

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

138 5th Avenue Kirkland, WA 98033
(425) 889 4558 info@stkatherine.org
Editor: Emily Lorelli ekslorelli@gmail.com

PASTOR'S COLUMN

The following is the archpastoral message of our Metropolitan Jonah on the occasion of Pascha.

Christ is Risen! Indeed He is Risen!

To the Very Reverend and Reverend Clergy, Monastics, and Faithful
of The Orthodox Church in America

Dearly Beloved in Christ,

Beloved, let us greet one another with Paschal Joy, and exchange the kiss of peace.

Let us feast soberly, that our joy may be full. Let us not stuff ourselves to satiety with feasting, nor indulge our passions to insensibility. Most of all, let us not give ourselves over to the darkness of the fallen world from which we have sought to purify ourselves, lack of forgiveness, anger and judgment, bitterness and hatred.

Rather, let us allow our old selves to remain crucified and buried, that the New Man may live, resurrected in and with Christ. Let us live according to the Kingdom, in communion with the Holy Spirit, so that we may be renewed by the Resurrection.

Our Pascha is not simply the beautiful services and the good food. It is not just family and Easter bunnies. It is not just the fellowship and familiar old customs.

Pascha is the dawn of the Age to Come, the Kingdom of God radiating into our souls and minds and hearts. Pascha is the experience of salvation itself, the foretaste of the Messianic Banquet, and the transformation of our lives. In Pascha we behold Christ, Risen from the dead, the revelation of the Second Coming.

We have gone with Christ to His Passion, but have we been crucified with Him?

We have held vigil at His Tomb, but were we asleep, and missed Him? Did our minds betray us and we doubt His Resurrection?

Let the fruit of our Lenten efforts be the enlightenment of our minds and the renewal of our hearts that our repentance not be in vain.

Let us sing with joy together with the Angels and Archangels, and all creation which has groaned awaiting the revelation of the Son of Man. With all creation, the living and dead, the spiritual and material, and with all the saints, let us cry:

Christ is Risen from the dead, trampling down death by death, and upon those in the tombs bestowing life!

Христос Воскресе из мертвых, смертию смерть поправ, и сущим во гробех живот даровав!

Χριστός ανέστη εκ νεκρών, θάνατο θανάτων πατήσας και της εν τοις μνημασι ζωην χαρισάμενος.

With love and joy in the Risen Christ,

+JONAH

Archbishop of Washington and New York
Metropolitan of All America and Canada

1 PARISH AND LOCAL EVENTS

CALENDAR HIGHLIGHTS:

May 2: Resurrectional Vigil @ 6pm

May 3: Holy Myrrh-Bearing Women – Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

May 7: Bible Study @ 7pm

May 9: Resurrectional Vigil @ 6pm

May 10: Sunday of the Paralytic – Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

May 12: Vespers for Midfeast @ 7pm

May 14: Studies in Orthodox Tradition (New Martyrdom in Russia) @ 7pm

May 16: Resurrectional Vigil @ 6pm

May 17: Sunday of the Samaritan Woman – Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

May 20: Parish Council Mtg. @ 7pm

May 21: Bible Study

May 23: Resurrectional Vigil @ 6pm

May 24: Sunday of the Blind Man – Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

May 27: Festal Vigil @ 7pm

May 28: Holy Ascension – Divine Liturgy @ 7am
Studies in Orthodox Tradition (American Mission)@ 7pm

May 30: Resurrectional Vigil @ 6pm

May 31: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am

June 7: Holy Pentecost

June 14: Sunday of All Saints

June 15-28: Apostles' Fast

June 21: Sunday of All Saints of North America

June 29: Holy Apostles Peter and Paul

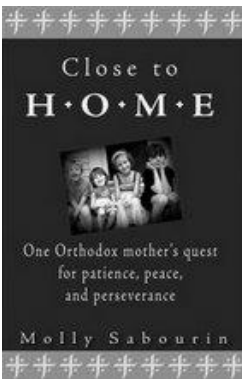
CATECHETICAL CHALLENGES (Our Catechumens can answer them. Can you?)

1. Who composed the Paschal Canon which we sing at Paschal Matins on Pascha and at Matins for all Sundays between Pascha and Ascension (with the exception of Thomas Sunday)?
2. What are the two respective scriptures read as the Gospel and the Epistle at the Divine Liturgy during the season of Pascha?
3. How is the paschal greeting rendered in at least one language other than English?

Answers for May on the last page.

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 – ekslorelli@gmail.com.****



CLOSE TO HOME by Molly Sabourin

For a long while, I couldn't quite put my finger on it. It wasn't the exhaustion or sudden loss of freedom per se; I was sure that eventually time and experience would remedy (or at least numb) the ill effects of those violent intrusions on my health and emotions. When the claustrophobia and hormonally charged periods of baby blueness came and went and came again those first several months, I knew deep down in my gut that they were not the cause, not the root anyway, of my discontentment either. I *wanted* to be a mom. I was

committed wholeheartedly to this invaluable opportunity to raise and nurture my children. No matter how hard I tried, however, to line up my thought life with my set in stone convictions regarding the sacredness of parenthood, I couldn't make one consistently reflect the other. In my mind, bouts of resentment, impatience, and insecurity were obviously signs of failure – were simply incompatible with good and prayerful parenting. What was dampening my experience as a mother (aha! I finally figured it out!) was that impossibly wide chasm between my ideals and capabilities. My main objective in life, then, became to cross it.

To combat my incompetence I sought voraciously the advice of others. I positive disciplined, sleep trained and chore charted my way to success – success that would last a week or so before I'd lose steam and give up, and then agonize over my laziness? my selfishness? my flightiness? To be honest, I didn't know what exactly was wrong with me! Somewhere there was a key that could unlock that mystical secret of maternal satisfaction and until I found it, I would dart all over the place testing theories and hypotheses claiming possession of precisely what I was longing for. Out *there* lay my happiness, perfection and fulfillment. I was always but an article or surefire tip away from arriving at that mommy plateau from which everything runs smoothly and where everyone, parents and kids alike, respond pleasantly and appropriately from that point forward to life's challenges.

In the midst of a never ending voyage toward an ambiguous and elusive finish line, I began to open up, out of frustration, to my fellow mom friends. What I discovered repeatedly, surprisingly enough, was that each of us was struggling with our own unique self-doubts. Each of us was worn out from trying to live up to our impeccable standards. Each of us was concerned that our children were abnormally something – shy, aggressive, willful, behind in development, you name it. It also began to dawn on me, however, that those conversations so honest and yet seemingly unproductive in which I vented to a supportive and empathetic peer provided comfort unlike any how-to manual I had ever combed through for answers. Feeling part of something bigger than the little lonely world I was dwelling in and worrying in and yet would sacrifice anything to stay in, brought me real and sustained peace. In apartments, houses and condos around the globe were women and men just like me – parents who adored their kids, parents whose families were flawed, parents inching their way toward enlightenment two steps forward and one step backward at a time.

Several years ago I got an idea in my head. I wanted to chronicle my experience as a new mom coming to terms with the actualities of her role. I wanted to state clearly and candidly the misconceptions holding me back from taking ownership of my position as the mother of *these distinct children* placed divinely in my care. I desired to scream from the pages of a book not, "Here is how you do it!" but rather, "You, my friend, are not alone!" I am abundantly thankful for Conciliar Press and for their willingness to take a chance on me. With Conciliar, I was able to freely and thoroughly examine motherhood in light of the Orthodox Christianity I had converted to. It was rigorous work, writing with four small children on my lap and at my feet, staying up later than I should to finish just one more thought, one more paragraph. It was (and still is) scary, I'll admit it, to become so vulnerable through the sharing of my faults and fears. But bigger than the challenges were the revelations! I was floored to find out how applicable and transforming are the teachings of the ancient Church to modern day men and women in the throes of disciplining, praying for, and doting on their children.

It is finished; I can scarcely believe it! *Close to Home: One Orthodox Mother's Quest for Patience, Peace and Perseverance* is now available to **pre-order at Conciliar's website**. I am honored for this chance to reveal how my numerous mistakes and disappointments, a sense of community, and the teachings of Jesus as revealed through the mysteries of His Church, are enabling me to focus less on what I *can't* be or do and more on what God can. I want to take this opportunity to thank you, all of you who have listened to these podcasts and read my blogs and who have inspired me to wake up each morning and try all over again to be a little more like Christ than the day before. Let us continue pursuing the unearthly gratification that comes from serving one another, uplifting one another – from loving sacrificially in the name of the Holy Trinity our spouses, sons and daughters, siblings, parents and neighbors.



THE LIVES OF THE SAINTS

May 7: Repose of St. Alexis Toth, confessor and defender of Orthodoxy in America

Our holy Father Alexis, the defender of the Orthodox Faith and zealous worker in the Lord's vineyard, was born in Austro-Hungary on March 18, 1854 into a poor Carpatho-Russian family. Like many others in the Austro-Hungarian empire, the Toths were Eastern Rite Catholics. Alexis' father and brother were priests and his uncle was a bishop in the Uniate church. He received an excellent education and knew several languages (Carpatho-Russian, Hungarian, Russian, German, Latin, and a reading knowledge of Greek). He married Rosalie Mihalich, a priest's daughter, and was ordained on April 18, 1878 to serve as second priest in a Uniate parish. His wife died soon afterwards, followed by their only child - losses which the saint endured with the patience of Job.

In May, 1879, Fr Alexis was appointed secretary to the Bishop of Presov and also Administrator of the Diocesan Administration. He was also entrusted with the directorship of an orphanage. At Presov Seminary, Father Toth taught Church History and Canon Law, which served him well in his later life in America. St Alexis did not serve long as a professor or an administrator, for the Lord had a different future planned for him. In October, 1889 he was appointed to serve as pastor of a Uniate parish in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Like another Abraham, he left his country and his relatives to fulfill the will of God (Gen 12:1).

Upon his arrival in America, Father Alexis presented himself to the local Roman Catholic diocesan authority, Archbishop John Ireland, since there was no Uniate bishop in America at that time. Archbishop Ireland belonged to the party of American Catholics who favored the "Americanization" of all Roman Catholics. His vision for the future was founded on a common faith, customs, and the use of the English language for everything except liturgical celebrations. Naturally, ethnic parishes and non-Latin rite clergy did not fit into this vision. Thus, when Father Toth came to present his credentials, Archbishop Ireland greeted him with open hostility. He refused to recognize him as a legitimate Catholic priest or to grant permission for him to serve in his diocese.

As a historian and professor of Canon Law, Father Toth knew his rights under the terms of the Unia and would not accept Archbishop Ireland's unjust decisions. In October of 1890, there was a meeting of eight of the ten Uniate priests in America at Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania under the chairmanship of Father Toth. By this time the American bishops had written to Rome demanding the recall to Europe of all Uniate priests in America, fearing that Uniate priests and parishes would hinder the assimilation of immigrants into American culture. Uniate bishops in Europe refused to listen to the priests' pleas for help.

Archbishop Ireland sent a letter to his parishes ordering their members not to attend Father Toth's parish nor to accept any priestly ministrations from him. Expecting imminent deportation, Father Toth explained the situation to his parishioners and suggested it might be best for him to leave and return to Europe.

"No," they said. "Let's go to the Russian bishop. Why should we always submit ourselves to foreigners?" It was decided to write to the Russian consul in San Francisco in order to ask for the name and address of the Russian bishop. Ivan Mlinar went to San Francisco to make initial contact with Bishop Vladimir; then in February, 1891 Father Toth and his church warden, Paul Podany, also made the journey. Subsequently, Bishop Vladimir came to Minneapolis and on March 25, 1891 received Father Toth and 361 parishioners into the Orthodox Church of their ancestors. The parishioners regarded this event as a new Triumph of Orthodoxy, crying out with joy: "Glory to God for His great mercy!"

This initiative came from the people themselves, and was not the result of any coercion from outsiders. The Russian Orthodox Church was unaware of the existence of these Slavic Uniate immigrants to America, but responded positively to their petition to be reunited to the Orthodox Church.

The example of St Alexis and his parish in returning to Orthodoxy was an encouragement to hundreds of other Uniates. The ever-memorable one was like a candle upon a candlestick giving light to others (Mt.5:15), and his flock may be likened to the leaven mixed with meal which leavened the whole (Mt.13:33). Through his fearless preaching he uprooted the tares which had sprung up in the wheat of true doctrine, and exposed the false teachings which had led his people astray. Although he did not hesitate to point out errors in the doctrines of other denominations, he was careful to warn his flock against intolerance. His writings and sermons are filled with admonitions to respect other people and to refrain from attacking their faith.

While it is true that he made some strong comments, especially in his private correspondence with the church administration, it must be remembered that this was done while defending the Orthodox Church and the American Mission from unfounded accusations by people who used much harsher language than Father Toth. His opponents may be characterized by intolerance, rude behaviour, unethical methods and threats against him and his parishioners. Yet, when Father Alexis was offended or deceived by other people he forgave them, and he would often ask his bishop to forgive his omissions and mistakes.

In the midst of great hardships, this herald of godly theology and sound doctrine poured forth an inexhaustible stream of Orthodox writings for new converts, and gave practical advice on how to live in an Orthodox manner. For example, his article "How We should Live in America" stresses the importance of education, cleanliness, sobriety, and the presence of children in church on Sundays and Holy

Days.

Although the Minneapolis parish was received into the Orthodox Church in March, 1891, it was not until July, 1892 that the Holy Synod of Russia recognized and accepted the parish into the Diocese of Alaska and the Aleutians. This resolution reached America only in October, 1892. During that time there was a climate of religious and ethnic hostility against the new converts. Father Alexis was accused of selling out his own Carpatho-Russian people and his religion to the "Muscovites" for financial gain.

In reality he did not receive any financial support for a long time, for his parish was very poor. Until his priestly salary began to arrive from Russia, the righteous one was obliged to work in a bakery in order to support himself. Even though his funds were meager, he did not neglect to give alms to the poor and needy. He shared his money with other clergy worse off than himself, and contributed to the building of churches and to the education of seminarians in Minneapolis. He was not anxious about his life (Mt.6:25), what he would eat or drink or wear. Trusting in God to take care of him, St Alexis followed the admonition of Our Savior to "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Mt.6:33). So he bore the tribulation, slander, and physical attacks with patience and spiritual joy, reminding us that "godliness is stronger than all" (Wisdom of Solomon 10:12).

Bishops Vladimir, Nicholas, St Tikhon, and Platon recognized the special gifts of Father Toth, so they often sent him forth to preach and teach wherever there were people of Slavic background. Even though he was aware of his shortcomings and inadequacies, yet he was obedient to the instructions of the bishops. He did not hesitate or make excuses, but went immediately to fulfill his mission. St Alexis visited many Uniate parishes, explaining the differences between Orthodoxy, Protestantism, Roman Catholicism and Uniatism, stressing that the true way to salvation is in Orthodoxy.

Like Josiah, "he behaved himself uprightly in the conversion of his people" (Sir 49:2). He was instrumental in the formation or return of seventeen parishes, planting a vineyard of Christ in America, and increasing its fruitful yield many times over. By 1909, the time of his blessed repose, many thousands of Carpatho-Russian and Galician Uniates had returned to Orthodoxy. This was a major event in the history of the North American Mission, which would continue to shape the future of Orthodoxy in this country for many generations to come. Any future growth or success may truly be regarded as the result of Father Toth's apostolic labors.

Who can tell of the saint's spiritual struggles? Who can speak of the prayers which his pious soul poured forth unto God? He did not make a public display of his piety, but prayed to God in secret with all modesty, with contrition and inward tears. God, Who sees everything done in secret, openly rewarded the saint (Mt.6:6). It is inconceivable that St Alexis could have accomplished his apostolic labors unless God had blessed and strengthened him for such work. Today the Church continues to reap the fruits of his teaching and preaching.

Father Toth's efforts did not go unrecognized in his own lifetime. He received a jeweled miter from the Holy Synod, as well as the Order of St Vladimir and the Order of St Anna from Czar Nicholas II for distinguished service and devotion to God and country. In 1907, he was considered as a candidate for the episcopal office. He declined this honor, however, humbly pointing out that this responsibility

should be given to a younger, healthier man.

At the end of 1908, St Alexis' health began to decline due to a complication of illnesses. He went to the seashore in southern New Jersey in an attempt to regain his health, but soon returned to Wilkes-Barre, where he was confined to bed for two months. The righteous one reposed on Friday, May 7, 1909 (April 24 on the Old Calendar), the feast of Sts Sava and Alexius the Hermit of the Kiev Caves. St Alexis' love and concern for his spiritual children did not cease with his death. Before closing the account of his life, it would be most appropriate to reveal but one example of his heavenly intercession:

In January, 1993 a certain man prayed to St Alexis to help him obtain information about his son from whom he had been separated for twenty-eight years. Placing his confidence in the saint's boldness before God, he awaited an answer to his prayer. The very next day the man's son telephoned him. It seems the young man was in church when he was suddenly filled with an overwhelming desire to contact his father. He had been taken to another state by his mother, and she changed his name when he was a child. This is why his father was unable to locate him. Having learned from his mother that his father was an Orthodox Christian, he was able with the help of an Orthodox priest to obtain his father's phone number in a distant city. As a result of that telephone call, the young man later visited his father, who rejoiced to see what sort of man his son had become. The father gave thanks to God and to St Alexis for reuniting him with his son.

St Alexis was a true man of God who guided many Carpatho-Russian and Galician immigrants through the dark confusion of religious challenges in the New World and back to the unity of the Orthodox Church through his grace-filled words and by his holy example. In his last will and testament St Alexis commended his soul to God's mercy, asking forgiveness from everyone and forgiving everybody. His holy relics now rest at St Tikhon Monastery in South Canaan, Pennsylvania where the faithful may come to venerate them and to entreat St Alexis' intercessions on their behalf.



WISDOM OF THE FATHERS

In a Lenten episode of his podcast "Speaking the Truth in Love," Fr. Thomas Hopko explains the idea that Lent is a tithe of the year, during which we put special effort towards Christian living – i.e. the way we should be living all the time. At someone's request, he compiled a list of 55 Maxims for Christian Living. They are listed below. In the podcast mentioned above, he briefly expounds each one. If you would like to listen to it in full please visit ancientfaith.com/podcasts/hopko and select the program "Lent – The Tithe of the Year."

55 MAXIMS

Fr. Thomas Hopko

1. Be always with Christ, and trust God in everything
2. Pray as you can, not as you think you must.
3. Have a keepable rule of prayer, done by discipline.
4. Say the Lord's Prayer several times each day.
5. Repeat a short prayer when your mind is not occupied.
6. Make some prostrations when you pray.

7. Eat good foods in moderation, and fast on fasting days.
 8. Practice silence: inner, and outer.
 9. Sit in silence 20 to 30 minutes each day.
 10. Do acts of mercy in secret.
 11. Go to liturgical services regularly.
 12. Go to confession, and holy communion regularly.
 13. Do not engage intrusive thoughts, and feelings.
 14. Reveal your thoughts, and feelings to someone regularly.
 15. Read the scriptures regularly.
 16. Read good books, a little at a time.
 17. Cultivate communion with the saints.
 18. Be an ordinary person, one of the human race.
 19. Be polite with everyone, first of all with family members.
 20. Maintain cleanliness, and order in your home.
 21. Have a healthy, wholesome hobby.
 22. Exercise regularly.
 23. Live a day, even a part of a day, at a time.
 24. Be totally honest, first of all with yourself.
 25. Be faithful in little things.
 26. Do your work, then forget it.
 27. Do the most difficult, and painful things first.
 28. Face reality.
 29. Be grateful.
 30. Be cheerful.
 31. Be simple, hidden, quiet, and small.
 32. Never bring attention to yourself.
 33. Listen when people talk to you.
 34. Be awake, and attentive, fully present where you are.
 35. Think, and talk about things no more than necessary.
 36. Speak simply, clearly, firmly, directly.
 37. Flee imagination, fantasy, analysis, figuring things out.
 38. Flee carnal, sexual things at their first appearance.
 39. Don't complain, grumble, murmur, or whine.
 40. Don't seek, or expect pity, or praise.
 41. Don't compare yourself with anyone.
 42. Don't judge anyone for anything.
 43. Don't try to convince anyone of anything.
 44. Don't defend, or justify yourself.
 45. Be defined, and bound by God, not by people.
 46. Accept criticism gracefully, and test it carefully.
 47. Give advice only when asked, or when it is your duty.
 48. Do nothing for people that they can, and should, do for themselves.
 49. Have a daily schedule of activities, avoiding whim, and caprice.
 50. Be merciful with yourself, and with others.
 51. Have no expectations, except to be fiercely tempted until your last breath.
 52. Focus exclusively on God, and light, and never on darkness, temptation, and sin.
 53. Patiently endure your faults, and sins peacefully, under God's mercy.
 54. When you fall, get up immediately, and start over.
 55. Get help when you need it, without fear, or shame.
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An excerpt from Fr. Hopko's *The Orthodox Faith: Doctrine, Volume II*

The Symbol of Faith: God

... One God, the Father Almighty ...

The fundamental faith of the Christian Church is in the one true and living God.

Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God is one God; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be placed upon your heart, and you shall teach them to your children, and you shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise..." (Deut 6:4-8).

These words from the Law of Moses are quoted by Christ as the first and greatest commandment (Mk 12:29). They follow upon the listing of the Ten Commandments which begin, "I am the Lord your God ... you shall have no other gods besides me" (Deut 5:6-7).

The one Lord and God of Israel revealed to man the mystery of his name.

And Moses said... "...if they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?"

God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

God also said to Moses, "Say to the people of Israel, 'Yahweh, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob has sent me to you: this is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.'" (Ex 3:13-15)

God's name is **Yahweh** which means I AM WHO I AM; or I AM WHAT I AM; or I AM WILL BE WHAT I WILL BE; or simply I AM. He is the true and living God, the only God. He is faithful and true to his people. He reveals to them His divine and holy Word. He gives to them his divine and holy Spirit. He is called **Adonai**: the Lord; and his holy name of **Yahweh** is never mentioned by the people because of its awesome sacredness. Only the high priest, and only once a year, and only in the holy of holies of the Jerusalem Temple dared to utter the divine name of Yahweh. On all other occasions **Yahweh** is addressed as the Almighty Lord, as the Most High God, as the Lord God of Hosts.

According to the Scriptures and the experience of the saints of both the old and new testaments, **Yahweh** is absolutely **holy**. This means literally that He is absolutely different and unlike anything or anyone else that exists (**Holy** literally means totally separated, different, other).

According to the Biblical-Orthodox tradition, even to say that "God exists" must be qualified by the affirmation that He is so unique and so perfect that His existence cannot be compared to any other. In this sense God is "above existence" or "above being." Thus, there would be great reluctance according to Orthodox doctrine to say that God "is" as everything else "is" or that God is simply the "supreme being" in the same chain of "being" as everything else that is.

In this same sense the Orthodox doctrine holds that God's unity or oneness is also not merely equivalent to the mathematical or philosophical concept of "one"; nor is his life, goodness, wisdom, and all powers and virtues ascribed to Him merely equivalent to any idea, even the greatest idea, which man can have about such reality.

However, having warned about an overly-clear or overly-positivistic concept or idea of God, the Orthodox Church -- on the basis of the living experience of God in the saints -- still makes the following affirmations: God may certainly be said to exist perfectly and absolutely as the one who is perfect and absolute life, goodness, truth, love, wisdom, knowledge, unity, purity, joy, simplicity; the perfection and superperfection of everything that man knows as holy, true, and good. It is this very God who is confessed formally in the Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom as "...God, ineffable, inconceivable, invisible, incomprehensible, ever-existing and eternally the same."

It is this God -- the Yahweh of Israel -- whom Jesus Christ has claimed to be His Father. God Almighty is known as "Father" through His son Jesus Christ. Jesus taught man to call the Almighty Lord God of Hosts by the title of Father. Before Jesus no one dared to pray to God with the intimate name of Father. It was Jesus who said, "Pray then like this: Our Father who art in heaven ..."

Jesus could call God **Father** because He is God's only-begotten Son. Christians can call God **Father** because through Christ they receive the Holy Spirit and become themselves sons of God.

*For when the time had fully come, God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons (or, so that we all might be made sons). And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying "Abba! Father!" So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir [of the Kingdom of God].
(Gal 4:4-7, The Christmas Epistle Reading in the Orthodox Church)*

Thus no man is naturally a son of God and no man can easily call God Father. We can only do so because of Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit. And so we say in the Orthodox Divine Liturgy:

And make us worthy, O Master, that with boldness and without condemnation, we may dare to call upon Thee, the Heavenly God as Father and to say : Our Father, who art in heaven...

In contemplating the revelation of God our Father in the life of His people in the Old Testament and in the life of the Church in the New Testament, certain attributes and properties of God can be grasped by men. First of all, it can be clearly seen that God is Love, and that in all of His actions in and toward the world, God the Father expresses His nature as Love through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God, and he who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God; for God is love.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him. In this

is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the expiation for our sins.

So we know and believe that love God has for us. God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. (1 Jn 4:7-16)

... God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which has been given to us (Rom 5:5).

Being the God who is Love, our Father in heaven does all that He can for the life and salvation of man and the world. He does this because He is merciful and kind, longsuffering and compassionate, willing to forgive and to pardon man's sins so that man might share in the life and love of God. These gracious attributes of God are recalled in the scriptural psalmody normally chanted at the beginning of the divine liturgy in the Church.

Bless the Lord, O my soul! And forget not all His benefits! Who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases! The Lord is compassionate and merciful, long suffering and of great goodness! (Ps 103).

HYMNOGRAPHY: MAY

May 3: Sunday of the Holy Myrrhbearing Women with the Noble Joseph

Troparion - Tone 2

The Noble Joseph,
When he had taken down Your most pure Body from the tree,
Wrapped it in fine linen and anointed it with spices,
And placed it in a new tomb.
But You did rise on the third day, O Lord,
Granting the world great mercy.

Troparion - Tone 2

The angel came to the myrrhbearing women at the tomb and said:
Myrrh is meet for the dead;
But Christ has shown Himself a stranger to corruption!
So proclaim: the Lord is risen,
Granting the world great mercy!

Kontakion - Tone 2

You did command the myrrh-bearers to rejoice, O Christ!
By Your Resurrection, You did stop the lamentation of Eve, O God!
You did command Your apostles to preach: The Savior is Risen!

May 10: Sunday of the Paralytic

Kontakion - Tone 3

By Your divine intercession, O Lord,
as You raised up the paralytic of old,
so raise up my soul, paralyzed by sins and thoughtless acts;
so that being saved I may sing to You:
"Glory to Your power, O compassionate Christ!"

May 13: Midfeast of Pentecost

Troparion - Tone 8

In the middle of the Feast, O Savior,

Fill my thirsting soul with the waters of godliness, as You did cry to all:
If anyone thirst let him come to me and drink!
O Christ God, Fountain of our life, glory to You!

Kontakion - Tone 4

Christ God, the Creator and Master of all
Cried to all in the midst of the Feast of the law:
Come and draw the water of immortality!
We fall before You and faithfully cry:
Grant us Your bounties, for You are the Fountain of our life!

May 17: Sunday of the Samaritan Woman

Kontakion - Tone 8

The Samaritan Woman came to the well in faith;
She saw You, the Water of Wisdom, and drank abundantly
She inherited the Kingdom on High and is ever glorified!

May 24: Sunday of the Blind Man

Kontakion - Tone 4

I come to You, O Christ,
Blind from birth in my spiritual eyes
And I call to You in repentance:
You are the most radiant light of those in darkness!

May 28: Holy Ascension

Troparion - Tone 4

O Christ God, You have ascended in Glory,
Granting joy to Your disciples by the promise of the Holy Spirit.
Through the blessing they were assured
That You are the Son of God,
The Redeemer of the world!

Kontakion - Tone 6

When You had fulfilled the dispensation for our sake,
and united earth to heaven:
You ascended in glory, O Christ our God,
not being parted from those who love You,
but remaining with them and crying:
"I am with you and no one will be against you!"

May 31: Fathers of the 1st Ecumenical Council

Troparion - Tone 8

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

Kontakion - Tone 8

The Apostles' preaching and the Fathers' doctrines have established one faith for
the Church.
Adorned with the robe of truth, woven from heavenly theology,
It defines and glorifies the great mystery of Orthodoxy!

PARISHIONERS' NAME DAYS – MAY

May 2: David Gribble (St. Gleb [David])

May 8: Fr. John Strickland (Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian)

May 17: Yevdokia Beaty (St. Euphrosyne the Princess of Moscow)

May 21: Konstantin Beaty, Mat. Yelena Strickland (St. Constantine and Helen)

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

Robert

Mark

Sarah

Patricia

Flore

Allan Simeon

Julia Agnes

Dean James

Deborah Maria

Yelena and the child to be born of her

Sarah Maria and the child to be born of her

Dereon Anthony

Patricia

Bistra

Andreanna

Alexander

Elizabeth

Nicholas

Andrew

Kim

Ana

Mark

Departed

ND Ian

Catechetical Challenge Answers:

1. Saint John of Damascus

2. John and the Acts of the Apostles

3. Here are a few examples:

Aleut: Khristus anahgrecum! Alhecum anahgrecum!

Aleut: Khris-tusax agla-gikux! Agangu-lakan agla-gikux!

Albanian: Krishti U Ngjall! Vertet U Ngjall!

Alutuq: Khris-tusaq ung-uixtuq! Pijii-nuq ung-uixtuq!

Amharic: Kristos tenestwal! Bergit tenestwal!

Anglo-Saxon: Crist aras! Crist sodhlice aras!

Arabic: El Messieh kahm! Hakken kahm!

Armenian: Kristos haryav ee merelotz! Orhnial eh harootyunuh kristosee!

Athabascan: Xristosi banuytashtch'ey! Gheli banuytashtch'ey!

Bulgarian: Hristos voskrese! Vo istina voskrese!

Byelorussian: Khrystos uvaskros! Saprawdy uvaskros!

Chinese: Helisituosi fuhuole! Queshi fuhuole!

Coptic: Pchristos aftooun! Alethos aftooun!

Czech: Kristus vstal a mrtvych! Opravdi vstoupil!

Danish: Kristus er opstanden! Ja, sandelig opstanden!

Dutch: Christus is opgestaan! Ja, hij is waarlijk opgestaan!

Eritrean-Tigre: Christos tensiou! Bahake tensiou!

Esperanto: Kristo levigis! Vere levigis!

Estonian: Kristus on oolestoosunt! Toayestee on oolestoosunt!

Ethiopian: Christos t'ensah em' muhtan! Exai' ab-her eokala!

Finnish: Kristus nousi kuolleista! Totistesti nousi!

French: Le Christ est ressuscite! En verite il est ressuscite!

Gaelic: Taw creest ereen! Taw shay ereen guhdyne!

Georgian: Kriste ahzdkhah! Chezdmariidet!

German: Christus ist erstanden! Wahrlich ist er erstanden!

Greek: Christos anesti! Alithos anesti!

Hawaiian: Ua ala hou 'o Kristo! Ua ala 'i 'o no 'oia!

Hebrew: Ha Masheeha houh quam! Be emet quam!

Hungarian: Krisztus feltamadt! Valoban feltamadt!

Ibo (Nigeria): Jesu Kristi ebiliwo! Ezia o' biliwo!

Indian (Malayalam): Christu uyirthezhunnettu! Theerchayayum uyirthezhunnettu!

Indonesian: Kristus telah bangkit! Benar dia telah bangkit!

Italian: Cristo e' risorto! Veramente e' risorto!

Japanese: Christos fukkatsu! Jitsu ni fukkatsu!

Javanese: Kristus sampun wungu! Tuhu sampun wungu!

Korean: Kristo gesso! Buhar ha sho nay!

Latin: Christus resurrexit! Vere resurrexit!

Latvian: Kristus ir augsham sales! Teyasham ir augsham sales vinsch!

Lugandan: Kristo ajukkide! Amajim ajukkide!

Norwegian: Kristus er oppstanden! Sandelig han er oppstanden!

Polish: Khristus zmartywcykwstal! Zaprawde zmartywcykwstal!

Portugese: Cristo ressuscitou! Em verdade ressuscitou!

Romanian: Hristos a inviat! Adeverat a inviat!

Russian (Slavonic): Khristos voskrese! Voistinu voskrese!

Sanskrit: Kristo'pastitaha! Satvam upastitaha!
Serbian: Cristos vaskres! Vaistinu vaskres!
Slovak: Kristus vstal zmr'tvych! Skutoc ne vstal!
Spanish: Cristo ha resucitado! En verdad ha resucitado!
Swahili: Kristo amefufukka! Kweli amefufukka!
Swedish: Christus ar upstanden! Han ar verkligen upstanden!
Syriac: M'shee ho dkom! Ha koo qam!
Tlingit: Xristos Kuxwoo-digoot! Xegaa-kux Kuxwoo-digoot!
Turkish: Hristos diril - di! Hakikaten diril - di!
Ugandan: Kristo ajukkide! Kweli ajukkide!
Ukrainian: Khristos voskres! Voistinu voskres!
Welsh: Atgyfododd Crist! Atgyfododd yn wir!
Yupik: Xris-tusaq Ung-uixtuq! Iluumun Ung-uixtuq!
Zulu: Ukristu uvukile! Uvukile kuphela
(Thanks to Christine Alexandra Adam for the list).