

# The Arena



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The Newsletter of  
SAINT KATHERINE THE GREAT MARTYR MISSION  
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## PASTOR'S COLUMN

by Father John Strickland

*From the Archpastoral Message of His  
Beatitude Metropolitan HERMAN on  
the occasion of the beginning of the  
new ecclesiastical year (or Indiction)*

In the New Testament, we learn of two different understandings of time. The first understanding is referred to in Greek as "chronos", from which we derive the words "chronological,"

"chronology," etc. This term signifies days, minutes, hours, and other measurements of time. The other term used in the Scriptures to denote time is "kairos." The word "kairos" refers to the "appointed time" for something to occur. The spirit of "kairos" time is reflected in these famous words from the book of Ecclesiastes: "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). God is not affected by chronological time as human beings are, but He knows and guides the "kairos," the appointed time, for all things in His creation.

Kairos time stands beyond any chronological unit. At the beginning of the Divine Liturgy, the deacon states, "It is time to begin the service to the Lord." The Greek original of this phrase makes it clear that the deacon is saying that the "kairos" has come for the celebration of the Liturgy. Regardless of the specific time in the morning at which that particular Divine Liturgy begins, it is the appointed time to hymn and bless God, to give thanks to Him and worship Him.

In the morning prayer of St. Philaret of Moscow we pray, "In unforeseen

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events let me not forget that all are sent by Thee.” This principle applies not only to what comes our way, but also to when it comes our way. God does not give those who believe in Him everything they want, but He will never deprive them of what they need. God gives us what we need, when He knows that we need it. A “kairos” moment can last for seconds, minutes, or generations.

In another prayer of St. Philaret, we pray, “Thou seest my needs, which I do not even know. See and deal with me according to Thy mercy. Purge and heal me, humble me and raise me....” From these words we learn that God’s mercy can be worked through both joys and sorrows, through triumph and tribulation, according to that which God knows we need.

Knowing that God always holds us in the palm of His hand, we can trust that every moment – both the good and the difficult – is a “kairos” moment. Our challenge is to prayerfully reflect on that given moment to discern how God is providing for our needs through it. God will not force His grace upon us; we must receive it willingly.

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## **1** PARISH AND LOCAL EVENTS

### CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:

**September 6:** St. Katherine’s 10 Year Anniversary Picnic

- Liturgy – 9:30am (with Fr. Timothy Perry)
- Picnic – noon

**September 7:** Sunday School Begins (K and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade combo)  
Vespers for Nativity of the Theotokos – 6 pm

**September 8:** Liturgy for Nativity of the Theotokos – 7am

**September 13:** Festal Vigil w/ Veneration of the Cross – 6pm

**September 14:** Elevation of the Precious Cross  
Sunday School (K and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade combo)

**September 17:** Parish Council – 7pm

**September 20:** Catechesis – 10am  
Resurrectional Vigil – 6 pm

**September 21:** Sunday School (2<sup>nd</sup> grade only)

**September 25:** Inquirer Course – 7pm

**September 28:** Sunday School (K only)

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

- In what scriptural passage does Saint Paul “preach Christ crucified”?
- Which late first-century or early second-century source states in a matter of fact way that Christians fast on Wednesdays and Fridays? (If you need a hint, ask a member of our inquirer course on church history).
- From where do we get the text for the hymn known as the Polyeleos sung at every Festal Vigil and Resurrectional Vigil?

Answers to August challenges:

- The Greek abbreviation for “Jesus Christ” and word “Victor” are stamped into the top of each prosphora used for the Divine Liturgy.
- The Holy Prophets Moses and Elijah appeared in conversation with Christ at the Transfiguration. (This reveals that departed saints remain in communion with Christ and intercede for us before him).
- The first council of the Orthodox Church was held in Jerusalem, included all of the Holy Apostles, and is described in Acts 15. Significantly, the Apostle James (who was Bishop of Jerusalem) was its president and issued the authoritative statement of its results, not Saint Peter (whom Roman Catholics claim must be, along with his successor bishops of Rome, the head of the Church and its ultimate authority).

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## ✝ THE LITTLE CHURCH

by Patty Rebne

*“The Little Church”, is intended to provide our parish with practical encouragement in bringing the Church home. I don't have the answers—I have a lot of questions! If you have topics you would like to read about, or if you have additional suggestions for the “answers”, send them along. I will include them in the next column. My email address is [patty.r@comcast.net](mailto:patty.r@comcast.net).*

The first column looked at practical tips for establishing a habit of prayer. Here is this month's question: “We brought home some holy water and some holy oil. Now what?”

