effort and personal ardor, and then God will be its teacher." The Holy Fathers, who have written many works on prayer in order to impart correct notions and faithful guidance to those desiring to practice it, propose and decree that one must engage in it actively in order to gain experiential knowledge, without which verbal instruction, though derived from experience, is dead, opaque, incomprehensible and totally inadequate. Conversely, he who is carefully practicing prayer and who is already advanced in it, should refer often to the writings of the Holy Fathers about prayer in order to check and properly direct himself, remembering that even the great Paul, though possessing the highest of all testimonies for his Gospel—that of the Holy Spirit—nevertheless went to Jerusalem where he communicated to the apostles who had gathered there the Gospel that he preached to the gentiles, "lest by any means," as he said, "I should run, or had run, in vain " (Gal. 2:2).

Translated by Stephen Karganovic from The Alphabet of Orthodox Life, Belgrade, 1974.

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Righteous Princes and Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb of Russia



The Holy Righteous Princes and Passion-bearers Boris and Gleb (in holy baptism, Romanus and David) were the first Russian saints canonized both by the Church of Russia and the Church of Constantinople.

Princes Boris and Gleb were sons of the Equal-to-the-Apostles prince Vladimir and princess Anna, the Byzantine. Since youth they were noted for their devoutness. According to the scripts we also know that Prince Boris liked church singing very much. Saint Vladimir held them especially dear for their devotion to the holy faith and brotherly love towards each other.

While still alive Prince Vladimir assigned Boris to rule the Rostov province, and Gleb received the Murom principedom. Both Princes worked hard to convert the rough pagans living in those territories into Christians. Saint Gleb is considered to be an educator of the Murom-Riazan region, where from those ancient times up to now he is remembered as the first Christian evangelist and protector of the country.

In the year of 1015 after St. Vladimir's death, his son Sviatopolk (nicknamed "the cursed") seized the power over the great principedom. Being afraid to compete fairly with his pious brothers, he decided to kill them.

At the time St. Boris was deployed with his armed forces on the Alta River. His troops suggested attacking and seizing Kiev, but St. Boris did not want to violate the sacred kinship relations and rejected the proposal with indignation. Sviatopolk informed St. Boris of their father's death, insidiously offered brotherly cooperation, and promised to expand St. Boris' principedom while at the same time sending mercenaries to assassinate him. On the night of July 23rd the mercenaries approached Boris' tent. When they heard psalms sung in the tent, they decided to wait until Boris fell asleep. Hardly had the saint prince gone to his bed, the murderers broke into the tent and speared him and his slave Georgui, a Hungarian, who tried to protect his master with his own body. The assassins wrapped the martyr who was still breathing into a tent cloth and rode to Sviatopolk. When Sviatopolk learned that Saint Boris was still alive, he sent two Variangians to pierce his heart with swords. The body of Saint Boris was secretly brought to Vyshgorod and buried there in the church of Saint Vasilii.

After killing Saint Boris, Sviatopolk invited Saint Gleb, who at the time was staying near Smolensk, to visit their father who allegedly got seriously ill. The young prince already knowing about Sviatopolk's atrocious deeds was tearfully praying for his father and brother. Horacer, who headed the assassins, ordered the prince's cook, a Turk, to butcher his master. The order was carried out on September 5, 1015.

In 1019, Kiev was conquered by Vladimir's son Jaroslav who ordered that Saint Gleb's body be found and buried next to Boris' grave. Soon the grave was noticed to work wonders. After the church of Saint Vasilii was destroyed by a fire, the bodies of the princes were brought to a new church built in Vishgorod in their honor. When the caskets were opened, metropolitan Ioann and the clergy witnessed a miracle: the bodies of the saints were as white as snow and their faces were shining with holy light, a heavenly incense filled the church and all that were present awed. In 1240, during the Batyi invasion, the bodies of the princes disappeared. Both princes-martyrs are glorified in Russia, beginning from those ancient times. This is testified, among other things, by the great number of monasteries and churches that were built in their honor and came through the ages to our time in many parts of Russia.

Russian people regarded the saint princes-martyrs as their protectors and intercessors. The scripts are full of descriptions of many people wonderfully healed near the relics of the saint princes and of the victories that were won with their help (e.g. the victory of

Ruric, son of Rostislav, over Konchak; or the triumph of Alexander-of-the-Neva over the German tribes).



