

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

by Father John Strickland

As Orthodox Christians living in a heterodox society, we are sometimes confronted by friends or acquaintances with an important question: Why do we pray for the departed? For many Protestant Christians the act of offering prayers for the dead seems at best an "invalid" act of compassion and at worst a form of "pagan" ancestor worship. This, for instance, was the sentiment of a writer in the Protestant journal *Christian Courier* in the face of the public prayers offered for the victims of the September 11 attacks in 2001. As always, such a misunderstanding arises from insufficient contact with the apostolic tradition or unfamiliarity with the correct interpretation of holy scripture. But it does provide us with an opportunity to reflect upon our faith and, perhaps, to give an effective witness to it.

In the course of the recent funeral services for our fellow parishioner Sally Raymond, we offered repeated prayers for the repose of the soul. We did this because we love her. As fellow communicants in the Body of Christ, we could not but express our desire that our Lord Jesus Christ have mercy on her the way we pray that he will have mercy on each of us. This love

has always been the foundation for the Church's prayers for the departed.

Nevertheless, after the Great Schism Christians living in the west introduced a new doctrine called "purgatory" that came to be associated with prayers for the dead. It claimed that such prayers helped release the dead from the "purgatorial pains" that followed death and which were necessary for the "satisfaction" of God before the soul could be admitted to paradise (Roman Catholic Council of Florence, 1439). Furthermore, such prayer was connected to the Roman Catholic practice of "indulgences," by which popes claimed to grant remission of the "punishment" due to sinners after their deaths. These deviations from the apostolic faith, rejected decisively by such Orthodox Fathers as Saint Mark of Ephesus (d. 1444), were at the center of the Protestant reaction against Rome during the Reformation. As a result, Protestantism was born with an inveterate aversion for prayer for the dead.

Orthodox theologians have for the most part avoided precise explanations of the effects of prayer for the departed because the matter remains a mystery. Because we love the departed and are taught by our tradition to believe that death can not and does not separate us from communion with Christ (cf. Rom. 8:35-39), or with them in Christ, we pray for them. As Metropolitan Kallistos wrote,

In God and in his Church, there is no division between the living and the departed, but all are one in the love of the Father. Whether we are alive or whether we are dead, as members of the Church we still belong to the same family, and still have a duty to bear one another's burdens. Therefore just as Orthodox Christians here on earth pray for one another and ask for one another's prayers, so they pray also for the faithful departed and ask the faithful departed to pray for them. (*The Orthodox Church*, 254)

We live out our faith in this very communion at the divine services. The kneeling prayers at Pentecost powerfully speak of it. At the Divine Liturgy itself, we pray repeatedly for the departed. At the Proskomedia, the priest commemorates each member of the parish—dead as well as living—by placing a particle of bread in his or her name next to the large piece of bread known as the Lamb that will ultimately be changed by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ. We pray for the "blessed and ever-memorable" departed during the litany following the Gospel. And we pray again for "those who have departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection" at the Great Entrance.

And of course we encounter such prayers in the funeral services themselves. I recently prepared a description of these services and their meaning on the occasion of Sally's funeral, and it is available to anyone who would like a copy. In it I brought attention to the fact that we the

faithful “stand in,” as it were, for the dying and the departed insofar as he or she has lost the power of prayer. This is especially pronounced in the canon of what the Book of Needs calls “the office at the departure of the soul from the body for one who has suffered for a long time.” One of the troparia from that canon has the faithful pray to the Archangel Michael, on behalf of the one who no longer can pray, “I am trying to be saved, yet I cannot call upon thy holy name for help, for my lips are silent and my tongue is bound.” Another troparion to the Virgin Mary has the faithful pray for the dying thus: “I cannot look upon thine image, for my light is extinguished and the night covers me.” These and other prayers in the Orthodox cycle of funeral services say less about their precise effect and more about our solidarity in faith and love with one another, even in death.

1 PARISH AND LOCAL EVENTS

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:

July 11: Great Vespers @ 6pm

July 15: Parish Council Meeting @ 7pm

July 16: Bible Study @ 7pm

July 17: Festal Vigil for St. Elizabeth at Poulsbo @ 6:30pm

July 18: New Martyr Elizabeth – Divine Liturgy at Poulsbo @ 10am
Great Vespers @ 6pm

July 20: 40th day of repose for Sally Raymond – Panikhida @ 7pm

July 23: Studies in Orthodoxy @ 7pm

July 25: Great Vespers @ 6pm

July 27: Hieromartyr Constantine – Molebin @ 7pm

July 30: Bible Study @ 7pm

July 31: Eve of Procession of the Life-Giving Cross – Vespers @ 7pm

August 1-14: Dormition Fast

August 5: Festal Vigil for Transfiguration @ 7pm

August 6: Transfiguration – Divine Liturgy @ 7am

August 14: Festal Vigil for Dormition @ 7pm

August 15: Dormition -- Chrismation of Nancy Anne @ 8:30am
Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

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

- 1) What priest served his own funeral service (since he knew there would be no one else to do so) while he was being marched to the site of his execution during the Russian Revolution?
- 2) According to the Church's liturgical calendar, what is the first divine service of the day?
- 3) What does the word "Orthodoxy" literally mean?

READINGS AND RAMBLINGS

****This is a new column designed to present your contributions. As the title suggests, this column will contain everything from suggested reading and book reviews to topics of personal and communal interest. In short, this column is what we, the parishioners of St. Katherine Mission, want it to be. Please email submissions to Emily Lorelli – ekstorelli@gmail.com.****

Call for Recipes! If you would like to see a Saint Katherine Mission Recipe Book produced this year, we will need your submission of favorite recipes (both lenten and nonlenten), with or without accompanying photos, by the end of August. They can be submitted electronically or in person. Please see Emily Lorelli or Fr. John if you have questions.

THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

July 19th: Venerable Macrina

Saint Macrina was the sister of the holy hierarchs Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa, and was born in Cappadocia at the beginning of the fourth century. Her mother, Emilia, saw an angel in a dream, naming her unborn child Thekla, in honor of the holy Protomartyr Thekla. St Emilia (January 1) fulfilled the will of God and named her daughter Thekla. Another daughter was named Macrina, in honor of a grandmother, who suffered during the time of persecution under the emperor Maximian Galerius.

Besides Macrina, family there were nine other children. St Emilia herself guided the upbringing and education of her elder daughter. She taught her reading and writing in the Scriptural books and Psalms of David, selecting examples from the sacred books which spoke of a pious and God-pleasing life. St Emilia taught her daughter to pray and to attend church services. Macrina was also taught the proper knowledge of domestic governance and various handicrafts. She was never left idle and did not participate in childish games or amusements.

When Macrina grew up, her parents betrothed her to a certain pious youth, but the bridegroom soon died. Many young men sought marriage with her, but Macrina refused them all, having chosen the life of a virgin and not wanting to be unfaithful to the memory of her dead fiancé. St Macrina lived in the home of her parents, helping them fulfill the household tasks as an overseer together with the servants, and she helped with the upbringing of her younger brothers and sisters. After the death of her father she became the chief support for the family.

When all the children grew up and left the parental home, St Macrina convinced her mother, St Emilia, to leave the world, to set their slaves free, and to settle in a women's monastery. Several of their servants followed their example. Having taken monastic vows, they lived together as one family, they prayed together, they worked together, they possessed everything in common, and in this manner of life nothing distinguished one from another.

After the death of her mother, St Macrina guided the sisters of the monastery. She enjoyed the deep respect of all who knew her. Strictness towards herself and temperance in everything were characteristic of the saint all her life. She slept on boards and had no possessions. St Macrina was granted the gift of wonderworking. There was an instance (told by the sisters of the monastery to St Gregory of Nyssa after the death of St Macrina), when she healed a girl of an eye-affliction. Through the prayers of the saint, there was no shortage of wheat at her monastery in times of famine.



St Macrina died in the year 380, after a final prayer of thanks to the Lord for having received His blessings over all the course of her life. She was buried in the same grave with her parents.



WISDOM OF THE FATHERS

For an explanation of the present Feast and understanding of its truth, it is necessary for us to turn to the very start of today's reading from the Gospel: "Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James and John his brother, and led them up onto a high mountain by themselves" (Mt 17:1).

First of all we must ask, from whence does the Evangelist Matthew begin to reckon with six days? From what sort of day be it? What does the preceding turn of speech indicate, where the Savior, in teaching His disciples, said to them: "For the Son of Man shall come with his angels in the glory of His Father," and further: "Amen I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death, until they have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom" (Mt 16:27-28)? That is to say, it is the Light of His own forthcoming Transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom.



The Evangelist Luke points this out and reveals this more clearly saying: "Now it came to pass about eight days after these words, that He took Peter and John and James, and went up the mountain to pray. And as He prayed, His countenance was altered, and His raiment became a radiant white" (Lk 9:28-29). But how can the two be reconciled, when one of them speaks definitively about the interval of time as being eight days between the sayings and the manifestation, whereas the other (says): "after six days?"

There were eight on the mountain, but only six were visible. Three, Peter, James and John, had come up with Jesus, and they saw Moses and Elias standing there and conversing with Him, so altogether there were six of them. However, the Father and the Holy Spirit were invisibly with the Lord: the Father, with His Voice testifying that this was His Beloved Son, and the Holy Spirit shining forth with Him in the radiant cloud. Thus, the six are actually eight, and there is no contradiction regarding the eight. Similarly, there is no contradiction with the Evangelists when one says "after six days," and the other says "eight days after these words."

But these twofold sayings as it were present us a certain format set in mystery, and together with it that of those actually present upon the Mount. It stands to reason,

and everyone rationally studying in accordance with Scripture knows that the Evangelists are in agreement one with another. Luke spoke of eight days without contradicting Matthew, who declared "after six days." There is not another day added on to represent the day on which these sayings were uttered, nor is the day on which the Lord was transfigured added on (which a rational person might reasonably imagine to be added to the days of Matthew).

The Evangelist Luke does not say "after eight days" (like the Evangelist Matthew says "after six days"), but rather "it came to pass eight days after these words." But where the Evangelists seem to contradict one another, they actually point out to us something great and mysterious. In actual fact, why did the one say "after six days," but the other, in ignoring the seventh day, have in mind the eighth day? It is because the great vision of the Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord is the mystery of the Eighth Day, i.e., of the future age, coming to be revealed after the passing away of the world created in six days.

About the power of the Divine Spirit, through Whom the Kingdom of God is to be revealed, the Lord predicted: "There are some standing here who shall not taste death, until they have seen the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom" (*Mt 16:28*). Everywhere and in every way the King will be present, and everywhere will be His Kingdom, since the advent of His Kingdom does not signify the passing over from one place to another, but rather the revelation of its power of the Divine Spirit. That is why it is said: "come in power." And this power is not manifest to simply ordinary people, but to those standing with the Lord, that is to say, those who have affirmed their faith in Him like Peter, James and John, and especially those who are free of our natural abasement. Therefore, and precisely because of this, God manifests Himself upon the Mount, on the one hand coming down from His heights, and on the other, raising us up from the depths of abasement, since the Transcendent One takes on mortal nature. Certainly, such a manifest appearance by far transcends the utmost limits of the mind's grasp, as effectualized by the power of the Divine Spirit.

Thus, the Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord is not something that comes to be and then vanishes, nor is it subject to the sensory faculties, although it was contemplated by corporeal eyes for a short while upon an inconsequential mountaintop. But the initiates of the Mystery, (the disciples) of the Lord at this time passed beyond mere flesh into spirit through a transformation of their senses, effectualized within them by the Spirit, and in such a way that they beheld what, and to what extent, the Divine Spirit had wrought blessedness in them to behold the Ineffable Light.

Those not grasping this point have conjectured that the chosen from among the Apostles beheld the Light of the Transfiguration of the Lord by a sensual and creaturely faculty, and through this they attempt to reduce to a creaturely level (i.e., as something "created") not only this Light, the Kingdom

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him. But to us God has revealed them through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (*1 Cor 2:9-10*).

and the Glory of God, but also the Power of the Divine Spirit, through Whom it is meet for Divine Mysteries to be revealed. In all likelihood, such persons have not heeded the words of the Apostle Paul: "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor has it entered into the heart of man, what things God has prepared for those who love Him. But to us God has revealed them through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God" (1 Cor 2:9-10).

So, with the onset of the Eighth Day, the Lord, taking Peter, James and John, went up on the Mount to pray. He always prayed alone, withdrawing from everyone, even from the Apostles themselves, as for example when with five loaves and two fish He fed the five thousand men, besides women and children (Mt 14:19-23). Or, taking with Him those who excelled others, as at the approach of His Saving Passion, when He said to the other disciples: "Sit here while I go over there and pray" (Mt 26:36). Then He took with Him Peter, James and John. But in our instance right here and now, having taken only these same three, the Lord led them up onto a high mountain by themselves and was transfigured before them, that is to say, before their very eyes.

"What does it mean to say: He was transfigured?" asks the Golden-Mouthed Theologian (Chrysostomos). He answers this by saying: "It revealed something of His Divinity to them, as much and insofar as they were able to apprehend it, and it showed the indwelling of God within Him." The Evangelist Luke says: "And as He prayed, His countenance was altered" (Lk 9:29); and from the Evangelist Matthew we read: "And His face shone as the sun" (Mt 17:2). But the Evangelist said this, not in the context that this Light be thought of as subsistent for the senses (let us put aside the blindness of mind of those who can conceive of nothing higher than what is known through the senses). Rather, it is to show that Christ God, for those living and contemplating by the Spirit, is the same as the sun is for those living in the flesh and contemplating by the senses. Therefore, some other Light for the knowing the Divinity is not necessary for those who are enriched by Divine gifts.

That same Inscrutable Light shone and was mysteriously manifest to the Apostles and the foremost of the Prophets at that moment, when (the Lord) was praying. This shows that what brought forth this blessed sight was prayer, and that the radiance occurred and was manifest by uniting the mind with God, and that it is granted to all who, with constant exercise in efforts of virtue and prayer, strive with their mind towards God. True beauty, essentially, can be contemplated only with a purified mind. To gaze upon its luminance assumes a sort of participation in it, as though some bright ray etches itself upon the face.

Even the face of Moses was illumined by his association with God. Do you not know that Moses was transfigured when he went up the mountain, and there beheld the Glory of God? But he (Moses) did not effect this, but rather he underwent a transfiguration. However, our Lord Jesus Christ possessed that Light Himself. In this regard, actually, He did not need prayer for His flesh to radiate with the Divine Light; it was but to show from whence that Light descends upon the saints of God, and how to contemplate it. For it is written that even the saints "will shine forth like the sun" (Mt 13:43), which is to say, entirely permeated by Divine Light as they gaze upon Christ, divinely and inexpressibly shining forth His Radiance, issuing from His Divine Nature. On Mount Tabor it was manifest also in His Flesh, by reason of the Hypostatic Union (i.e., the union of the two perfect natures, divine and human, within the divine Person [Hypostasis] of Christ, the Second Person of the Most Holy Trinity). The Fourth Ecumenical Council at Chalcedon

defined this Hypostatic union of Christ's two natures, divine and human, as "without mingling, without change, without division, without separation."

We believe that at the Transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine. So also, in the teachings of the Fathers, Jesus Christ was transfigured on the Mount, not taking upon Himself something new nor being changed into something new, nor something which formerly He did not possess. Rather, it was to show His disciples that which He already was, opening their eyes and bringing them from blindness to sight. For do you not see that eyes that can perceive natural things would be blind to this Light?

Thus, this Light is not a light of the senses, and those contemplating it do not simply see with sensual eyes, but rather they are changed by the power of the Divine Spirit. They were transformed, and only in this way did they see the transformation taking place amidst the very assumption of our perishability, with the deification through union with the Word of God in place of this.

So also she who miraculously conceived and gave birth recognized that the One born of her is God Incarnate. So it was also for Simeon, who only received this Infant into his arms, and the aged Anna, coming out [from the Jerusalem Temple] for the Meeting, since the Divine Power illumined, as through a glass windowpane, giving light for those having pure eyes of heart.

And why did the Lord, before the beginning of the Transfiguration, choose the foremost of the Apostles and lead them up onto the Mount with Him? Certainly, it was to show them something great and mysterious. What is particularly great or mysterious in showing a sensory light, which not only the foremost, but all the other Apostles already abundantly possessed? Why would they need a transforming of their eyes by the power of the Holy Spirit for a contemplation of this Light, if it were merely sensory and created? How could the Glory and the Kingdom of the Father and the Holy Spirit project forth in some sort of sensory light? Indeed, in what sort of Glory and Kingdom would Christ the Lord come at the end of the ages, when there would not be necessary anything in the air, nor in expanse, nor anything

similar, but when, in the words of the Apostle, "God will be all in all" (1 Cor 15: 28)? That is to say, will He alter everything for all? If so, then it follows that light is included.

Hence it is clear that the Light of Tabor was a Divine Light. And the Evangelist John, inspired by Divine Revelation, says clearly that the future eternal and enduring city "has no need of the sun or moon to shine upon it. For the Glory of God lights it up, and the Lamb will be its lamp" (Rev 21:23). Is it not clear, that he points out here that this [Lamb] is Jesus, Who is divinely transfigured now upon Tabor, and

Jesus Christ was transfigured on the Mount, not taking upon Himself something new nor being changed into something new, nor something which formerly He did not possess. Rather, it was to show His disciples that which He already was, opening their eyes and bringing them from blindness to sight.

the flesh of Whom shines, is the lamp manifesting the Glory of divinity for those ascending the mountain with Him?

John the Theologian also says about the inhabitants of this city: "they will not need light from lamps, nor the light of the sun, for the Lord God will shed light upon them, and night shall be no more" (*Rev 22:5*). But how, we might ask, is there this other light, in which "there is no change, nor shadow of alteration" (*Jas 1:17*)? What light is there that is constant and unsetting, unless it be the Light of God? Moreover, could Moses and Elias (and particularly the former, who clearly was present only in spirit, and not in flesh [Elias having ascended bodily to Heaven on the fiery chariot]) be shining with any sort of sensory light, and be seen and known? Especially since it was written of them: "they appeared in glory, and spoke of his death, which he was about to fulfill at Jerusalem" (*Lk 9:30-31*). And how otherwise could the Apostles recognize those whom they had never seen before, unless through the mysterious power of the Divine Light, opening their mental eyes?

But let us not tire our attention with the furthestmost interpretations of the words of the Gospel. We shall believe thus, as those same ones have taught us, who themselves were enlightened by the Lord Himself, insofar as they alone know this well: the Mysteries of God, in the words of a prophet, are known to God alone and His perpetual proximity. Let us, considering the Mystery of the Transfiguration of the Lord in accord with their teaching, strive to be illumined by this Light ourselves and encourage in ourselves love and striving towards the Unfading Glory and Beauty, purifying our spiritual eyes of worldly thoughts and refraining from perishable and quickly passing delights and beauty which darken the garb of the soul and lead to the fire of Gehenna and everlasting darkness. Let us be freed from these by the illumination and knowledge of the incorporeal and ever-existing Light of our Savior transfigured on Tabor, in His Glory, and of His Father from all eternity, and His Life-Creating Spirit, Whom are One Radiance, One Godhead, and Glory, and Kingdom, and Power now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

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

The Symbol of Faith: Man

Man is God's special creature. He is the only one "created in the image and likeness of God" (*Gen 1:26*). He is created by God from the dust at the end of the process of creation (the "sixth day") and by the special will of God. He is made to breathe "the breath of life" (*Gen 2:7*), to know God, to have dominion over all that God has made.

God created humans as male and female (*Gen. 1:27; 2:21*) in order "to be fruitful and multiply" (*Gen 1:28*). Thus, according to Orthodox doctrine sexuality belongs to the creation which God calls "very good" (*Gen 1:31*), and in itself it is in no way sinful or perverse. It belongs to the very nature of humanity directly willed by God.

As the image of God, ruler over creation and co-creator with the Uncreated Maker, man has the task to "reflect" God in creation; to make His presence, His will and His powers spread throughout the universe; to transform all that exists into the paradise of God. In this sense man is definitely created for a destiny higher than the bodiless powers of heaven, the angels. This conviction is affirmed by Orthodox Christianity not only because of the Scriptural emphasis on man as made in God's image to rule creation, which is not said about angels; but it is also directly affirmed because it is written of Jesus Christ, Who is truly the perfect man and the Last Adam (*1 Cor 15:45*) that "God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (*Phil 2:10-11*).

It follows from belief in Jesus that man is created for a life far superior to that of any creature, even the angels who glorify God and serve the cause of man's salvation. It is precisely this conviction which is affirmed when the Church hails Mary the Mother of Christ as "more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim." For what is glorified as already accomplished in the human Mary is precisely what is expected and hoped for by all men "who hear the word of God and keep it" (*Lk 11:28*).

Thus we see the great dignity of man according to the Christian faith. We see man as the "most important" of God's creatures, the one for whom "all things visible and invisible" have been created by God.

It is the Orthodox doctrine that one can understand and appreciate what it means to be human only in the light of the full revelation of Jesus Christ. Being the Divine Word and Son of God in human flesh, Jesus reveals the real meaning of manhood. As the Perfect Man and the Last Adam, the "man from heaven," Jesus gives us the proper interpretation of the story of creation given in the book of Genesis. For as the



Apostle Paul has written, Adam finds his significance as "the type (or figure) of the one who was to come," namely Jesus Christ (Rom 5:14).

Thus it is written, "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. But it is not the spiritual which is first but the physical, and then the spiritual. The first man was from the earth, a man of dust; the second man (Christ) is from heaven ... Just as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the man of heaven. (1 Cor 15:45-49).

According to Orthodox theology, to bear the image of God is to be like Christ, the uncreated Image of God, and to share in all of the spiritual attributes of divinity. It is, in the words of the holy fathers, to become by divine grace all that God Himself is by nature. If God is a free, spiritual, personal Being, so human beings, male and female, are to be the same. If God is so powerful and creative, having dominion over all creation, so human creatures, made in His image and according to His likeness, are also to exercise dominion in the world. If God exercises dominion and authority not by tyranny and oppression, but by loving kindness and service, so are His creatures to do likewise. If God Himself is love, mercy, compassion and care in

all things, so must His creatures, made to be like Him, also be the same. And finally, if God lives forever in eternal life, never dying, but always existing in perfectly joyful and harmonious beauty and happiness with all of creation, so too are human beings made for everlasting life in joyful and harmonious communion with God and the whole of creation.

According to Orthodox doctrine, human being and life is never completed and finished in its development and growth because it is made in the image and according



to the likeness of God. God's being and life are inexhaustible and boundless. As the Divine Archetype has no limits to His divinity, so the human image has no limits to its humanity, to what it can become by the grace of its Creator. Human nature, therefore, is created by God to grow and develop through participation in the nature of God for all eternity. Man is made to become ever more Godlike forever, even in the Kingdom of God at the end of this age, when Christ will come again in glory to raise the dead and give life to those who love Him.

Thus the holy fathers of the Orthodox faith taught that whatever stage of maturity and development man attains and achieves, whatever his power, wisdom, mercy, knowledge, love, there continually remains before him an infinity of ever-greater fullness of life in the most blessed Trinity to be participated in and lived. The fact that human nature progresses eternally in perfection within the nature of God constitutes the meaning of life for man, and remains forever the source of his joy and gladness for all eternity.

It must be mentioned at this point as well that according to Orthodox Christian doctrine, the fact that humans are created male and female is the direct will of

God and is essential for proper human life and activity as reflective of God. In a word, human sexuality is a necessary element in human being and life as made in the image of God. This does not mean that there is any sort of sexuality in God, but it does mean that human life must be sexual -- male and female -- if it will be what God Himself has made it to be.

Man and woman, male and female, are created by God to live together in a union of being, life and love. The man is to be the leader in human activities, the one reflecting Christ as the new and perfect Adam. The woman is to be man's "**helpmeet**," the "mother of all living" (Gen 2:18; 3:20). Symbolized in the relationship of Mary and the Church, the New Eve, to Christ, the New Adam, as the one who inspires man's life and completes his being and fulfills his life, the woman is not man's instrument or tool. She is a person in her own right, a sharer of the nature of God, a necessary complement to man. There can be no man without woman -- no Adam without Eve; just as there can be no woman without man. The two exist together in perfect communion and harmony for the fulfillment of human nature and life.

The differences between men and women are real and irreducible. They are not limited to biological or physical differences. They are rather different "modes of existence" within one and the same humanity; just as, we might say, the Son and the Holy Spirit are different "modes of existence" within one and the same divinity, together with God the Father. The male and female are to be in spiritual as well as bodily union. They are to express together, in one and the same humanity, all of the virtues and powers that belong to human nature as made in the image and according to the likeness of God. There are no virtues or powers that belong to man, and not to woman; nor to woman and not to man. All are called to spiritual perfection in truth and in love, indeed in all of the divine virtues of God given to His creatures.

The hostilities and competitions between man and woman that exist in the present world are not due to their respective "modes of existence" as created by God. They are due rather to sin. There should be no tyranny of men over women; no oppression, no servitude. Just as there should be no striving of women to be men, and to hold the male position in the order of creation. There should be rather a harmony and unity within the community of being with its natural created order and distinctions. The oneness of nature with the distinction of various modes of being within Divinity, the Most Holy Trinity. For in the Divinity of the Trinity itself there is a perfect unity of nature and being, with real distinctions between the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit as to how each of the Divine Persons lives and expresses the common nature of God. There is an **order** in the Trinity. There is even a **hierarchy** if we do not take this term to mean some difference in nature between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but merely the **way** in which the Divine Persons relate to one another and to man and the world. For in the Trinity itself the Father alone is the "source of divinity." The Son is the expression of the Father and is "subject" to Him. And the Holy Spirit, of one essence and fully equal with the Father and the Son, is the "third" Person who fulfills the will of the Father and the Son. The Three Divine Persons are perfectly equal. This is a dogma of the Church. But they are not the same, and there is an ordered relation between them in which there are "priorities" in being and acting which not only do not destroy the perfection and perfect unity of the Godhead, but even allow it and make it to be perfect and divine (see [Holy Trinity](#)). It is the Trinitarian Life of God which is the Divine

Archetype and Pattern for the being and acting of male and female within the order of creation.

 HYMNOGRAPHY: JUNE

July 12: St. Veronica, a woman healed by Christ

Troparion - Tone 8

The image of God was truly preserved in you, O Mother,
For you took up the Cross and followed Christ.
By so doing, you taught us to disregard the flesh, for it passes away,
But to care instead for the soul, since it is immortal.
Therefore your spirit, O Holy Mother Veronica, rejoices with the Angels!

July 19: Fathers of the First Six Councils

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!

July 26: Repose of St. Jacob Netsvetov

Troparion - Tone 4

O righteous Father Jacob,
Adornment of Atka and the Yukon Delta;
You offered yourself as a living sacrifice
To bring light to a searching people.
Offspring of Russian America,
Flower of brotherly unity,
Healer of sickness and terror of demons:
O Holy Father Jacob,
Pray to Christ God that our souls may be saved.

Kontakion - Tone 3

O Holy Father Jacob,
Teacher of the knowledge of God,
You revealed your love for your people,
Taking up your cross and following Christ,
Enduring hardships like the Apostle Paul.
Pray on our behalf to Christ our God
To grant us great mercy.



August 1: Procession of the Honorable Wood of the 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 the Cross,
Preserve Your habitation!

Kontakion - Tone 4

As You were voluntarily crucified for our sake,
Grant mercy to those who are called by Your name;
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!

PARISHIONERS' NAME DAYS – JULY

July 4th – Andrew Strickland (Andrew of Crete)

July 11th – Olga Koblov (St. Olga the Princess of Russia)

July 17th – Christine Alexandra (Royal Passionbearer Alexandra)

July 18th – Dominique Elizabeth Homiak, JoAnn Elizabeth Grambush, Elizabeth Strickland (New Martyr Elizabeth)

July 19th – Ali Collins (Venerable Macrina)

July 22nd – Cynthia Maria Kvasknikoff and Jennifer Gribble (Mary Magdalene)

July 25th – Alina Bibireata and Anya Knowlton (Righteous Anna)

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 include the following people, both Orthodox and non-Orthodox, in whatever prayers you can offer. Each of them is in special need this month for our common intercessions before God.

Living

Patricia

Flore

Allan Simeon

Deborah Maria

Peg

Janet

Elie

Robert Gregory

Bistra

Sarah

Allan

Antonio

Amy and the child to be born of her

Departed

ND Sarah

ND Elsie

Catechetical Challenge Answers:

- 1) New Martyr Constantine (whose relics lie in our temple and who is commemorated this month on July 27)
- 2) Vespers (which is why we sing about the Resurrection of Jesus Christ—the liturgical theme for every Sunday—at Vespers *Saturday* evening)
- 3) “Correct glorification” or “true worship”