When you bring holy water home from church, use it! It's not just for decoration. Holy water is water that has been blessed and restored to its original effectiveness for washing, for refreshment and for healing. Here are some ways you can bring the blessing of holy water into your home:

- ❖ Drink a little as the first thing taken into the body in the morning.
- ❖ Use it to sign the Cross on sores and cuts as you pray for healing.
- ❖ Drink a little when you are ill, or tempted, or even when you are angry. (Remember that water cleanses, refreshes and heals...)
- ❖ If a family member misses Divine Liturgy, bring him or her some of the blessed bread to eat and some holy water to drink. This does not substitute for Holy Communion but it does bless the recipient.

- ❖ Sprinkle it on the walls of rooms where a “bad scene” has occurred—ask God to restore the room to holy use.

If you have holy water left when newly blessed holy water is available, instead of pouring the older holy water down the drain, put it on the plants in your garden.

The Old and New Testaments refer frequently to oil as a source of good things: light, healing, anointing and beauty. Oil is a symbol of God's mercy and a visible embodiment of the grace of healing. Olive oil can be blessed by a priest—for example, at the Lity of a festal vigil—or by burning in vigil lamps in holy places. At St. Katherine, we have been given oil that burned in the vigil lamps over the relics of St. John of San Francisco. Father John can provide you with holy oil if you need some for your icon corner.

You can use holy oil to:

- ❖ Anoint your children on their foreheads with the sign of the cross after evening prayers when you give them a bedtime blessing. (I love it when Glenn anoints me, too!)
- ❖ Anoint yourself with the sign of the cross during your prayers.
- ❖ Anoint family members who are beginning a specific task, journey or undertaking. For example, anoint your children as they start school; anoint those who are preparing for a trip or for surgery or a new job or an important project.
- ❖ Anoint cuts and sores or the body in general with the sign of the cross as you pray for healing.

Holy water and holy oil are both restorative and protective when they are used with faith in the grace of the Holy Spirit Who sanctified them. Use them freely, and thank God that He has given these material blessings for the health and restoration of our spirits, minds, bodies and souls.

Next month: A reader asks, “Why do we light candles when we pray?”



## THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

### September 28<sup>th</sup> – Saint Wenceslaus the Prince of the Czechs

The Holy Prince Wenceslaus (Vyacheslav) of the Czechs was a grandson of the holy Martyr and Princess Ludmilla (September 16), and he was raised by her in deep piety. He began to rule at age eighteen after the death of his father Prince Bratislav (+ 920).

In spite of his youthful age, he ruled wisely and justly and concerned himself much about the Christian enlightenment of the people. The holy prince was a widely educated man, and he studied in the Latin and Greek languages.

St Wenceslaus was peace-loving. He built and embellished churches, and in Prague, the Czech capital, he raised up a magnificent church in the name of St Vitus, and he had respect for the clergy. Envious nobles decided to murder the saint and, at first, to incite his mother against him, and later to urge his younger brother, Boleslav, to occupy the princely throne.

Boleslav invited his brother to the dedication of a church, and then asked him to stay another day. In spite of the warnings of his servants, the holy prince refused to believe in a conspiracy and exposed his life to the will of God. On the following day, September 28, 935, when Wenceslaus went to Matins, he was wickedly murdered at the doors of the church by his own brother and his brother's servants. His body was stabbed and discarded without burial.

The mother, hearing of the murder of her son, found and placed his body in a recently consecrated church at the princely court. They were not able to wash off the blood splashed on the church doors, but after three days it disappeared by itself.

After repenting of his sin, the murderer transferred the relics of St Wenceslaus to Prague, where they were placed in the church of St Vitus, which the martyr himself had constructed (the transfer of the relics of St Wenceslaus is celebrated on March 4). The memory of Prince Wenceslaus has been honored from of old in the Russian Orthodox Church.



- *Saint Ignatius of Antioch (d. c. 110)*, **Epistle to the Romans**

All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. "For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?" Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not ye give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light: when I have gone thither, I shall indeed be a man. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God.

- *Saint Innocent of Alaska (d. 1879)*, **Indication of the Way into the Kingdom of Heaven**

... If the Lord leads a person into suffering or lays crosses upon him, it is only to heal his soul, to make him like Jesus Christ and to perfectly purify his heart, in which He Himself wishes to dwell with the Son and the Holy Spirit.

