

The Arena

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The Newsletter of
SAINT KATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR MISSION

ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

by Father John Strickland

This year, the month of June carries us to the conclusion of the paschal season with our Lord's Ascension and the arrival of the feast of Holy Pentecost (June 15). This event is recorded in the second chapter of the Acts of the Holy Apostles, when, after the Ascension, God poured out his Holy Spirit upon the Apostles who had gathered in Jerusalem in the upper room. By this act God created the Church, and

in a certain sense Pentecost, in addition to celebrating the awesome power of the Holy Spirit, represents a feast (one might say the principle feast) of the "one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." Saint Katherine Mission, like every Orthodox parish, is a microcosm of this Church, and we are called to participate in the life of the Holy Spirit as fully as the first Christians themselves. In fact, for us (as for them) the experience of Pentecost has never and will never come to an end.

As much as we feel our lives at times to be spiritually deficient, the Holy Spirit persistently summons us back to the eternal, pentecostal reality of that upper room. Is it not this reality into which he initiated us with "the gift of the Holy Spirit" at our Chrismation? Is it not this reality which he renews in us at each and every divine service? It is no coincidence that every rule of prayer and every divine service given to us by the Church begins with the prayer to the Holy Spirit, known as O Heavenly King, which is taken from the hymnography of Pentecost.

An important way we can begin to live a life more completely filled by the grace of the Holy Spirit is to love one another. Often during Holy Communion at the Divine Liturgy we sing the text of the Gospel of John in which our Lord gives the new commandment that we love one another. He states explicitly that we are to do so "as I have loved you" (John 13:34). This kind of love is not easy. It involves sacrifice, the kind that Christ made through his Crucifixion. It is a love that puts the

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will of God first in our lives, and leads us to see in every one around us the presence of God.

While we may not and perhaps can not always be in agreement with one another, we can and must try to love one another in a spirit of unity, the way that the Holy Trinity is unity. This is why we sing about the Trinity at the point in the Divine Liturgy after the priest calls upon us to “love one another, that with one accord we may confess.” It is precisely this unity that existed at Pentecost. The Apostles, we are told, “were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). Their unity was not based upon identical convictions about the needs of the future (consider the later disagreements of Peter and Paul described in Galatians), but upon love for one another and confidence that God would care for them. As a parish, we must try to enter into the life of the Holy Spirit through this unity in love. The feast of Pentecost, as a feast of the Church, is a time for us to resolve to do this.

PARISH COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS:

PARISH AND LOCAL EVENTS

COMING SOON: PARISH CLASSIFIEDS & PARISHIONER CONTRIBUTIONS

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:

June 12: Inquirer Course – 7pm

June 14: Catechesis – 10am

Moleben to St. Konstantine – 5:30pm

Festal Vigil – 6pm

June 15: Pentecost

Vespers with Kneeling Prayers following Fellowship

June 16 – July 4: Father John away

June 21: no services

June 23 – June 28 : Apostles Fast

June 28: no services

June 29: Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul

CATECHETICAL CHALLENGES (Our Catechumens can answer them. Can you?).

- Liturgical challenge: What hymn sung toward the end of every Divine Liturgy (outside the season of Pascha) is simply taken from the feast of Pentecost? (Hint: it relates to receiving the Holy Spirit).
- Historical challenge: Which North American saint was the first to be formally canonized?
- Iconographical challenge: How many icons do we have in our temple that represent North American saints?

Answers to May challenges:

- "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (because Pascha was traditionally the time when catechumens were received into the Church)
- Ezekiel (Ez. 37:1-14 is read at Matins for Holy Saturday).
- Saint Serafim of Sarov customarily wore a white cassock honor of the Resurrection.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

New Martyr Constantine

The Russian Church of the 20th Century has witnessed a countless host of martyrs, many of them recently glorified either as Saints of All-Russia, or as locally venerated Saints. One of the first to take his place among the multitude of witnesses to the Truth was the renowned missionary to the Bogorodsk area, Archpriest Constantine Golubev (1852 - 1918.), who through the podvig of martyrdom struggle glorified the Lord.

Fr. Constantine was born in 1852, into the family of a church reader, in the village of Baranovka, Volsky District, Saratov Province. His father reposed in the Lord when the boy was nine years of age. Soon after his father's death, Constantine enrolled in the Saratov Theological Seminary; he graduated at the top of his class.

At the age of 24, he felt called to missionary service. With the blessing of the Most Reverend Tikhon, Bishop of Saratov and Tsarytsin, he was assigned to work in the village of Baranovka as a missionary of the Brotherhood of the Holy Cross. Three years later, recognizing Constantine Golubev's success in the missionary field, Bishop Tikhon granted a request to assign him as anti-sectarian and anti-schismatic missionary for the Saratov Diocese.

The Saratov Diocesan Missionary's work drew the attention of Metropolitan Sergius (Liapidevsky) of Moscow and Kolomna, who was troubled by the extent of sectarian activity in the Moscow Province, especially in Bogorodsky District.

On March 12, 1895 Bishop Tikhon (Nikanorov) of Mozhaïsk ordained him to the priesthood. One month later, Fr. Constantine was assigned to be missionary in the town of Bogorodsk and for its District, and was made dean of two deaneries – that of the town of Bogorodsk, and that of Pavloposad. Fr. Constantine very quickly joined battle with the mindset not only of the Orthodox Faithful, but of the Old Ritualists.

Fr. Constantine played an active role in charitable activities to benefit the incarcerated, and was made the Prisons Committee District Division Director, and conducted Divine Services in the prison church until a priest was assigned to staff that church.

Fr. Constantine accorded a great deal of attention to problems of religious education and enlightenment of women. He used to say that Russia's citizens would be a reflection of the kind of women there would be in the land, a reflection of the women's level of faith and religious education. He also accorded a great deal of attention to the battle against alcoholism, and was a member of the Bogorodsk Temperance Committee.

Amid all of his wide-ranging endeavors, Fr. Constantine would find time to devote to his own large and friendly family. His children – of whom there were seven – were strictly raised in an Orthodox spirit.

Fr. Constantine was arrested after a Vigil Service in November 1918. For several days, batiushka was under arrest in the Bogorodsk jail. Then without a trial or legal proceeding, he was condemned to death. Apparently, he was told that he was to be executed, for he managed to hand over his pectoral Cross and service book so that they might be removed from the jail. The priest did not ask to be

released; he knew that he had been condemned to death, and was prepared to die. The one thing that he did not know was that, having come to know the priest's strength of faith during his time in jail, the malefactors had chosen to inflict a painful death upon him.

We do not know the date of Fr. Constantine's death; we only know that it was during inclement weather, with a howling wind. We know details of his execution from a speech by V.P. Shein, a member of the All-Russian Local Council of 1917 - 1918, who was later the Russian New Martyr Archimandrite Sergius, in 1922 executed by firing squad along with Metropolitan Benjamin of Petrograd and Gdov. He reported, "The firing squad executing Archpriest Constantine Golubev in Bogorodsk only wounded him; they threw him, still alive, into the pit, and began to cover him with earth. The unfortunate one would raise his head out of the pit and implore them to finish him off; his crying daughter knelt, likewise imploring them not to bury her father alive. However, it was no use, and their villainous deed was carried out to the end..."

It was known ahead of time that the priest was to be executed. Archpriest Constantine had served for 23 years in Bogorodsk, and during that time had become the spiritual father of its Orthodox residents. When a detachment of Red Guards brought the priest out of the prison and escorted him to the place of execution, an enormous crowd of people followed. Those who walked close to him heard Fr. Constantine, remembering the Savior's words, say, "They know not what they do."

They shot him at the edge of a pine forest, and buried him, half dead, in a shallow gully. According to eyewitness accounts, the ground covering him still "breathed" for some time. Later, people who came to the place of Fr. Constantine's execution covered up his feet and the hem of his riasa, which were protruding from the ground.

Executed with Fr. Constantine was a certain woman who fearlessly attempted to protect him by shielding him with her body, and a young member of the Red Army who had refused to carry out the death sentence. Local residents say that as a child, he had been baptized by Fr. Constantine. Their bodies were cast into the same pit.

According to the murdered priest's oldest daughter, Maria Constantinovna, a certain Bedov carried out the [death] sentence.

Apparently, the murderer was tortured by pangs of conscience. Several times, the deceased Fr. Constantine appeared to him. Once, upon seeing his wife come into the house with her hair unkempt, Bedov suffered a momentary delusion and took her for the murdered archpriest; he shot her to death, and then shot himself.

For decades, the pious residents of Bogorodsk venerated the place of Fr. Constantine's death as a holy site, and although the atheists repeatedly leveled the little burial mound in efforts to wipe out all signs of the martyr's burial, Fr. Constantine's spiritual children and others who revered him would repeatedly restore it, would bring flowers, icons, and candles to the grave, would light a vigil lamp, and would serve memorial Panikhidas.

Thus, the memory of the accomplished missionary and martyr has come down to our days, when the Lord revealed in the fullness of His power the glory of His

witness: On November 20, Archpriest Constantine's incorrupt relics were discovered, along with the relics of the two others who had been martyred with him.

JUNE HYMNOGRAPHY

Troparion for Ascension (tone 4)

Thou hast ascended in glory O Christ God, granting joy to thy disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit. Through the blessing they were assured that thou art the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world.

Hymn to the Holy Spirit from the aposticha for Pentecost (tone 6)

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings, and Giver of Life: Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Troparion for Pentecost (tone 8)

Blessed art thou O Christ our God, who hast revealed the fishermen as most wise, by sending down upon them the Holy Spirit; through them thou didst draw the world into thy net. O Lover of Man, glory to thee!

Troparion to the New Martyr Constantine (tone 3)

O unshakable pillar of the Russian Church, model of piety, image of the evangelical life: Hieromartyr Constantine. Thou didst suffer for Christ even to the shedding of thy blood. Diligently entreat Him, the author and finisher of our salvation, to confirm Russia and our own land in Orthodoxy until the end of the world.

Hymn to the Saints of North America from Lord I Cry (tone 6)

Rejoice, O mountains of Pennsylvania; leap for joy, O waters of the Great Lakes; rise up, O fertile plains of Canada; for the elect of Christ who dwell in you are glorified. Men and women who left their homes for a new land. With faith, hope, and patience as their armor, they courageously fought the good fight. Comforted by the beauty of the Orthodox Faith, they labored in mines and mills; they tilled the land; they braved the challenges of the great cities; enduring many hardships and sufferings. Never failing to worship- God in spirit and truth, and unyielding in devotion to his most pure Mother, they erected many temples to his glory. Come, O assembly of the Orthodox, and with love let us praise the holy women, men, and children, those known to us and those known only to God, and let us cry out to them: Rejoice, All Saints of North America, and pray to God for us!

WISDOM OF THE FATHERS

SECOND KNEELING PRAYER OF PENTECOST (FROM VESPERS ON SUNDAY)

Lord Jesus Christ our God, who, while still present with us in this life, gave your peace to humankind, and ever grant the gift of the all-holy Spirit to the faithful as an inheritance which cannot be taken away, you sent down this grace today in a more manifest form to your Disciples and Apostles and gave eloquence to their lips with tongues of fire, through which we, every race of humankind, having received the knowledge of God in our own language by the hearing of the ear, have been enlightened by the light of the Spirit, delivered from the darkness of error and, by the distribution and supernatural force of the perceptible tongues of fire, have been taught faith in you and have been illumined to speak of you as God with the Father and the holy Spirit in one Godhead, power and authority.

Do you, then, the radiance of the Father, the unchangeable and unalterable stamp of his Essence and nature, the source of salvation and grace, open also the lips of me, a sinner, and teach me how I should and for whom I ought to pray, for you know the multitude of my sins, but your compassion will overcome their measureless number. For see, with fear I stand before you, having cast away despair of my soul into the sea of your mercy. Govern my life, by the ineffable power of your wisdom, you who govern all creation by a word, who are the fair haven of the storm-tossed, and make known to me the way in which I shall walk.

Grant to my thoughts the Spirit of your wisdom, to my folly the Spirit of understanding, with the Spirit of your fear overshadow my deeds. Renew a right Spirit within my inward parts and make firm the instability of my mind with the sovereign Spirit, so that guided each day by your good Spirit to what is profitable, I may be found worthy to do your commandments and always keep in mind your Coming, which searches out all that we have done. Do not neglect me, so that I become deceived by the corrupted pleasures of the world, but give me strength to yearn for the enjoyment of the treasures which are to come. For you said, Master, that whatever someone asks in your name they receive without restraint from your co-eternal God and Father. And so I a sinner at the coming of your holy Spirit implore your goodness, 'The things that I have prayed for grant me for my salvation'. Yes, Lord, the loving and most generous giver of every benefaction, for it is you who give superabundantly more than we ask. It is you who are compassionate, merciful, who without sin became a partaker in our flesh and who in loving compassion bend down to those who bend the knee to you and became the atonement for our sins. Give your people, Lord, your acts of pity; hear us from your holy heaven; sanctify us by the power of your saving right hand; shelter us in the shelter of your wings; do not despise the works of your hands. Against you alone we have sinned, but it is you alone that we adore. We do not know how to worship a strange god, nor to spread out our hands, Master, to another god. Forgive us our offences and, accepting our supplications on our bended knees, stretch out to us all a helping hand. Accept the prayer of all as acceptable incense, rising up before your kingdom, above all goodness.

THE ORTHODOX FAITH

An excerpt from Fr. Hopko's *The Orthodox Faith: Doctrine, Volume I*

Sources of Christian Doctrine: Revelation

Every morning at its Matins Service the Orthodox Church proclaims: "God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us; blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Ps 118:26-27). The first foundation of Christian doctrine is found in this biblical line: *God has revealed Himself to us.*

God has shown Himself to His creatures. He has not disclosed His very innermost being, for this innermost essence of God cannot be grasped by creatures. But God has truly shown what men can see and understand of His divine nature and will.

The fullness and perfection of God's self-revelation is found in His Son Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of the gradual and partial revelation of God in the Old Testament. Jesus is the one truly "blessed ... who comes in the name of the Lord."

The first title given to Jesus by the people is that of **Rabbi**, which literally means **teacher**, in the English New Testament the word **Master** also issued in relation to Jesus in the sense of one who teaches, such as in schoolmaster or holder of a master's degree. Jesus' followers are also called **disciples**, which literally means students or pupils.

Jesus came to men first of all as the Teacher sent from God. He teaches the will of God and makes God known to men. He reveals fully--as fully as men can grasp--the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.

The coming of Jesus as teacher is one aspect of his being Christ the Messiah. The word **Christ** in Greek is the word for the Hebrew **Messiah** which means the Anointed of God. For when the messiah would come, it was foretold, men would be "taught by God" (Is 54:13, Jn 6:45).

Jesus comes to men as the divine teacher. He claimed on many occasions that his words were those of God. He spoke as "one having authority" not like the normal Jewish teachers (Mt 7:29). And he accused those who rejected his teachings as rejecting God Himself.

He who believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And he who sees me sees Him who sent me. I have come as light into the world ... for I have not spoken on my own authority; the Father who sent me has himself given me commandment what to speak. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has bidden me. (Jn 12:44-50)

Jesus taught men not only by his words, but also by his actions; and indeed by his very own person. He referred to himself as the Truth (John 14:6) and as the Light (Jn 8:12). He showed himself not merely to be speaking God's words, but to be himself the Living **Word of God** in human flesh, the **Logos** who is eternal and uncreated, but who has become man as Jesus of Nazareth in order to make God known to the world.

In the beginning was the Word [Logos] and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God; all things were made through him, and without him was not any

thing made that was made.

In him was life and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

The true light that enlightens every man was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world knew him not.

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only-begotten Son from the Father.

And from his fullness have we all received, grace upon grace. For the law came through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God; the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known.

(See Jn 1:1-18. The Easter Liturgy Gospel Reading in the Orthodox Church)

Jesus, the divine Word of God in human flesh, comes to teach men by his presence, his words and his deeds. His disciples are sent into the world to proclaim Him and His **Gospel**, which means literally the "glad tidings" or the "good news" of the Kingdom of God. Those whom Jesus sends are called the **apostles**, which means literally "those who are sent." The apostles are directly inspired by God's Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth (Jn 15:26), to "make disciples of all nations" teaching them what Christ has commanded (Mt 28:19).

The early Church, we are told, "devoted themselves to the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42). **Doctrine** as a word simply means teaching or instruction. The apostles' doctrine is the doctrine of Jesus and becomes the doctrine of the Christian Church. It is received by the disciples of every age and generation as the very doctrine of God. It is proclaimed everywhere and always as the doctrine of eternal life through which all men and the whole world are enlightened and saved.

At this point it must be mentioned that although God's self-revelation in history through the chosen people of Israel--the revelation which culminates in the coming of Christ the Messiah--is of primary importance, it is also the doctrine of the Christian Church that all genuine strivings of men after the truth are fulfilled in Christ. Every genuine insight into the meaning of life finds its perfection in the Christian Gospel. Thus, the holy fathers of the Church taught that the yearnings of pagan religions and the wisdom of many philosophers are also capable of serving to prepare men for the doctrines of Jesus and are indeed valid and genuine ways to the one Truth of God.

In this way Christians considered certain Greek philosophers to have been enlightened by God to serve the cause of Truth and to lead men to fullness of life in God since the Word and Wisdom of God is revealed to all men and is found in all men who in the purity of their minds and hearts have been inspired by the Divine Light which enlightens every man who comes into this world. This Divine Light is the word of God, Jesus of Nazareth in human flesh, the perfection and fullness of God's self-revelation to the world.

It cannot be overstressed that divine revelation in the Old Testament, in the Church of the New Testament, in the lives of the saints, in the wisdom of the fathers, in the beauty of creation ... and most fully and perfectly in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the revelation of God Himself. God has spoken. God has acted. God has manifested Himself and continues to manifest Himself in the lives of His people.

If we want to hear God's voice and see God's actions of self-revelation in the world, we must purify our minds and hearts from everything that is wicked and false. We must strive to love the truth, to love one another, and to love everything in God's good creation. According to the Orthodox faith, purification from falsehood and sin is the way to the knowledge of God. If we open ourselves to divine grace and purify ourselves from all evils, then it is certain that we will be able to interpret the scriptures properly and come into living communion with the true and living God who has revealed Himself and continues to reveal Himself to those who love Him.



TROPARIA & KONTAKIA: JUNE

June 8

Commemoration of the Holy Fathers of the First Ecumenical Council

Troparion - Tone 8

You are most glorious, O Christ our God!
You have established the Holy Fathers as lights on the earth!
Through them you have guided us to the true faith!
O greatly Compassionate One, glory to You!

Kontakion - Tone 8

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one faith
for the Church.

Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology,
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of Orthodoxy!

June 15

Holy Pentecost

Troparion - Tone 8

Blessed art You O Christ Our God
You have revealed the fishermen as most wise
By sending down upon them the Holy Spirit
Through them You drew the world into Your net
O Lover of Man, Glory to You!

Kontakion - Tone 8

When the most High came down and confused the tongues,
He divided the nations;
But when he distributed the tongues of fire
He called all to unity.
Therefore, with one voice, we glorify the All-holy Spirit!

June 22

Synaxis of All Saints

Troparion - Tone 4

As with fine porphyry and royal purple,
Your church has been adorned with Your martyrs' blood shed throughout all the
world.

She cries to You, O Christ God:
Send down Your bounties on Your people,
Grant peace to Your habitation, and great mercy to our souls!

Kontakion - Tone 8

The universe offers You the God-bearing martyrs,
As the first fruits of creation, O Lord and Creator.
Through the Theotokos, and their prayers establish Your Church in peace!

May 25

Synaxis of the Saints of North America

Troparion - Tone 8

As the bountiful harvest of Your sowing of salvation,
The lands of North America offer to You, O Lord, all the saints who have shone

in them.

By their prayers keep the Church and our land in abiding peace
Through the Theotokos, O most Merciful One.

Kontakion - Tone 3

Today the choir of Saints who were pleasing to God in the lands of North
America

Now stands before us in the Church and invisibly prays to God for us.
With them the angels glorify Him,
And all the saints of the Church of Christ keep festival with them;
And together they all pray for us to the Pre-Eternal God.

PARISHIONERS' NAME DAYS – JUNE

June 4th – Megan Carlisle (Righteous Martha, sister of Lazarus)

June 27th – Patty Rebne (St. Joanna the Myrrhbearer)

June 29th – Brody Rebne (the Holy Glorious and All-Praised Leader of the Apostles,
Peter)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following people in your prayers this month:

LIVING:

Charles
Robert
Mark
Sarah
David
Patricia
Flore
Allan Simeon
Naheda
Gregory
Arne
Lena
Child Ben
Niki and the child to be born of her
Nicholas
Emily

DEPARTED: