

The Arena



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*"All who love the martyrs, raise up a
divine and worthy hymn, honoring the
most wise Katherine, for she
preached Christ in the arena"*

Kontakion to Saint Katherine

The Newsletter of
SAINT KATHERINE THE GREAT
MARTYR MISSION
ORTHODOX CHURCH OF
AMERICA

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PASTOR'S COLUMN

The following reflection on the Orthodox Church in America and the legacy of Fr. Alexander Schmemmann by Metropolitan Jonah was originally published in 2005 and recently revised.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Father Alexander Schmemmann: In Memoriam
His Beatitude, Metropolitan Jonah

Twenty five years have passed since the repose of Father Alexander Schmemmann. Father Alexander's vision shaped the structure and life of the Orthodox Church in America as well as St. Vladimir's Seminary. His works informed and infuriated, transformed and influenced the life of the whole Orthodox community in America and beyond.

Reading his works now, I am impressed not only by his vision, but by how far the Church has come over the past fifty years since Father Alexander came to the United States from France. No longer is lay non-participation in the Eucharist the norm, a huge transformation. No longer is it questioned that the liturgical texts are a primary access to the Mind of the Church. The liturgy in the OCA is universally served in English, or the language of the local community where necessary. No longer is the OCA a Slavic ghetto of ex-Uniates; it has become a truly catholic

(Continued on page 3)

PARISH AND LOCAL EVENTS

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:

January 1: Orthodox Studies @ 7pm (Church History: New Martyrdom in Russia)

January 5: Vespers w/ Liturgy of St. Basil @ 9am
Festal Vigil @ 7pm

January 6: Theophany of Our Lord
Divine Liturgy @ 9am w/ procession to Lake Washington and
Great Blessing of Waters

January 8: Bible Study @ 7pm

January 10: Catechesis @ 4pm

January 15: Orthodox Studies @ 7pm (Church History: the American Mission)

January 21: Parish Council @ 7pm

January 22: Bible Study @ 7pm

January 24: Catechesis @ 4pm

January 25: Annual Parish Assembly following Liturgy

January 29: Orthodox Studies @ 7pm (Church History: the 3rd Millennium)

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

1. At the Great Blessing of the Waters on Holy Theophany, the priest reads a prayer about the sanctification of creation beginning with the words: "Great art thou, O Lord, and marvelous are thy works, and there is no word which suffices to hymn thy wonders." In what other liturgical context is precisely this prayer used?
2. Which monastic saint from early Muscovite Russia was the direct spiritual father and inspiration to at least eleven other known saints?
3. Without looking at your wall calendar, name at least one Orthodox saint commemorated during the saint-rich month of January.

Answers for January on back page.

THE LITTLE CHURCH

by Patty Rebne

"The Little Church" means to give our parish 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 suggestions for the "answers", send them along. I will include them in the next column. My email address is patty.r@comcast.net.

I know, I know—last month I said we would look at s practices which would help us bring Church life home and make our hearts ready for the Nativity of Christ. But it is a little late for that now, and besides, *The Illumined Heart* on Ancient Faith Radio recently released a podcast with the title “The Family as the Little Church.” The host Kevin Allen interviewed Father Nicolas Speier about why St. John Chrysostom calls the family “the little church” and what is the true vocation of the Orthodox family.

To listen to this podcast, go here <http://ancientfaith.com/podcasts/illuminedheart> and scroll down to November 28th's entry.

If you would rather read a quick summary, here is my take on it. Remember: this is my interpretation, and I might have missed something that would have been of value to you.

Father Nicolas' key point is that the model for any Christian relationship—in the Sacramental Church or the Little Church—is that of the Holy Trinity, Who is the perfect model of unity, humility, harmony and love. The Holy Trinity relate to one another based on self-emptying love, not on power.

Father Nicolas noted that the Little Church will look different from home to home, which makes sense if you think about it, but too often, it is easy to set someone else's home up as The Ideal Orthodox Home (Which Looks Nothing Like Mine). Our job is to live in self-emptying love toward one another in our homes, not to compare ourselves with others.

The Little Church in no way replaces the Sacramental Church—it is an extension of it, both draw strength from the other.

Father Nicolas said to focus on the virtues of love, humility and remembrance of God; when we forget these, we open the door to pride (which brings anger right along with it), and forgetfulness of God. To guard against the vices and to open our hearts to virtue, we pray. We pray for each other and with each other.

If you listen to the podcast, you will get more out of it than this summary.

Every New Year, my thoughts turn to what I want to do better. I hope that some part of this podcast will find its way into the “resolutions” I make. Which brings me to the last point: “Walk. Fall down. Get up again.” Father Nicolas pointed out struggling together is normal to Orthodox family life—we are not perfect, but we struggle along, always seeking holiness.

Pastor's Corner continued...

community based on faith rather than ethnic and family tradition. No longer is it canonically isolated; it is fully in communion with all the other Orthodox Churches. Great numbers of the clergy, many of whom are converts to Orthodoxy, are well educated with master's degrees in divinity or theology. These were some of the main issues with which Father Alexander dealt.

There are still more issues, however, which remain unresolved. The question of the so-called “diaspora” and the role of the Ecumenical Patriarchate is a key issue, which not only Father Alexander but many others courageously addressed. The OCA's autocephaly remains unaccepted by Constantinople, though its canonicity

is unquestioned. Most of all, his vision of a united American Orthodox Church, embracing all Orthodox Christians under a single hierarchy, fully autocephalous and engaged with the contemporary social and cultural milieu, remains unfulfilled. Father Alexander delineated some of the key challenges that the Orthodox Church must face in its mission in this culture. One such challenge is secularization: the reduction of Orthodoxy to a compartmentalized religious form fulfilling people's "religious needs," while their overall worldview remains defined by "the world." Father Alexander wrote against this sellout to secularization, and it is one of the greatest impacts on how we do mission in our culture.

Another central issue is the relationship of monasticism to the mission of the Orthodox Church in this culture. At the time of Father Alexander's death, monasticism was very minimal in North America. The larger men's monasteries were primarily outside the canonical churches, and some were riddled with scandal. Others preserved external forms, but they sorely lacked elders with profound spiritual maturity. Still others were barely nascent, or even experimental in their forms and expression. Monasticism was entirely marginal to the life of the Orthodox community in America (except perhaps in the Russian Church Abroad). Elder Ephraim's communities were not even planned. Father Alexander took a rather dim view of monasticism, undoubtedly because of its spiritual shallowness and external religiosity, as well as his knowledge of the corruption just under the surface of so many communities. He rejected the pharisaical externalism that is such an easy temptation for monasticism, the anti-intellectualism and arrogant elitism, all of which were part of the corruption of monasticism in Romanov Russia. Some say that his attitude was a carry-over from the rivalry between white and black clergy imbedded in the Russian ecclesiastical community. My opinion is that he would have agreed entirely with St. Ignatiy Brianchaninov, that where monasticism is in line with the Gospel it is healthy and constructive. Where it is formal and external, it is useless.

Since Father Alexander's death, the Orthodox Church in America has suffered a crisis in vision. Father Alexander had provided that vision and direction, but no successors have arisen to his role of leadership. We have to ask the question, Where do we go from here? There is consensus that there is a crisis in vision and leadership. Given the foundation of Father Alexander's work, what will bring us back to a unified vision and direction as we strive to do the work of mission as the Orthodox Church in America? We must first examine the past few years, and evaluate the context we have to address, before trying to answer this question.

Where do we go from here?

The mission of the Orthodox Church in North America has come a long way over the past forty years, with the formation of SCOBA, the autocephaly of the OCA, the influx of converts and translation of the services, the reconciliation of the Ukrainian Churches in North America with the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the relative autonomy of the Antiochian Archdiocese, and the healing of the schism between ROCOR and the Russian Mother Church. The face of the Orthodox Church has changed dramatically, with the publication of literature, the education of clergy to better minister to the people, and the establishment of monasticism on a broad scale. But the question, and the point of judgment and hence the crisis, is, Where do we go from here?

We cannot make light of any of the remarkable developments of the past years. But we are faced with an ever changing social and political situation which is

leaving our churches in a rather strange predicament. The old established social institutions -- the Protestant churches which were the ethnic churches of American culture -- are changing so rapidly that they have lost their Christian vision and validate all sorts of immorality. They have lost their status as defining elements in American culture and morality, and have are fast becoming post-Christian, dying on the vine. The new Evangelical and Pentecostal churches are attracting large crowds, but there is little staying power. People usually remain members for no more than three years. These churches have a lot of excitement and entertainment, but the experience is often very shallow and unsatisfying. They emphasize the Bible, but preach an oversimplified and distorted Calvinism or some other strange idea, and are blown about by every wind of doctrine.

Fundamentalism means either dispensationalism, Calvinism or whatever the preacher has been reading that week. The Roman Catholic Church is being battered by these same social currents, and hangs onto its orthodoxy by the strength of the papacy alone, whose authority is steadily declining in the American scene. There is theological, liturgical, and spiritual chaos. And on top of that is the ever growing New Age conglomeration of syncretisms.

Then, you have us.

To paraphrase Father Thomas Hopko, from the inside, the Orthodox Church seems absolutely crazy. Until you look at the churches outside. Then we seem to be the paragon of stability. Orthodoxy in America has been shielded by its ethnicism and inherent conservatism from some of these social trends. It was even the most rapidly growing denomination in the country for a while. But, as the Church becomes indigenous in this country, it is encountering and has to deal with the culture at large. It can no longer hide under the dark veils of mystical antiquity and languages incomprehensible even to the faithful. Babushka watches Pat Robertson and Mother Angelica. Yaya watches Benny Hinn. Our people are now well educated and sophisticated businessmen, no longer non-English speaking immigrants. And thousands of converts have flooded the churches across the jurisdictional spectrum, each with his own baggage.

On one hand, the liturgy remains the same -- though substantially in English -- and there is no interest in changing it or the theology behind it. Church life remains the same, with festivals, bible studies, and dance and choral groups. Things are comfortable. But if we are going to go beyond where we are now, we are going to have to change. Not the liturgy or other services: they are a given. No one is interested in a reformation or Vatican II for Orthodoxy. Not even the day to day life of the parish or diocese will change. What must change is our fundamental attitude about who we are and what we are doing, and how we go about doing it. It is a question of vision and of mission.

For too long, we have been concerned about simply maintaining "our" church, serving "our" people, focusing on the services and on social events. But we have sorely neglected the core of the Gospel: to bring the good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to give sight to the blind and to raise the fallen. We have served mostly ourselves, and anyone who wants to join us -- but not "Them." This is not what our Lord Jesus Christ has given us to do. He has commissioned us to "Go into all the world, preach the Gospel to every nation, baptizing them ... teaching them to observe all I have commanded." Our vision has been constricted, and our mission has been curtailed into something self-serving. We are so concerned

about our own visions and missions, consisting of the petty little agendas of our organizations, that we ignore the underlying mission of the Gospel. It is no wonder that there are multiple parallel jurisdictions. We have lost sight of the thing that really unifies us: the vision and mission of the Gospel.

So what is the Gospel? What is the Good News that we have for people? We have lots of news for people, and lots of invitations, but they are not necessarily very good.

The Gospel is not that Orthodoxy is the True Religion and all the rest are false. The Gospel is not that they can become born-again Russians, Ukrainians, Greeks, Syrians, Serbs or what have you. It is not that they can come help us pay the mortgage. It is not that they can support our position against the Others -- like the OCA vs. the Ecumenical Patriarchate, or Antioch vs. Jerusalem, or God only knows what. It is not that they can come join some enclave of a foreign culture and even be (more or less) accepted.

The Only Agenda: The Gospel

If we are really Orthodox, we should be able to preach the Gospel better than anyone else, because we have it in an undistorted form. So what is it? First and foremost that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead, trampling death by death and giving life to those in the tombs. It is the message of the Resurrection, the victory of Jesus Christ over death and hell. It is the Good News that the Kingdom of God is present, here and now, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and you can be baptized into it, commune of its grace, and be filled with new life. It is this that we constantly celebrate in church, in the services, in the cycles of feasts and fasts. And what does it do for us? It heals our souls, and raises us up from despair, and enables us to deal with any obstacle that comes in our way.

The good news of the "Orthodox" Gospel is that we are free from the destructive perversions of the Gospel which pervade the religious presuppositions of our post-Christian ex-Protestant culture. We don't preach that God is a harsh judge waiting to damn us to hell for the least transgression. How often do we say in the Liturgy, "For You are a good God and the lover of mankind," or "You are a God of mercy and compassion and love for mankind." This is Good News. We don't preach that we are inescapably predestined to be saved or damned, and there is not a thing we can do about it, either way. And we don't preach that being a Christian is about going to heaven when we die. What do we say? As St John Chrysostom said, "For You have brought us up to heaven and endowed us with your kingdom which is to come." Here and now, not just when we're dead. And we don't need to forget those who have gone before us, but we have continual remembrance of them, because in Christ they are alive with the same life with which we also live. We celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy, but it needs to be a real celebration of the integrity of the Gospel message. The triumph over iconoclasm has an essential point of faith: by His Incarnation, Jesus Christ sanctified matter. We can paint a picture of God Incarnate, and experience His Presence in and through venerating the icon. We can partake of His life by eating the bread and wine of His Body and Blood; we are immersed into His life in Baptism, anointed with the Holy Spirit in Chrismation, and made part of His Body. The world itself, matter, is sanctified by Christ's Coming, and becomes a means of communion with God. And we ourselves, in this body, in this life, here and now, are sanctified and made holy, partakers of the life of God. Salvation is about life here and now, not "fire insurance" for after death! In Christ, all things are made new. "For He has brought

us up to heaven, and endowed us with His Kingdom which is to come." This is Good News!

A Call to Repentance

So what do we need to do? We need to focus on this life-giving message of the Gospel, which is what the Church, its life and services, are about anyway. We need to surrender to Christ, and put aside our self-serving agendas. Only then can we come together to do the work of Christ: to draw all people to Him. We need to learn the Scripture, so that we can live it. We need to serve the poor and those in need without regard to who they are or whether they are "ours." In short, we need to love our neighbor as our self. In other words, it is time that we accepted the responsibility to incarnate the message of Christ at all costs. It is time we grew up. Orthodoxy in North America has come a long way. Our forefathers in the Faith have laid a foundation for us to build upon. It is here that we can be encouraged and informed by the vision of Father Alexander Schmemmann, and others. We have a lot of work to do and we have a long way to go. We must repent of the sins and attitudes which have distorted the life of our Church here, and then tear down the obstacles we have erected to fulfilling the mission of the Gospel.

We have to repent of ethnic phyletism. This includes convertism as well. I do not mean that our communities will not have their own traditional flavors -- in more ways than one! We have to rejoice in our diversity; but not at the expense of our unity and cooperation. We can't let any human barriers get in the way of the Gospel: language, culture, social or economic status, race, or anything else. When we let any human category exclude others from the Church, we sell out Christ, as the Jews did who refused to let Gentiles enter the Church.

We have to repent of the exclusiveness that leads us into sectarianism and self-enclosure in our own little self-satisfied groups. This attitude is alien to the Catholic mind, which presupposes a holistic vision of the faith and community of the Church. This means authentic encounter with non-Orthodox Christians in a spirit of humility and openness, not insecurity and arrogance. Exclusivist sectarianism is not the vision of the Catholic Church of the Roman Empire that embraced hundreds of cultures and united them in Christ. It doesn't matter what the rituals look like if we do not have a Catholic vision. If we are not Catholic, we are not Orthodox. We have to assert that we are not in diaspora. We have been here for many generations, and our churches are consecrated to last until the Second Coming. We are Americans and Canadians, with heritages to be proud of. We rejoice in our communion with the Churches of the Old World, but we are Orthodox Christians here and now, and we need to govern our own affairs and elect our own bishops and primate. The Fathers have taught us that as Christians we can have no abiding earthly country. We are citizens of the Kingdom of Heaven. Orthodox churches can only be organized canonically on the basis of local territorial boundaries. We have to end the parallel jurisdictions, which fundamentally distort the life and mission of the Church. The most important canonical objection the Orthodox have against the Papacy is its assertion of universal jurisdiction, without territorial boundaries. Yet we have fallen into the same heresy, as virtually every national Orthodox church has jurisdiction outside its territorial borders, like in America. Just look at a phone book. We have to remind our hierarchs that there is no such thing as "universal jurisdiction" in the Orthodox Church, so if we are to continue to consider ourselves within the Apostolic Tradition, things must change.

Repentance not only entails recognizing and admitting the sin. It is not fulfilled until the sin is overcome, not to be repeated. This means that we have to reorganize the life of the Church in North America, with one synod of all the Orthodox bishops, under one primate elected by them. This is the only way to bring an end to the confusion and competition between the jurisdictions, all of whom are doing the same thing, but are captive to foreign nationalistic agendas. The mission of the Church in America must not be held hostage to the agendas of patriarchs and synods thousands of miles away in different cultures and nations. If they could be convinced relinquish their tight hold on their American cash cows, they might find our financial support of them to increase.

Still more important, however, is the critical need to repent of our self-serving agendas, which reinforce parochial and jurisdictional isolation and competition. If we could focus on the needs of the local community around us, and not just on ourselves and our institutions, every financial need and every personnel shortage would resolve itself. We must simply open our doors and hearts to those in need: those held by the poverty of loneliness and isolation, as well as financial need; those suffering from addictions and abuse; the thousands of children needing a safe place to go after school; the women -- the widows of our age, from loss or divorce -- left abandoned and in poverty barely able to survive. To minister to them is to preach the Gospel in words far stronger than any rhetoric. To receive them in love incarnates the Gospel, and fulfills the church as the Body of Christ -- for "they will know you are my disciples by how you love one another" (cf. John 13 : 35).

On a more subtle level there is another temptation which demands our repentance. Too often we reduce the life of the Church to the services, to the cult, to religion. Those of us who are priests and concerned with the integrity and beauty of the services are especially prone to this. The Church is not the services. The Church is not the Eucharist. The Eucharist constitutes and fulfills the Church, but it is there to constitute and fulfill the entire life of the whole community, its good works of charity and self-denial, the self-offering of the faithful to those in need. But if these things are forgotten, what does the Eucharist consecrate and fulfill? It simply becomes a ritual act to fulfill the "religious needs" of the people. Father Alexander Schmemmann drew a sharp distinction between religion and faith. How easy it is to be religious -- to focus on the external dimensions of the life of the church, its services, rules, disciplines, aesthetics, structure. But if these become ends in themselves, rather than expressions and supports to a life of faith manifest in works of charity, then our trust in these things is in vain and we are hypocrites, "having the form of religion but denying its power." As one abbot recently said, "its hard not to be a Pharisee when you look like one!" It is not the forms that are the problem, but rather, our attitude towards them and the focus of our life as a Christian community. We are called to "do the one without neglecting the other."

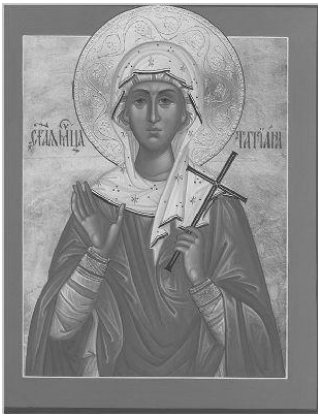
The reduction of faith to observance of religious forms is a foundational element of secularization. The forms divorced from their content become meaningless, or at best nostalgic reminders of bygone days. They can thus be compartmentalized or discarded, having no real impact on how we live our lives. The only way to fight secularization is to emphasize that faith is about how we live our life: not only the remembrance of God, but how we treat other people, for how we treat our neighbor is the criterion of how we love God. In this way, our faith is not relegated

to an hour or so on Sunday morning. Rather, it impacts every encounter with another person, and every relationship we have.

Our communion with our neighbor is the criterion of our faith. The agendas of power and money, organizations and institutions, by which we isolate ourselves from our neighbors, are ultimately distractions from our real vocation as the Church. Our real calling is the mission given us by Christ, the work of Christ himself: "to preach the good news to the poor, to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to captives and the recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4 : 18). Then our religion will be true and authentic: "Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (James 1 : 27).

Eucharistic Life: Thanksgiving with Joy

As Father Alexander would remind us, the most essential elements of the Christian life are joy and thanksgiving. When we live a life of faith, overcoming our selfishness by self-denial, doing the works of charity for which we have been recreated in Christ, we can have no other attitude but joy, and we offer all things to God in a sacrifice of thanksgiving. We sin and fall short -- but repenting we find joy. We have to bear our cross, whatever it may be; but "behold, through the cross, joy has come into all the world!" We have great and diverse elements within our communities; but we can rejoice in the unity of the Spirit, as one Body. What is our vocation as the Church but to be witnesses to the world of Christ's resurrection, to heal by our love, and to raise the whole world as an offering of thanksgiving to God? Then all our life, as persons and as community, is transformed into a Eucharistic celebration of joy, an anticipation of the Presence of Christ in His Kingdom.



THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

January 12th: Martyr Tatiana of Rome

The Holy Virgin Martyr Tatiana was born into an illustrious Roman family, and her father was elected consul three times. He was secretly a Christian and raised his daughter to be devoted to God and the Church. When she reached the age of maturity, Tatiana decided to remain a virgin, betrothing herself to Christ. Disdaining earthly riches, she sought instead the imperishable wealth of Heaven. She was made a deaconess in one of the Roman churches and served God in fasting and prayer, tending the sick and helping the needy.

When Rome was ruled by the sixteen-year-old Alexander Severus (222-235), all power was concentrated in the hands of the regent Ulpian, an evil enemy and persecutor of Christians. Christian blood flowed like water. Tatiana was also arrested, and they brought her into the temple of Apollo to force her to offer sacrifice to the idol. The saint began praying, and suddenly there was an earthquake. The idol was smashed into pieces, and part of the temple collapsed

and fell down on the pagan priests and many pagans. The demon inhabiting the idol fled screeching from that place. Those present saw its shadow flying through the air.

Then they tore holy virgin's eyes out with hooks, but she bravely endured everything, praying for her tormentors that the Lord would open their spiritual eyes. And the Lord heard the prayer of His servant. The executioners saw four angels encircle the saint and beat her tormentors. A voice was heard from the heavens speaking to the holy virgin. Eight men believed in Christ and fell on their knees before St Tatiana, begging them to forgive them their sin against her. For confessing themselves Christians they were tortured and executed, receiving Baptism by blood.

The next day St Tatiana was brought before the wicked judge. Seeing her completely healed of all her wounds, they stripped her and beat her, and slashed her body with razors. A wondrous fragrance then filled the air. Then she was stretched out on the ground and beaten for so long that the servants had to be replaced several times. The torturers became exhausted and said that an invisible power was beating them with iron rods. Indeed, the angels warded off the blows directed at her and turned them upon the tormentors, causing nine of them to fall dead. They then threw the saint in prison, where she prayed all night and sang praises to the Lord with the angels.

A new morning began, and they took St Tatiana to the tribunal once more. The torturers beheld with astonishment that after such terrible torments she appeared completely healthy and even more radiant and beautiful than before. They began to urge her to offer sacrifice to the goddess Diana. The saint seemed agreeable, and they took her to the heathen temple. St Tatiana made the Sign of the Cross and began to pray. Suddenly, there was a crash of deafening thunder, and lightning struck the idol, the sacrificial offerings and the pagan priests.

Once again, the martyr was fiercely tortured. She was hung up and scraped with iron claws, and her breasts were cut off. That night, angels appeared to her in prison and healed her wounds as before. On the following day, they took St Tatiana to the circus and loosed a hungry lion on her. The beast did not harm the saint, but meekly licked her feet.

As they were taking the lion back to its cage, it killed one of the torturers. They threw Tatiana into a fire, but the fire did not harm the martyr. The pagans, thinking that she was a sorceress, cut her hair to take away her magical powers, then locked her up in the temple of Zeus.

On the third day, pagan priests came to the temple intending to offer sacrifice to Zeus. They beheld the idol on the floor, shattered to pieces, and the holy martyr Tatiana joyously praising the Lord Jesus Christ. The judge then condemned the valiant sufferer to be beheaded with a sword. Her father was also executed with her, because he had raised her to love Christ.



Discourse on the Day of the Baptism of Christ

by Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople

We shall now say something about the present feast. Many celebrate the feastdays and know their designations, but the cause for which they were established they know not. Thus concerning this, that the present feast is called Theophany -- everyone knows; but what this is -- Theophany, and whether it be one thing or another, they know not. And this is shameful -- every year to celebrate the feastday and not know its reason.

First of all therefore, it is necessary to say that there is not one Theophany, but two: the one actual, which already has occurred, and the second in future, which will happen with glory at the end of the world. About this one and about the other you will hear today from Paul, who in conversing with Titus, speaks thus about the present: "The grace of God hath revealed itself, having saved all mankind, decreeing, that we reject iniquity and worldly desires, and dwell in the present age in prudence and in righteousness and piety" -- and about the future: "awaiting the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ" (Tit 2:11-13). And a prophet speaks thus about this latter: "the sun shalt turn to darkness, and the moon to blood at first, then shalt come the great and illuminating Day of the Lord" (Joel 2:31). Why is not that day, on which the Lord was born, considered Theophany -- but rather this day on which He was baptised? This present day it is, on which He was baptised and sanctified the nature of water. Because on this day all, having obtained the waters, do carry it home and keep it all year, since today the waters are sanctified; and an obvious phenomenon occurs: these waters in their essence do not spoil with the passage of time, but obtained today, for one whole year and often for two or three years, they remain unharmed and fresh, and afterwards for a long time do not stop being water, just as that obtained from the fountains.

Why then is this day called Theophany? Because Christ made Himself known to all -- not then when He was born -- but then when He was baptised. Until this time He was not known to the people. And that the people did not know Him, Who He was, listen about this to John the Baptist, who says: "Amidst you standeth, Him Whom ye know not of" (Jn.1:26). And is it surprising that others did not know Him, when even the Baptist did not know Him until that day? "And I -- said he -- knew Him not: but He that did send me to baptise with water, about This One did tell unto me: over Him that shalt see the Spirit descending and abiding upon Him, This One it is Who baptiseth in the Holy Spirit" (Jn. 1:33). Thus from this it is evident, that -- there are two Theophanies, and why Christ comes at baptism and on whichever baptism He comes, about this it is necessary to say: it is therefore necessary to know both the one and equally the other. And first it is necessary to speak your love about the latter, so that we might learn about the former. There was a Jewish baptism, which cleansed from bodily impurities, but not to remove sins. Thus, whoever committed adultery, or decided on thievery, or who did some other kind of misdeed, it did not free him from guilt. But whoever touched the bones of the dead, whoever tasted food forbidden by the law, whoever approached from contamination, whoever consorted with lepers -- that one washed, and until evening was impure, and then cleansed. "Let one wash his body in pure water -- it says in the Scriptures, -- and he will be unclean until evening, and then he will be

clean" (Lev 15:5, 22:4). This was not truly of sins or impurities, but since the Jews lacked perfection, then God, accomplishing it by means of this greater piety, prepared them by their beginnings for a precise observance of important things.

Thus, Jewish cleansings did not free from sins, but only from bodily impurities. Not so with ours: it is far more sublime and it manifests a great grace, whereby it sets free from sin, it cleanses the spirit and bestows the gifts of the Spirit. And the baptism of John was far more sublime than the Jewish, but less so than ours: it was like a bridge between both baptisms, leading across itself from the first to the last. Wherefore John did not give guidance for observance of bodily purifications, but together with them he exhorted and advised to be converted from vice to good deeds and to trust in the hope of salvation and the accomplishing of good deeds, rather than in different washings and purifications by water. John did not say: wash your clothes, wash your body, and ye will be pure, but what? -- "bear ye fruits worthy of repentance" (Mt 3:8). Since it was more than of the Jews, but less than ours: the baptism of John did not impart the Holy Spirit and it did not grant forgiveness by grace: it gave the commandment to repent, but it was powerless to absolve sins. Wherefore John did also say: "I baptise you with water...That One however will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and with fire" (Mt 3:11). Obviously, he did not baptise with the Spirit. But what does this mean: "with the Holy Spirit and with fire?" Call to mind that day, on which for the Apostles "there appeared disparate tongues like fire, and sat over each one of them" (Acts 2:3). And that the baptism of John did not impart the Spirit and remission of sins is evident from the following: Paul "found certain disciples, and said to them: received ye the Holy Spirit since ye have believed? They said to him: but furthermore whether it be of the Holy Spirit, we shall hear. He said to them: into what were ye baptised? They answered: into the baptism of John. Paul then said: John indeed baptised with the baptism of repentance," -- repentance, but not remission of sins; for whom did he baptise? "Having proclaimed to the people, that they should believe in the One coming after him, namely, Christ Jesus. Having heard this, they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus: and Paul laying his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them" (Acts 19:1-6). Do you see, how incomplete was the baptism of John? If the one were not incomplete, would then Paul have baptised them again, and placed his hands on them; having performed also the second, he shew the superiority of the apostolic Baptism and that the baptism of John was far less than his. Thus, from this we recognise the difference of the baptisms.

Now it is necessary to say, for whom was Christ baptised and by which baptism? Neither the former the Jewish, nor the last -- ours. Whence hath He need for remission of sins, how is this possible for Him, Who hath not any sins? "Of sin, -- it says in the Scriptures, -- worked He not, nor was there deceit found in His mouth" (1 Pet 2:22); and further, "who of you convicteth Me of Sin?" (Jn 8:46). And His flesh was privy to the Holy Spirit; how might this be possible, when it in the beginning was fashioned by the Holy Spirit? And so, if His flesh was privy to the Holy Spirit, and He was not subject to sins, then for whom was He baptised? But first of all it is necessary for us to recognise, by which baptism He was baptised, and then it will be clear for us. By which baptism indeed was He baptised? -- Not the Jewish, nor ours, nor John's. For whom, since thou from thine own aspect of baptism dost perceive, that He was baptised not by reason of sin and not having need of the gift of the Spirit; therefore, as we have demonstrated, this baptism was alien to the one and to the other. Hence it is evident, that He came to Jordan not for the forgiveness of sins and not for receiving the gifts of the Spirit. But so that some from

those present then should not think, that He came for repentance like others, listen to how John precluded this. What he then spoke to the others then was: "Bear ye fruits worthy of repentance"; but listen what he said to Him: "I have need to be baptised of Thee, and Thou art come to me?" (Mt 3:8, 14). With these words he demonstrated, that Christ came to him not through that need with which people came, and that He was so far from the need to be baptised for this reason -- so much more sublime and perfectly purer than Baptism itself. For whom was He baptised, if this was done not for repentance, nor for the remission of sins, nor for receiving the gifts of the Spirit? Through the other two reasons, of which about the one the disciple speaks, and about the other He Himself spoke to John. Which reason of this baptism did John declare? Namely, that Christ should become known to the people, as Paul also mentions: "John therefore baptised with the baptism of repentance, so that through him they should believe on Him that cometh" (Acts 19:4); this was the consequence of the baptism. If John had gone to the home of each and, standing at the door, had spoken out for Christ and said: "He is the Son of God," such a testimony would have been suspicious, and this deed would have been extremely perplexing. So too, if he in advocating Christ had gone into the synagogues and witnessed to Him, this testimony of his might be suspiciously fabricated. But when all the people thronged out from all the cities to Jordan and remained on the banks of the river, and when He Himself came to be baptised and received the testimony of the Father by a voice from above and by the coming-upon of the Spirit in the form of a dove, then the testimony of John about Him was made beyond all questioning. And since he said: "and I knew Him not" (Jn 1:31), his testimony put forth is trustworthy. They were kindred after the flesh between themselves "wherefore Elizabeth, thy kinswoman, hath also conceived a son" -- said the Angel to Mary about the mother of John (Lk. 1: 36); if however the mothers were relatives, then obviously so also were the children. Thus, since they were kinsmen -- in order that it should not seem that John would testify concerning Christ because of kinship, the grace of the Spirit organised it such, that John spent all his early years in the wilderness, so that it should not seem that John had declared his testimony out of friendship or some similar reason. But John, as he was instructed of God, thus also announced about Him, wherein also he did say: "and I knew Him not." From whence didst thou find out? "He having sent me that sayeth to baptise with water, That One did tell me" What did He tell thee? "Over Him thou shalt see the Spirit descending, like to a dove, and abiding over Him, That One is baptised by the Holy Spirit" (Jn 1:32-33). Dost thou see, that the Holy Spirit did not descend as in a first time then coming down upon Him, but in order to point out that preached by His inspiration -- as though by a finger, it pointed Him out to all. For this reason He came to baptism.

And there is a second reason, about which He Himself spoke -- what exactly is it? When John said: "I have need to be baptised of Thee, and Thou art come to me?" -- He answered thus: "stay now, for thus it becometh us to fulfill every righteousness" (Mt 3:14-15). Dost thou see the meekness of the servant? Dost thou see the humility of the Master? What does He mean: "to fulfill every righteousness?" By righteousness is meant the fulfillment of all the commandments, as is said: "both were righteous, walking faultlessly in the commandments of the Lord" (Lk 1:6). Since fulfilling this righteousness was necessary for all people -- but no one of them kept it or fulfilled it -- Christ came then and fulfilled this righteousness.

And what righteousness is there, someone will say, in being baptised? Obedience for a prophet was righteous. As Christ was circumcised, offered sacrifice, kept the

sabbath and observed the Jewish feasts, so also He added this remaining thing, that He was obedient to having been baptised by a prophet. It was the will of God then, that all should be baptised -- about which listen, as John speaks: "He having sent me to baptise with water" (Jn 1:33); so also Christ: "the publicans and the people do justify God, having been baptised with the baptism of John; the pharisees and the lawyers reject the counsel of God concerning themselves, not having been baptised by him" (Lk 7:29-30). Thus, if obedience to God constitutes righteousness, and God sent John to baptise the nation, then Christ has also fulfilled this along with all the other commandments.

Consider, that the commandments of the law is the main point of the two denarii: this -- debt, which our race has needed to pay; but we did not pay it, and we, falling under such an accusation, are embraced by death. Christ came, and finding us afflicted by it -- He paid the debt, fulfilled the necessary and seized from it those, who were not able to pay. Wherefore He does not say: "it is necessary for us to do this or that," but rather "to fulfill every righteousness." "It is for Me, being the Master, -- says He, -- proper to make payment for the needy." Such was the reason for His baptism -- wherefore they should see, that He had fulfilled all the law -- both this reason and also that, about which was spoken of before. Wherefore also the Spirit did descend as a dove: because where there is reconciliation with God -- there also is the dove. So also in the ark of Noah the dove did bring the branch of olive -- a sign of God's love of mankind and of the cessation of the flood. And now in the form of a dove, and not in a body -- this particularly deserves to be noted -- the Spirit descended, announcing the universal mercy of God and showing with it, that the spiritual man needs to be gentle, simple and innocent, as Christ also says: "Except ye be converted and become as children, ye shall not enter into the Heavenly Kingdom" (Mt 18:3). But that ark, after the cessation of the flood, remained upon the earth; this ark, after the cessation of wrath, is taken to heaven, and now this Immaculate and Imperishable Body is situated at the right hand of the Father.

Having made mention about the Body of the Lord, I shall also say a little about this, and then the conclusion of the talk. Many now will approach the Holy Table on the occasion of the feast. But some approach not with trembling, but shoving, hitting others, blazing with anger, shouting, cursing, roughing it up with their fellows with great confusion. What, tell me, art thou troubled by, my fellow? What disturbeth thee? Do urgent affairs, for certain, summon thee? At this hour art thou particularly aware, that these affairs of thine that thou particularly rememberest, that thou art situated upon the earth, and dost thou think to mix about with people? But is it not with a soul of stone naturally to think, that in such a time thou stand upon the earth, and not exult with the Angels with whom to raise up victorious song to God? For this Christ also did describe us with eagles, saying: "where the corpse is, there are the eagles gathered" (Mt 24:28) -- so that we might have risen to heaven and soared to the heights, having ascended on the wings of the spirit; but we, like snakes, crawl upon the earth and eat dirt. Having been invited to supper, thou, although satiated before others, would not dare to leave before others while others are still reclining. But here, when the sacred doings are going on, thou at the very middle would pass by everything and leave? Is it for a worthy excuse? What excuse might it be? Judas, having communed that last evening on that final night, left hastily then as all the others were still reclining.

Here these also are in imitation of him, who leave before the final blessing! If he

had not gone, then he would not have made the betrayal; if he did not leave his co-disciples, then he would not have perished; if he had not removed himself from the flock, then the wolf would not have seized and devoured him alone; if he had separated himself from the Pastor, then he would not have made himself the prey of wild beasts. Wherefore he (Judas) was with the Jews, and those (the apostles) went out with the Lord. Dost thou see, by what manner the final prayer after the offering of the sacrifice is accomplished? We should, beloved, stand forth for this, we should ponder this, fearful of the coming judgement for this. We should approach the Holy Sacrifice with great decorum, with proper piety, so as to merit us more of God's benevolence, to cleanse one's soul and to receive eternal blessings, of which may we all be worthy by the grace and love for mankind of our Lord Jesus Christ, to with Whom the Father, together with the Holy Spirit, be glory, power, and worship now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.



THE ORTHODOX FAITH

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

Sources of Christian Doctrine: Canons

There are canon laws of ecumenical councils, of provincial and local councils, and of individual church fathers which have been received by the entire Orthodox Church as normative for Christian doctrine and practice. As a word **canon** means literally rule or norm or measure of judging. In this sense the canon laws are not positive laws in the juridical sense and cannot be easily identified with laws as understood and operative in human jurisprudence.

The canons of the Church are distinguished first between those of a dogmatic or doctrinal nature and those of a practical, ethical, or structural character. They are then further distinguished between those which may be changed and altered and those which are unchangeable and may not be altered under any conditions.

The dogmatic canons are those council definitions which speak about an article of the Christian faith; for example, the nature and person of Jesus Christ. Although such canons may be explained and developed in new and different words, particularly as the Church Tradition grows and moves through time, their essential meaning remains eternal and unchanging.

Some canons of a moral and ethical character also belong to those which cannot be changed. These are the moral canons whose meaning is absolute and eternal and whose violation can in no way be justified. The canons which forbid the sale of Church sacraments are of this kind.

There are, in addition, canons of a quite practical nature which may be changed and which, in fact, have been changed in the course of the life of the Church. There are also those which may be changed but which remain in force since the Church has shown the desire to retain them. An example of the former type is the canon which requires the priests of the church to be ordained to office only after reaching thirty years of age. It might be said that although this type of canon remains normative and does set a certain ideal which theoretically may still be of value, the needs of the Church have led to its violation in actual life. The canon which requires that the bishops of the Church be unmarried is of the latter type.

It is not always clear which canons express essential marks of Christian life and which do not. There are often periods of controversy over certain canons as to their applicability in given times and conditions. These factors, however, should not lead the members of the Church to dismay or to the temptation either to enforce all canons blindly with identical force and value or to dismiss all the canons as meaningless and insignificant.

In the first place, the canons are "of the Church" and therefore cannot possibly be understood as "positive laws" in a juridical sense; secondly, the canons are certainly not exhaustive, and do not cover every possible aspect of Church faith and life; thirdly, the canons were produced for the most part in response to some particular dogmatic or moral question or deviation in the Church life and so usually bear the marks of some particular controversy in history which has conditioned not merely their particular formulation, but indeed their very existence.

Taken by themselves, the canon laws of the Church can be misleading and frustrating, and therefore superficial people will say "either enforce them all or discard them completely." But taken as a whole within the wholeness of Orthodox life -- theological, historical, canonical, and spiritual --- these canons do assume their proper place and purpose and show themselves to be a rich source for discovering the living Truth of God in the Church. In viewing the canons of the Church, the key factors are Christian knowledge and wisdom which are borne from technical study and spiritual depth. There is no other "key" to their usage; and any other way would be according to the Orthodox faith both unorthodox and unchristian.

TROPARIA & KONTAKIA: JANUARY

January 1: Circumcision of Our Lord

Troparion - Tone 1

Enthroned on high with the Eternal Father and Your divine Spirit,
O Jesus, You willed to be born on earth of the unwedded handmaid, your
Mother.

Therefore You were circumcised as an eight-day old Child.

Glory to Your most gracious counsel;

glory to Your dispensation;

glory to Your condescension, O only Lover of mankind.

Kontakion - Tone 3

The Lord of all accepts to be circumcised,
thus, as He is good, excises the sins of mortal men.

Today He grants the world salvation,

while light-bearing Basil, high priest of our Creator,
rejoices in heaven as a divine initiate of Christ.

January 4: Forefeast of Theophany

Troparion - Tone 4

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John:

"Do not be afraid to baptize me.

For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Kontakion - Tone 4

Prepare, O Zebulon,
and adorn yourself, O Naphtali;
River Jordan, cease flowing
and receive with joy the Master coming to be baptized.
Adam, rejoice with our First Mother
and do not hide yourself as you did of old in Paradise;
for having seen you naked,
He has appeared to clothe you with the first garment.
Christ has appeared to renew all creation.

Synaxis of the 70 Apostles

Troparion - Tone 3

Holy apostles of the Seventy,
entreat the merciful God
to grant our souls forgiveness of transgressions.

Kontakion - Tone 2

O faithful, let us praise with hymns
the choir of the seventy disciples of Christ.
They have taught us all to worship the undivided Trinity,
for they are divine lamps of the Faith.

January 6: Theophany of Our Lord

Troparion - Tone 1

When You, O Lord were baptized in the Jordan
The worship of the Trinity was made manifest
For the voice of the Father bore witness to You
And called You His beloved Son.
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove,
Confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ, our God, You have revealed Yourself
And have enlightened the world, glory to You!

Kontakion - Tone 4

Today You have shown forth to the world, O Lord,
and the light of Your countenance has been marked on us.
Knowing You, we sing Your praises.
You have come and revealed Yourself,
O unapproachable Light

January 7: Synaxis of the Glorious Baptist John

Troparion - Tone 2

The memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise,
but the Lord's testimony is sufficient for you, O Forerunner.
You were shown in truth to be the most honorable of the prophets,
for you were deemed worthy to baptize in the streams of the Jordan Him
whom they foretold.

Therefore, having suffered for the truth with joy,
you proclaimed to those in hell God who appeared in the flesh,
who takes away the sin of the world, and grants us great mercy.

Kontakion - Tone 6

The river Jordan trembled and was driven back filled with fear at Your

coming in the flesh,
while John drew back in awe as he fulfilled the ministry of a prophet.
The ranks of angels stood amazed,
when they beheld You in the flesh being baptized in the streams.
And we, who were in darkness, are filled with light as we praise You,
who have appeared to enlighten all.

January 11: Afterfeast of Theophany

Troparion - Tone 4

Of old, the river Jordan
turned back before Elisha's mantle at Elijah's ascension.
The waters were parted in two
and the waterway became a dry path.
This is truly a symbol of baptism
by which we pass through this mortal life.
Christ has appeared in the Jordan to sanctify the waters!

Kontakion - Tone 4

Today the Lord enters the Jordan and cries out to John:
"Do not be afraid to baptize me.
For I have come to save Adam, the first-formed man."

Venerable Theodosius the Great

Troparion - Tone 8

By a flood of tears you made the desert fertile,
and your longing for God brought forth fruits in abundance.
By the radiance of miracles you illumined the whole universe!
Our Father Theodosius, pray to Christ God to save our souls!

Kontakion - Tone 8

Planted in the courts of your Lord, you blossomed beautifully with virtue,
and increased your children in the desert, showering them with streams of
your tears, O chief shepherd of the divine flock of God.
Therefore, we cry to you: "Rejoice, Father Theodosius."

January 18: St. Athanasius the Great, Archbishop of Alexandria

Troparion - Tone 3

You shone forth with works of Orthodoxy and quenched all heresy,
and became victorious trophy-bearers, hierarchs Athanasius and Cyril.
You enriched all things with piety and greatly adorned the Church,
and worthily found Christ God,
who grants His great mercy to all.

Kontakion - Tone 4

Athanasius and Cyril, great hierarchs of true piety, and noble champions of the
Church of Christ,
preserve all who sing:
"O Compassionate Lord, save those who honor You."

January 25: St. Gregory the Theologian

Troparion - Tone 1

The sweet-sounding shepherd's pipe of your theology
overpowered the trumpeting of the orators;
for having searched the depths of the Spirit
eloquence was also bestowed upon you.

Pray to Christ God, Father Gregory,
that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion - Tone 3

By words of theology you unraveled the complex webs of the orators,
glorious Gregory,
and adorned the Church with the robe of Orthodoxy woven from on high.
Wearing it, she cries out with us, her children:
"Rejoice, O Father, supreme mind of theology."

January 27: St. John Chrysostom

Troparion - Tone 8

Grace shining forth from your lips like a beacon has enlightened the universe;
It has shone to the world the riches of poverty;
It has revealed to us the heights of humility.
Teaching us by your words, O Father John Chrysostom,
Intercede before the Word, Christ our God, to save our souls.

Kontakion - Tone 6

Having received divine grace from heaven,
You teach all men to adore the one God in three persons.
O all-blessed John Chrysostom, we rightly praise you,
For you are our teacher, revealing things divine!

January 30: Synaxis of the Three Holy Heirarchs: Basil the Great,
Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom

Troparion - Tone 1

Let us who love their words gather together
and honor with hymns the three great torch-bearers of the triune Godhead:
Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom.
These men have enlightened the world with the rays of their divine doctrines.
They are sweetly-flowing rivers of wisdom
filling all creation with springs of heavenly knowledge.
Ceaselessly they intercede for us before the Holy Trinity!

Kontakion - Tone 2

O Lord, You have taken up to eternal rest
and to the enjoyment of Your blessings
the divinely-inspired heralds, the greatest of Your teachers,
for You have accepted their labors and deaths as a sweet-smelling sacrifice,
for You alone are glorified in Your saints!

PARISHIONERS' NAME DAYS – JANUARY

January 1 – St. Emmelia: Emily Lorelli, Emily Stchur

January 2 – St. Juliana: Jennifer Cutshall, Jennifer Kirmeyer

January 12 – Martyr Tatiana: Stephanie Collins

January 17 – St. Anthony the Great: Anthony Lorelli

January 21 – Holy Virgin Martyr Agnes: Julia Evans

January 24 – St. Xenia: Ksenya Knowlton

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

Robert

Mark

Sarah

David

Patricia

Flore

Allan Simeon

Olga and the child to be born of her

Yelena and the child to be born of her

Cat. Deborah

Patricia

Heather Mary and the child to be born of her

Ben

Elaine

John

Bistra

Barbara

DEPARTED:

ND Arne

Catechetical Challenge Answers: 1) Holy Baptism 2) Saint Sergius of Radonezh
3) Take a look at your wall calendar to see if you were right