... All carry their crosses, all have to suffer. To carry the cross is not the portion or lot only of Christians. No! Both the Christian and the non-Christian, the believer and the unbeliever carry the cross. The only difference is that for the one the cross serves as a cure and as a means of inheriting the Kingdom of Heaven, while for the other it becomes a chastisement, penalty, and punishment. For the one, crosses gradually become lighter, sweeter, and are finally turned into crowns of eternal glory; while for the other they become heavier and more grievous, and in the end all the crosses of the world will converge into one great hellish burden which will weigh down upon their heads and beneath which they will suffer eternally and without respite. The reason is that the one carries them with faith and surrender to God, and the other with murmuring and blasphemies. And so, Christian, you should not only not avoid crosses and not murmur at them, but, on the contrary, you should thank Jesus Christ for sending them to you, and thank Him day and night for granting you to be numbered among His crusaders or cross-bearers.

... Jesus Christ did not suffer and die in order to give us the will to do all that we want. No, God preserve us from thinking so!

### Sources of Christian Doctrine: The Liturgy

When the Church, which means literally the gathering or assembly of people who are called together to perform a specific task, assembles as God's People to worship, this gathering is called the **liturgy** of the Church. As a word *liturgy* means the common work or action of a particular group of people for the sake of all. Thus the divine liturgy of the Christian Church means the common work of God done by the people of God.

The liturgy of the Old Testament people was the official worship in the temple of Jerusalem according to the Mosaic Law, as well as the annual feasts and fasts and the private prayers and services held by the Israelites at home or in the synagogues. **Synagogues** by definition are houses of gathering; they are not temples since according to the Law there was just the one **temple** in Jerusalem where the priestly worship was conducted. In the synagogues the Israelites gathered for prayer and scriptural study, preaching, and contemplation of the Word of God.

In the New Testament Church the liturgy is centered in the person of Christ and is primarily a "christening" of the Old Testament liturgical life. The Christian Church retains the liturgical life of the Old Testament in a new and eternal perspective. Thus, the prayers of the Old Testament, the scriptures and the psalms, are read and sung in the light of Christ. The sacrifice of the Body and Blood of Christ replaces the Old Testament sacrifices in the temple. And the Lord's Day, Sunday, replaces the old Jewish sabbath which is Saturday.

The Jewish feasts also take on new meaning in the Christian Church with the central feast of Passover, for example, becoming the celebration of Christ's death and resurrection; and the feast of Pentecost becoming the celebration of the coming of the Holy Spirit which fulfills the Old Testamental Law. The Christian liturgical year is also patterned after the Old Testamental prototype.

From the basic foundation of the Old Testament liturgy the Church developed its own sacramental life with baptism in the name of the Holy Trinity, chrismation, holy communion, marriage, repentance, healing and the Churchly ministry and priesthood taking on specifically Christian forms and meaning. In addition, a great wealth of specifically Christian prayers, hymns and blessings were developed, together with specifically Christian feasts and celebrations in remembrance of New Testamental events and saints.

The living experience of the Christian sacramental and liturgical life is a primary source of Christian doctrine. In the liturgy of the Church, the Bible

and the Holy Tradition come alive and are given to the living experience of the Christian people. Thus, through prayer and sacramental worship men are "taught by God" as it was predicted for the messianic age (Jn 6:45).

In addition to the living experience of the liturgy, the texts of the services and sacraments provide a written source of doctrine in that they may be studied and contemplated by one who desires an understanding of Christian teachings. According to the common opinion of the Orthodox Church, the sacramental and liturgical texts -- the hymns, blessings, prayers, symbols, and rituals -- contain no formal errors or deformations of the Christian faith and can be trusted absolutely to reveal the genuine doctrine of the Orthodox Church. It may well be that some of the historical information contained in church feasts is inaccurate or merely symbolical, but there is no question in the Church that the doctrinal and spiritual meaning of all of the feasts is genuine and authentic and provides true experience and knowledge of God.

### **Sources of Christian Doctrine: The Councils**

As the Church progressed through history it was faced with many difficult decisions. The Church always settled difficulties and made decisions by reaching a consensus of opinion among all the believers inspired by God who were led by their appointed leaders, first the apostles and then the bishops.

The first church council in history was held in the apostolic church to decide the conditions under which the gentiles, that is, the non-Jews, could enter the Christian Church (see Acts 15). From that time on, all through history councils were held on every level of church life to make important decisions. Bishops met regularly with their priests, also called presbyters or elders, and people. It became the practice, and even the law, very early in church history that bishops in given regions should meet in councils held on a regular basis.