HOLY EQUAL-TO-THE-APOSTLES METHODIUS AND CYRIL, TEACHERS OF THE SLAVS

As brothers they were children of a wealthy Bulgarian Slav Voivode Lev, who lived in Salonika, Macedonia. When the eldest brother, Methodius, reached maturity he entered military service and soon become the governor of a Slavonic province. After 10 years of military service Methodius, "loving the solitary life", left for Mount Olympus and accepted monasticism there, completely devoting himself to meditation and reading divinely inspired books and "adorning his soul through prayer, vigils and fasting".

The youngest brother, Constantine, from his youth showed brilliant success both in secular and religious-moral formation. He studied together with Emperor Michael and thus received a brilliant education. But having acquired "wisdom with the care of higher



philosophy", upon the completion of his education he refused all the benefits of position and left for one of the monasteries on the Black Sea. Soon his residence was revealed. He was almost violently returned to Constantinople and being ordained a priest there, he was appointed librarian at the St. Sophia Temple and teacher of philosophy in a major Constantinopolitan School. His extensive erudition was to enable him to defeat the iconoclast Patriarch John [Grammaticus] (text has Annius probably in error) in scholarly discourse. When the Emir of the militants, a Moslem, addressed a petition to Byzantium (851) asking to send scholars to acquaint him with Christianity, the Emperor and the Patriarch selected the "golden-lettered" Constantine and the ascetics George for

this mission. After returning Cyril lived for a short time in Constantinople, but then he left to go to his brother Methodius and shared monastic asceticism in the monastery on Olympus with him.

In 858, the Khazars, living on coast of the Don, Volga and Sea of Azov, sent ambassadors to Emperor Michael requesting him to give them a scholar capable of advising them about faith. The Emperor sent Constantine as his brilliant debates with other scholars on faith became known. St. Methodius joyfully agreed to accompany his brother. The holy brothers landed in Chersonese and here found the relics of St. Clement in the sea and carried them into the Temple of the Holy Apostles.

Having come to the Khazars, they soon taught the Christian faith to every last one of them and having confirmed them in Orthodoxy, they returned to Constantinople. Constantine renewed his scholarly occupations, but Methodius received the position of Hegumen in the Polychroniou [Many Years] monastery.

Soon after this at the request of Slavonic princes, the holy brothers went to Moravia and there, first of all translated the Greek divine service books into the Slavonic language (for

which purpose they invented the Slavonic alphabet), they began to spread the Orthodox faith. Their preaching had enormous success: over several years Moravia, Bulgaria, Pannonia and other countries were enlightened with the light of Gospel teaching.

In 867, based on the slander of the German bishops, Sts. Methodius and Constantine were summoned by Pope Nicholas I to court in Rome. When they arrived in Rome, Nicholas I was no longer alive. His successor Hadrian II found out that they were bringing the relics of St. Clement with them and solemnly met them outside the city. Constantine brought him the Gospel and other books in the Slavonic language and the Pope, having known of their approval, placed them on the altar in the Temple of St. Maria, and later the divine services were performed in several churches of Rome from them.

Here on February 14, 869 St. Cyril died and was buried in the Church of St. Clement. Before his death he said to his brother: *"You and I, like two oxen, plowed one furrow. I am exhausted, but don't you think of leaving the labor of teaching or to again leave your mountain"*.

After the death of Cyril, St. Methodius was absolved by the Pope, installed as the Bishop of Moravia and Pannonia where he also labored, enlightening his flock and preaching Christ to many other Slavonic people (to the Czechians, Hungarians, Dalmatians, etc.). During this time Methodius had to bear much unpleasantness from heterodox missionaries and he "endured many troubles and exiles".

So, the Latin priests armed the German emperor against him. By the order of the Salzburgian [Juvavum] Archbishop and council, Methodius was banished to Swabia [Schwaben] where he was imprisoned for about three years, enduring the cruelest torture: he was beaten, thrown out into the cold without clothes and violently dragged along the streets. Pope John VIII in 874 insisted on his release and elevated him to the dignity of Archbishop of Moravia with the rank of Papal Legate.

But soon Ven. Methodius was again summoned to court because he did not believe in the descent of the Holy Spirit "and from the Son [filioque]" and it was as if he did not recognize his hierarchical dependence on the Pope. The Pope forbade him to serve Slavonic divine services, and in 879 once again summoned him to Rome where Methodius was completely absolved of the charges made against him and again received the bulla which resolved the issue of Slavonic divine services.

At the invitation of Emperor Basil not long before his death St. Methodius visited Constantinople. He died on April 6, 885 (see Apr. 6 and Feb. 14)¹.

See the 1885 Decree [Ukase] of the Holy Synod on commemorating the memory of the Slavonic teachers which relates to the middle ranked church feasts. The service for this day is directed by a special published booklet².

That same decree prescribes to remember: Our Holy Fathers among the Saints, Methodius and Cyril, Teachers of the Slavs after the name of Hierarch Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker in the prayers in the Litia, after the Gospel in Matins before the canon, in the dismissals, and in all equivalent Prayers, in which the Ecumenical Hierarchs of the Russian Church are remembered, Epistle and Gospel: see Feb. 14.

1. In olden times all the Slavonic people celebrated the memory of the holy brothers, but later it was forgotten due to the influence of various adverse historical and political

circumstances. At the beginning of the 19th century, the memory of the first-teachers of the Slavs was renewed together with revival of the Slavonic nationalities. In 1863 the Holy Synod decided to celebrate Sts. Cyril and Methodius on May 11, for which the ancient services were reprinted.

The celebration of the Holy First-teachers has special meaning for Orthodox Russia: "by their beginning to do the Divine Liturgy and all the church services in our innate Slavonic language the un-drawn well of water flowing to eternal life was given to us". Really, our country was established, became stronger and grew under the influence and guardianship of the Orthodox faith brought to us and in the shortening of the Slavonic letters and in the Slavonic translation of Holy Scripture and liturgical books, completed more than a thousand years ago by the holy brothers. The Slavonic letters handed to them protected us from the Western Papal yoke, delivered us from the excessive custody of the Greeks, kept our national character in inviolable purity, sown in us the seeds of erudition and spiritual blessings for us. The wonderful, stately, harmonious Slavonic language into which the holy brothers have made their translation at once lifted our ancestors above the level of barbarity, roughness and stagnancy and began religious, intellectual and esthetical developments in them.

2. So that when Trinity Saturday fell on May 11, 1885 when the commemoration of the departed was done, the decree of the Holy Synod transferred the commemoration of Sts. Methodius and Cyril to May 13.

S. V. Bulgakov, Handbook for Church Servers, 2nd ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900), pp. 0167-0169.

Translated by Archpriest Eugene D. Tarris © March 16, 2007.



How to Bring (or bring back) Someone to the Orthodox Christian Faith?

Orthodox is the Greek word meaning "correct glorification (of God)" coming from the words "Orthos" which means "right" or "correct", and "Doxa", which means "glory", thus loosely translated to "the proper way to believe".

Here are some steps you should take to bring someone to the Orthodox Christian Faith.

1. Pray for the person to come to the faith, and for God's help in your task. Trust that God will do whatever is necessary to help, so long as you are working from a pure heart. This is very important.
2. If possible, seek the council and support of your spiritual father, another trusted cleric, or an experienced layperson.
3. Take time to review the basic principles of Orthodox Christian faith, and familiarize yourself with Orthodox apologetics in order to have the most productive conversations. Understanding various other faiths and ideologies and how they contrast to Orthodoxy is also very important.

4. Speak positively and with enthusiasm about your faith. Remember to stay calm, and only express those things you genuinely believe. Honest expression will be much more effective than repeating memorized sermons.
5. Try to learn why a person feels the way they currently do about God, Christ, and the church. Be prepared to be a good listener. It is important to understand and empathise with this person's life path.
6. Be prepared to answer difficult questions. If you cannot answer them, do not panic. Remain calm and take time to find the answer when the opportunity arises.
7. Sense when the person is feeling too much discomfort and is no longer being receptive. Do not be forceful. Be careful to avoid a patronizing attitude; simply because this person does not accept your faith in no way makes you better than they are.
8. Encourage people to come to an Orthodox church to "see for themselves" what it is about. Do not apply too much pressure, or you will drive them away. Maintain an open, friendly attitude at all times.
9. When the moment is right, try to direct the person to see a priest whom you trust to properly explain the faith to him or her.

Tips

- If in doubt about how to best approach a person, refer to God in prayer, asking for Him to guide your words, deeds, and thoughts.
- A positive example by way of genuine (not artificially forced) warmth, sensitivity, receptivity, and kindness towards a person is vital in helping a person respect the Orthodox way of life.
- Do not take someone's lack of conversion/understanding as your own fault. Many people come to faith in gradual stages. It may take a few months, or it may take years - this is all dependent on God's will and the level of this person's receptivity.
- When discussing Orthodoxy, do not remain confined to the New Testament. The lives of the saints are a vital instrument in properly explaining what it means to live by the Orthodox way.
- Regularly remembering the person in your prayers will always be of benefit to the conversion of him or her.

Warnings

- Do not use confrontation language. Such language usually puts people on the defensive and will not produce converts.
- Do not threaten the person's damnation for not accepting the Orthodox faith or leading a sinful life; conversion by threat is not effective.
- Abort any spiritual conversation if it gets too agitated, especially if tempers are on the rise.
- Avoid turning the conversation into a personal contest of "you're wrong, I'm right"
- Do not speak of yourself or other Orthodox Christians as being greater people for having accepted the faith.
- Trying to convert someone for your own personal agenda (i.e. to feed your sense of pride) will not produce good results. Search out and confront these motives.
- Do not attempt to artificially "smooth over" the Orthodox faith and try to cater it to the person's current ideology.

- Remember that witnessing is a difficult task, and not everyone has the strength to do it and accept failure.
- Be cautious when speaking to children, their parents may misunderstand your intentions and become hostile.

Things You'll Need

- Prayer.
- Patience.
- The support of your spiritual father or other, preferably experienced cleric. A knowledgeable layperson can also be of help.
- A book on the basics of the Orthodox faith can be of great help.

www.wikihow.com/Bring-Someone-to-the-Orthodox-Christian-Faith



Lessons from the fathers:

On the Resurrection of Christ

“Pascha, the Pascha of the Lord!” By His Resurrection, the Lord has brought us from death to life, and that Resurrection the “Angels in Heaven cry,” [for they have] seen the light of deified human nature in fore-ordained glory in the person of our Lord and Redeemer, in Whose Image and through the power of Whose Resurrection, all true believers in Him, all who have united with Him with all their souls, are transformed. Glory, O Lord, to Thy Most-glorious Resurrection! The Angels sing, rejoicing together with us and foreseeing the swelling of their ranks. O Lord, make us worthy, to hymn Thee, the Resurrected One, with pure hearts, seeing in Thy Resurrection the cessation of our corruption, the seeds of a new resplendent life and the dawn of coming eternal glory whose forerunner Thou becamest, being resurrected for our sake. The tongues of neither men nor angels are capable of expressing Thy ineffable mercy toward us, O most-gloriously Resurrected Lord!

Bishop Theophanes the Recluse

Christ’s Resurrection became life and healing from passions for those who believe on Him, that they might live in God and bring forth the fruits of truth.

Venerable Abba Isaiah

On this Great Day, Christ is called from among the dead which he had emulated. On this day he repelled death’s sting, laid low the gloomy confines of hell, and granted freedom to the souls. On this day, risen from the tomb, He appeared to people for whom he had been born, had died, and been awakened from the dead, so that we, having been reborn and escaped death, might be resurrected with Him, the Resurrected One. On this bright glorious and great day, the angelic hosts, filled with joy, sing a song of victory.

Holy Hierarch Gregory the Theologian

Resurrection of the soul

Christ was Risen, and so we too must be resurrected with Christ, in order to ascend with Him. Our Resurrection is two-fold: in body and in spirit. Our bodily Resurrection will take place on the Last Day. We speak of this when we recite the Creed, the Symbol of Faith: "I look for the Resurrection of the dead." To be resurrected spiritually is to depart from our sins, to turn away from the vanities of this world, and to abide in true repentance and faith; to take up the struggle against any sin, to do the will of our Heavenly Father, to live His truth, and to follow Christ, the Son of God, with humility, love, meekness, and patience. This the new creation of which the Holy Apostle speaks when he says, "...if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature...." (II Corinthians 5, 17); a new person, renewed through repentance and faith, a true Christian, a living member of Christ and an heir to the Kingdom of God.

Holy Hierarch St. Tikhon of Zadonsk

The first Resurrection takes place by means of two Mysteries, Baptism and Repentance... The worker of that Resurrection is the Holy Spirit.

Holy Hierarch Ignatiy Brianchaninov

Christ is resurrected in one who is prepared [for the Resurrection], and His tomb, the heart, once again becomes the Temple of God. Arise, O Lord, and save me, O my God - In this, Thy mystical, essential, material Resurrection, lies my salvation.

Holy Hierarch Ignatiy Brianchaninov

On the Glorious Ascension



That our flesh should be seated in the heavens and be worthy of worship by the Angels, Archangels, Seraphim and Cherubim is truly a great, astonishing and marvelous thing. On contemplating that, I am often struck with amazement, and I entertain exalted thoughts about mankind, for I see God's great and abundant care for our existence.

St. John Chrysostom

O man, become a bit more sober, come to your senses. As a rational creature, recognize that God in the Highest has descended from Heaven for you, to raise you up from the earth and take you to Heaven.

St. Ephraim of Syria

By ascending to Heaven before [the eyes of] his holy disciples, Christ also showed all believers the way. Christ the Head ascended unto Heaven; His holy members, the true Christians, will ascend as well. The path had been closed to men, but by Christ's death, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain" (Matthew 27: 51), and the path and entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven was opened to the faithful (Hebrews 10: 19-20).

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk



Wisdom from the Fathers

**SAINT SILOUAN
ON THE LOVE OF GOD EXPERIENCED THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT**

No man himself can know what God's love is unless he is taught by the Holy Spirit; but God's love is known in our Church through the Holy Spirit, and so we speak of this love. The sinful soul which does not know the Lord fears death, thinking that the Lord will not forgive her her sins. But this is because the soul does not know the Lord and how greatly He loves us. If people knew this, then no man would despair, for the Lord not only forgives but rejoices exceedingly at the return of a sinner. Though you be at death's door, believe firmly that the moment you ask, you will receive forgiveness. The Lord is not like us. He is immeasurably meek, and merciful, and good; and when the soul knows Him she marvels greatly and exclaims: "O what a Lord is ours!" The Holy Spirit gave our Church to know how great is God's mercy.

The soul cannot know peace unless she prays for her enemies. The soul that has learned of God's grace to pray, feels love and compassion for every created thing, and in particular for mankind, for whom the Lord suffered on the Cross, and His soul was heavy for every one of us.

The Lord taught me to love my enemies. Without the grace of God we cannot love our enemies. Only the Holy Spirit teaches love, and then even demons arouse our pity because they have fallen from good, and lost humility in God.

I beseech you, put this to the test. When a man affronts you or brings dishonor on your head, or takes what is yours, or persecutes the Church, pray to the Lord, saying: "O Lord, we are all Thy creatures. Have pity on Thy servants, and turn their hearts to repentance," and you will be aware of grace in your soul. To begin with, constrain your heart to love your enemies, and the Lord, seeing your good will, will help you in all things, and experience itself will show you the way. But the man who thinks with malice of his enemies has not God's love within him, and does not know God.

If you will pray for your enemies, peace will come to you; but when you can love your enemies – know that a great measure of the grace of God dwells in you, though I do not say perfect grace as yet, but sufficient for salvation. Whereas if you re-vile your enemies, it means there is an evil spirit living in you and bringing evil thoughts into your heart, for, in the words of the Lord, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts" or good thoughts.

The good man thinks to himself in this wise: everyone who has strayed from the truth brings destruction on himself and is therefore to be pitied. But of course the man who has not learned love of the Holy Spirit will not pray for his enemies. The man who has learned love from the Holy Spirit sorrows all his life over those who are not saved, and sheds abundant tears for the people, and the grace of God gives him strength to love his enemies.

If you cannot love, then at least do not revile or curse your enemies, and things will already be better; but if a man curse and abuse his enemies, it is plain that an evil spirit

lives in him, and if he does not repent, when he dies he will go to the place where evil spirits dwell. May the Lord preserve every soul from such adversity!



MISCELLANEOUS

MANY THANKS TO ALL!

During Great Lent and Holy Week there were many things which needed to be done (cleaning, singing, serving, decorating, cooking, etc). Your labors, time, and offerings did not go unnoticed but instead are greatly appreciated! May God bless you!

THANK YOU FOR THE BEAUTIFUL PASCHA!

To our Beloved Rector, Father Lubomir and our Altar Servers, Readers, Chanters, Choir regent and Choir - we want you to know how appreciative we are of the extra effort you have made to make Holy Week and Pascha special this year. We are thankful to those who donated for the beautiful flowers , made the garlands, dyed the eggs for the Pascha Services, made the Artos, and Kulichi. To those who maintained the Church and made special efforts to clean it between services. Thank You!

THE HONEY SALE FUNDRAISER

raised just over \$200 for our church. Many thanks to the sisters organizing the event and all those who helped support our Church by purchasing items from the sale!

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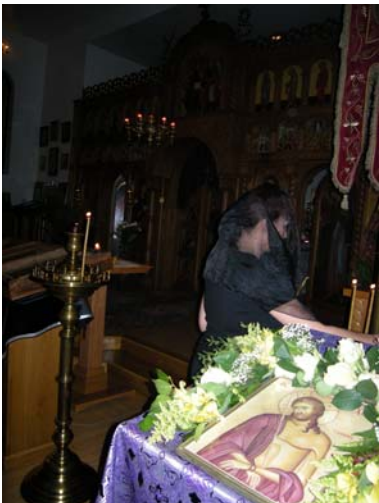
Posted by the Senior-Sister Ekaterina.

(Some sources for this issue have been used from the web net as indicated)



PHOTO GALLERY

“Passion week” – 2009





“Palm Sunday”- 2009





“Pascha” – 2009