At times in church history councils of all of the bishops in the church were called. All the bishops were not able to attend these councils, of course, and not all such councils were automatically approved and accepted by the Church in its Holy Tradition. In the Orthodox Church only seven such councils, some of which were actually quite small in terms of the number of bishops attending, have received the universal approval of the entire Church in all times and places. These councils have been termed the **Seven Ecumenical Councils** (see table below).

The dogmatic definitions (**dogma** means official teaching) and the canon laws of the ecumenical councils are understood to be inspired by God and to be expressive of His will for men. Thus, they are essential sources of

Orthodox Christian doctrine.

Besides the seven ecumenical councils, there are other local church councils whose decisions have also received the approval of all Orthodox Churches in the world, and so are considered to be genuine expressions of the Orthodox faith and life. The decisions of these councils are mostly of a moral or structural character. Nevertheless, they too reveal the teaching of the Orthodox Church.

### **The Seven Ecumenical Councils**

Nicea I (325): Formulated the First Part of the Creed, defining the divinity of the Son of God

Constantinople I (381): Formulated the Second Part of the Creed, defining the divinity of the Holy Spirit

Ephesus (431): Defined Christ as the Incarnate Word of God and Mary as Theotokos

Chalcedon (451): Defined Christ as Perfect God and Perfect Man in One Person

Constantinople II (553): Reconfirmed the Doctrines of the Trinity and of Christ

Constantinople III (680): Affirmed the True Humanity of Jesus by insisting upon the reality of His human will and action

Nicea II (787): Affirmed the propriety of icons as genuine expressions of the Christian Faith

## HYMNOGRAPHY: SEPTEMBER

### **First hymn at the Aposticha of Vespers for Elevation of the Cross**

Rejoice, O live-bearing Cross, unconquerable trophy of godliness, door to Paradise, succor of the faithful, rampart set about the Church! Through thee corruption is utterly destroyed, the power of death is swallowed up, and we are raised from earth to heaven: invincible weapon, adversary of demons, glory of martyrs, true ornament of saints, have of salvation bestowing on the world great mercy.

## TROPARIA & KONTAKIA: SEPTEMBER

September 7

### **Forefeast of the Nativity of the Mother of God**

#### **Troparion - Tone 4**

Today from the stem of Jesse and from the loins of David,  
the handmaid of God Mary is being born for us.

Therefore all creation is renewed and rejoices!

Heaven and earth rejoice together.

Praise her, you families of nations,

for Joachim rejoices and Anna celebrates crying out:

"The barren one gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our life!"

#### **Kontakion - Tone 3**

Today the Virgin Theotokos Mary

the bridal chamber of the Heavenly Bridegroom

by the will of God is born of a barren woman,

being prepared as the chariot of God the Word.

She was fore-ordained for this, since she is the divine gate and the true Mother of Life.

September 8

### **Nativity of the Mother of God**

#### **Troparion - Tone 4**

Your Nativity, O Virgin,

Has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!

The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,

Has shone from You, O Theotokos!

By annulling the curse,

He bestowed a blessing.

By destroying death, He has granted us eternal Life.

#### **Kontakion - Tone 4**

By Your Nativity, O Most Pure Virgin,

Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness;

Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death.

And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to

you:

The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life!

September 14

**The Universal Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross**

**Troparion - Tone 1**

O Lord, save Your people,  
And bless Your inheritance.  
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians  
Over their adversaries.  
And by virtue of Your Cross,  
Preserve Your habitation.

**Kontakion - Tone 4**

As You were voluntarily raised upon the cross for our sake,  
Grant mercy to those who are called by Your Name, O Christ God;  
Make all Orthodox Christians glad by Your power,  
Granting them victories over their adversaries,  
By bestowing on them the Invincible trophy, Your weapon of Peace.

September 21

**Leavetaking of the Elevation of the Cross**

Same as above

September 28

**Martyr Wenceslaus the Prince of the Czechs**

See the Life of the Saint above.

No Troparion or Kontakion

# PARISHIONERS' NAME DAYS – SEPTEMBER

**September 5:** The Righteous Elizabeth (Elizabeth Lorelli)

**September 17:** Holy Martyr Saint Sophia (Sophia Collins)

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Note: If you wish to have someone included on our parish prayer list for remembrance during the divine services, please notify Fr. John before the end of the month. This list will in most cases be cleared at the beginning of each month.

Please keep the following people in your prayers this month:

### LIVING

Charles

Robert

Mark

Sarah

David

Patricia

Flore

Emily and the child to be born of her

Olga and the child to be born of her

Cat. Deborah

Patricia

Arne

Child Ben

Nika and the child to be born of her

Nicholas

Barbara

Shadi

Heather Mary and the child to be born of her

Johanna

### DEPARTED: