

The Arena

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The Newsletter of
**Saint Katherine the Great Martyr Mission
Orthodox Church of America**

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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

Pastor's Column

by Father John Stickland

Approaching the End

There is a custom in the iconographical programs of many Orthodox temples to depict the Dormition of Mary on the rear wall, so that it is the last icon one sees upon departure. It shows the Mother of God, having reached the end of her life on earth, lying dead. Around her stand the Apostles both mourning and rejoicing in the event. Mourning, for they had lost the most luminous of the saints. Rejoicing, for they understood with the eyes of faith that in her death their Lord was accomplishing yet another great victory over death. For above her, within a mandorla to signify invisible reality, stands Christ himself, tenderly holding her shrouded body in his arms. It is an image that brings to mind the Nativity of Christ, whose icon depicts the Birthgiver of God and her infant son, who is wrapped in swaddling clothes resembling a burial shroud. Thus whereas Christ's death was foreseen in his birth, Mary's life is foreseen in her death. The death of every saint brings forth eternal life. "As the Mother of Life," we sing in the festal kontakion, "she hath passed over to the Life who dwelt within her ever-virgin womb."

On August 15 we celebrate the Dormition of Mary. It is the last great feast of the liturgical year. By this point we have journeyed through the entire festal cycle, beholding Christ's marvelous acts of salvation (Elevation of the Cross, Nativity, Theophany, Meeting in the Temple, Palm Sunday and the Passion, Resurrection, Ascension, Pentecost, Transfiguration). And we have celebrated Mary's cooperation with Christ as he wins for us that salvation. Indeed, as the last great

feast of the year celebrates her falling asleep, the first (September 8) celebrates her birth. It is as if the Church is telling us that we can not be fully initiated into the life of Christ without reflecting on his mother. "Whatever he says to you," she says to the servants at Cana, "do it" (John 2:5). She is our guide, the one "who points the way" the "mediatrix of our salvation."

As we approach the end of the liturgical year, then, we are also called through the example of Mary to reflect on the approaching end of our lives. In that example we find one who fearlessly looked beyond death to the glory of deification, through which she received the "divine glory" of Christ himself (Great Vespers for the feast). And the icon of her Dormition is a reminder to all of us who depart from the temple into the world that we are on a journey whose end lies beyond the world, in the eternal kingdom of Christ.

1 Parish and Local News, Notes, and Events

Catechetical Challenges (Our Catechumens can answer them. Can you?)

- 1) In the second chapter of the book of Job, who despairs in the face of Job's catastrophic suffering and calls on him to "curse God and die"?
- 2) In addition to the saints and ruling hierarchs, who is commemorated by name with particles from the prosphora at the Proskomedia prior to the Divine Liturgy?
- 3) What happens to the commemorative particles during the Divine Liturgy?

Calendar Highlights:

August 1-14: Dormition Fast

August 1: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am – Coffee Hour: Team 5

August 2 & 9: Confessions 4-6pm

August 5: Festal Vigil @ 7pm

August 6: Transfiguration, Divine Liturgy @ 7am

August 8: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am – Coffee Hour: Team 6

August 12: Inquirer Course @ 6pm; Bible Study @ 7pm

August 15: DORMITION – Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am – Coffee Hour: Team 7

August 18: Parish Council Meeting @ 7pm

August 19: Orthodox Studies @ 7pm

August 22: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am – Coffee Hour: POTLUCK

August 26: Inquirer Course @ 6pm; Bible Study @ 7pm

August 29: Divine Liturgy @ 9:30am – Coffee Hour: POTLUCK

August 31: Vespers @ 7pm

September 2: Orthodox Studies @ 7pm

Dear parishioners,

We have embarked on a serious effort to acquire property for use as a holy place of worship for our parish, perhaps permanently and certainly for many years. We, as members of the parish, can contribute to this task in no better way than to fervently pray to our Lord Jesus Christ that He bestow his favor and guidance upon us, and to ask the Lady Theotokos and all the Saints to intercede for us that we may succeed in doing the will of God.

Fr. Mancantelli of Billings, Montana was kind enough to recommend this prayer rule. If possible, please add it to your daily rule of prayer and bring it to the attention of others who might be willing to support us in this manner. Regardless of the outcome of the property search, this prayer will help us all fulfill our primary mission of preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ in love to the world, beginning here on the East Side.

Glenn Rebne (Property Search Committee)

Prayer for Repentance and Church Growth

Please offer this prayer each morning at 10 AM (or as close to that hour as you can):

Lord Jesus Christ our God, Thou didst promise that when two or three are gathered together in Thy name, Thou Thyself wouldst be in their midst. We call out to Thee with one voice, one mind and one heart, asking for the communion of Thy Most Holy Spirit, a converted heart which burns with love for God and our neighbor, and the growth of our parish.

Give us the grace to help our parish grow to establish Thy peace and righteousness upon the earth. Show us when and how to speak to, to pray, and to love Thy lost sheep, and bring them into the safety of Thy fold. We ask this through the prayers of our Most Pure Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and the Holy Great-martyr Katherine, patroness and protector of our holy parish.

For Thou, O Christ our God, art worthy to receive power, riches, wisdom, strength, honor, glory and blessing; and we praise Thee, together with Thy Father, Who is from everlasting, and Thy Most Holy, Good, and Life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Readings and Ramblings: Where we, the parishioners of St. Katherine Orthodox Church, “ramble” about what we’re reading, doing, and thinking about. **Please email submissions to Emily Lorelli – ekslorelli@gmail.com.**

**** No articles this month. Please email submissions for the September Arena to Emily Lorelli. ****

The Lives of the Saints – August 16 Translation of the Image “Not-Made-By-Hands” of our Lord Jesus Christ from Edessa to Constantinople

The Transfer from Edessa to Constantinople of the Icon of our Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-by-Hands occurred in the year 944. Eusebius, in his HISTORY OF THE CHURCH (I:13), relates that when the Savior was preaching, Abgar ruled in Edessa. He was stricken all over his body with leprosy. Reports of the great miracles worked by the Lord spread throughout Syria (Mt.4:24) and reached even Abgar. Without having seen the Savior, Abgar believed in Him as the Son of God. He wrote a letter requesting Him to come and heal

him. He sent with this letter to Palestine his own portrait-painter Ananias, and commissioned him to paint a likeness of the Divine Teacher.

Ananias arrived in Jerusalem and saw the Lord surrounded by people. He was not able to get close to Him because of the large throng of people listening to the preaching of the Savior. Then he stood on a high rock and attempted to paint the portrait of the Lord Jesus Christ from afar, but this effort was not successful. The Savior saw him, called to him by name and gave him a short letter for Abgar in which He praised the faith of this ruler. He also promised to send His disciple to heal him of his leprosy and guide him to salvation.

Then the Lord asked that water and a cloth be brought to Him. He washed His Face, drying it with the cloth, and His Divine Countenance was imprinted upon it. Ananias took the cloth and the letter of the Savior to Edessa. Reverently, Abgar pressed the holy object to his face and he received partial healing. Only a small trace of the terrible affliction remained until the arrival of the disciple promised by the Lord. He was St Thaddeus, Apostle of the Seventy (August 21), who preached the Gospel and baptized Abgar and all the people of Edessa. Abgar put the Holy Napkin in a gold frame adorned with pearls, and placed it in a niche over the city gates. On the gateway above the icon he inscribed the words, "O Christ God, let no one who hopes on Thee be put to shame."

For many years the inhabitants kept a pious custom to bow down before the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands, when they went forth from the gates. But one of the great-grandsons of Abgar, who later ruled Edessa, fell into idolatry. He decided to take down the icon from the city wall. In a vision the Lord ordered the Bishop of Edessa to hide His icon. The bishop, coming by night with his clergy, lit a lampada before it and walled it up with a board and with bricks.

Many years passed, and the people forgot about it. But in the year 545, when the Persian emperor Chozroes I besieged Edessa and the position of the city seemed hopeless, the Most Holy Theotokos appeared to Bishop Eulabius and ordered him to remove the icon from the sealed niche, and it would save the city from the enemy. Having opened the niche, the bishop found the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands: in front of it was burning the lampada, and upon the board closing in the niche, a copy of the icon was reproduced. After a church procession with the Icon Not-

Made-by-Hands had made the circuit of the city walls, the Persian army withdrew.

In the year 630 Arabs seized Edessa, but they did not hinder the veneration of the Holy Napkin, the fame of which had spread throughout all the East. In the year 944, the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitos (912-959) wanted to transfer the icon to the Constantinople, and he paid a ransom for it to the emir of the city. With great reverence the Icon of the Savior Not-Made-by-Hands and the letter which He had written to Abgar, were brought to Constantinople by clergy.

On August 16, the icon of the Savior was placed in the Tharossa church of the Most Holy Theotokos. There are several traditions concerning what happened later to the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands. According to one, crusaders ran off with it during their rule at Constantinople (1204-1261), but the ship on which the sacred object was taken, perished in the waters of the Sea of Marmora.

According to another tradition, the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was transported around 1362 to Genoa, where it is preserved in a monastery in honor of the Apostle Bartholomew. It is known that the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands repeatedly gave from itself exact imprints. One of these, named "On Ceramic," was imprinted when Ananias hid the icon in a wall on his way to Edessa; another, imprinted on a cloak, wound up in Georgia. Possibly, the variance of traditions about the original Icon Not-Made-by-Hands derives from the existence of several exact imprints.

During the time of the Iconoclast heresy, those who defended the veneration of icons, having their blood spilt for holy icons, sang the Troparion to the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands. In proof of the validity of Icon-Veneration, Pope Gregory II (715-731) sent a letter to the Byzantine emperor, in which he pointed out the healing of King Abgar and the sojourn of the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands at Edessa as a commonly known fact. The Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was put on the standards of the Russian army, defending them from the enemy. In the Russian Orthodox Church it is a pious custom for a believer, before entering the temple, to read the Troparion of the Not-Made-by-Hand icon of the Savior, together with other prayers.

According to the Prologue, there are four known Icons of the Savior Not-Made-by-Hands:

- at Edessa, of King Abgar (August 16)
- the Kamulian, -- St Gregory of Nyssa (January 10) wrote of its discovery, while according to St Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain (July 14), the Kamulian icon appeared in the year 392, but it had in appearance an icon of the Mother of God (August 9)
- in the time of Emperor Tiberius (578-582), St Mary Syncletike (August 11) received healing from this on ceramic tiles (16 August)

The Feast of the Transfer of the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands, made together with the Afterfeast of the Dormition, they call the third-above Savior Icon, the "Savior on Linen Cloth." The particular reverence of this Feast in the Russian Orthodox Church is also expressed in iconography, and the Icon Not-Made-by-Hands was one of the most widely distributed.



Wisdom of the Fathers

The Orthodox Veneration of the Theotokos

by Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco

The Orthodox Church teaches about the Mother of God that which Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture have informed concerning Her, and daily it glorifies Her in its temples, asking Her help and defence. Knowing that She is pleased only by those praises which correspond to Her actual glory, the Holy Fathers and hymn-writers have entreated Her and Her Son to teach them how to hymn Her. "Set a rampart about my mind, O my Christ, for I make bold to sing the praise of Thy pure Mother" (Ikos of the Dormition). "The Church teaches that Christ was truly born of Mary Ever-Virgin" (St. Epiphanius, "True Word Concerning the Faith").

"It is essential for us to confess that the holy Ever-Virgin Mary is actually Theotokos (Birth-giver of God), so as not to fall into blasphemy. For those who deny that the Holy Virgin is actually Theotokos are no longer believers, but disciples of the Pharisees and Sadducees" (St. Ephraim the Syrian, "To John the Monk").

From Tradition it is known that Mary was the daughter of the aged Joachim and Anna, and that Joachim descended from the royal line of David, and Anna from the priestly line. Notwithstanding such a noble origin, they were poor. However, it was not this that saddened these righteous ones, but rather the fact they did not have children and could not hope that their descendants would see the Messiah. And behold, when once, being disdained by the Hebrews for their barrenness, they both in grief of soul were offering up prayers to God - Joachim on a mountain to which he had retired after the priest did not want to offer his sacrifice in the Temple and Anna, in her own garden, weeping over her barrenness -- there appeared to them an angel who informed them that they would bring forth a daughter. Overjoyed, they promised to consecrate their child to God.

In nine months a daughter was born to them, called Mary, Who from Her early childhood manifested the best qualities of soul. When She was three years old, her parents, fulfilling their promise, solemnly led the little Mary to the Temple of Jerusalem; She Herself ascended the high steps and, by revelation from God, She was led into the very Holy of Holies by the High Priest who met Her, taking with Her the grace of God which rested upon Her into the Temple which until then had been without grace. (See the Kontakion of the Entry into the Temple. This was the newly-built Temple into which the glory of God had not descended as it had upon the Ark or upon the Temple of Solomon). She was settled in the quarters for virgins which existed in the Temple, but She spent so much time in prayer in the Holy of Holies that one might say that She lived in it. (Service to the Entry, second Sticheron on "Lord, I have cried," and the "Glory, Both Now Being adorned with all virtues, She manifested an example of extraordinarily pure life. Being submissive and obedient in all, She offended no one, said no crude word to anyone, was friendly to all and did not allow any unclean thought (abridged from St. Ambrose of Milan, "Concerning the Ever-Virginity of the Virgin Mary").

"Despite the righteousness and the immaculateness of life which the Mother of God led, sin and eternal death manifested their presence in Her. They could not but be manifested: Such is the precise and faithful teaching of the Orthodox Church concerning the Mother of God with relation to original sin and death" (Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, "Exposition of the Teaching of the Orthodox

Church on the Mother of God"). "A stranger to any fall into sin" (St. Ambrose of Milan, Commentary on the 118th Psalm), She was not a stranger to sinful temptations. "God alone is without sin" (St. Ambrose, same source), while man will always have in himself something yet needing correction and perfection in order to fulfil the commandment of God; Be ye holy as I the Lord your God am Holy (Leviticus 19:2). The more pure and perfect one is, the more he notices his imperfections and considers himself all the more unworthy.

The Virgin Mary, having given Herself entirely up to God, even though She repulsed from herself every impulse to sin, still felt the weakness of human nature more powerfully than others and ardently desired the coming of the Saviour. In Her humility She considered Herself unworthy to be even the servant-girl of the Virgin Who was to give Him birth. So that nothing might distract Her from prayer and heedfulness to Herself, Mary gave to God a vow not to become married, in order to please only Him Her whole life long. Being betrothed to the elderly Joseph when Her age no longer allowed Her to remain in the Temple, She settled in his house in Nazareth. Here the Virgin was vouchsafed the coming of the Archangel Gabriel who brought Her the good tidings of the birth from Her of the Son of the Most High. Hail, Thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou among women ... The Holy Spirit shall come upon Thee and the power of the Most High shall overshadow Thee: wherefore also that which is to be born shall be holy and shall be called the Son of God (Luke 1:28-35).

Mary received the angelic good tidings humbly and submissively. "Then the Word, in a way known to Himself, descended and, as He Himself willed, came and entered into Mary and abode in Her" (St. Ephraim the Syrian, "Praise of the Mother of God"). "As lightning illuminates what is hidden, so also Christ purifies what is hidden in the nature of things. He purified the Virgin also and then was born, so as to show that where Christ is, there is manifest purity in all its power. He purified the Virgin, having prepared Her by the Holy Spirit, and then the womb, having become pure, conceived Him. He purified the Virgin while She was inviolate; wherefore, having been born, He left Her virgin. I do not say that Mary became immortal, but that being illuminated by grace, She was not disturbed by sinful desires" (St. Ephraim the Syrian, Homily Against Heretics, 41). The Light abode in Her, cleansed Her mind, made Her thoughts pure, made chaste Her concerns, sanctified Her virginity" (St. Ephraim the Syrian, "Mary and Eve") "Once who was pure according to human understanding, He made pure by grace" (Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov, "Exposition of the Teaching of the Orthodox Church on the Mother of God").

Mary told no one of the appearance of the angel, but the angel himself revealed to Joseph concerning Mary's miraculous conception from the Holy Spirit (Matt. 1:18-25); and after the Nativity of Christ, with a multitude of the heavenly host, he announced it to the shepherds. The shepherds, coming to worship the new-born one, said that they had heard of Him. Having previously endured suspicion in silence, Mary now also listened in silence and kept in her heart the sayings concerning the greatness of Her Son (Luke 2:8-19). She heard forty days later Symeon's prayer of praise and the prophecy concerning the weapon which would pierce Her soul. Later She saw how Jesus advanced in wisdom; She heard Him at the age of twelve teaching in the Temple and everything She kept in Her heart (Luke 2:21-51)

Even though full of grace, She did not yet fully understand in what the service and the greatness of Her Son would consist. The Hebrew conceptions of the Messiah were still close to Her and natural feelings forced Her to be concerned for Him, preserving Him from labours and dangers which it might seem, were excessive. Therefore She favoured Her Son involuntarily at first, which evoked His indication of the superiority of spiritual to bodily kinship (Matt. 12:46-49). "He had concern also over the honour of His Mother, but much more over the salvation of Her soul and the good of men, for which He had become clothed in flesh" (St. John Chrysostom, Commentary on John, Homily 21). Mary understood this and heard the word of God and kept it (Luke 11:27,28). As no other person, She had the same feelings as Christ (Phil. 2:5), uncomplainingly bearing the grief of a mother when She saw Her Son persecuted and suffering. Rejoicing in the day of the Resurrection, on the day of Pentecost. She was clothed with power from on high (Luke 24:49). The Holy Spirit Who descended upon Her taught (Her) all things (John 14:26), and instructed (Her) in all truth (John 16:13). Being enlightened, She began to labour all the more zealously to perform what She had heard from Her Son and Redeemer, so as to ascend to Him and be with Him.

The end of the earthly life of the Most Holy Mother of God was the beginning of Her greatness. "Being adorned with Divine glory" (Irmos of the Canon of the Dormition), She stands and will stand, both in the day of the Last Judgment and in the future age, at the right hand of the throne of Her Son. She reigns with Him and has boldness towards Him as His Mother according to the flesh and as one in spirit with Him, as one who performed the will of God and instructed others (Matt. 5:19). Merciful and full of love, She manifests Her love towards Her Son and God in love for the human race. She intercedes for it before the Merciful One, and going about the earth, She helps men.

Having experienced all the difficulties of earthly life, the Intercessor of the Christian race sees every tear, hears every groan and entreaty directed to Her. Especially near to Her are those who labour in the battle with the passions and are zealous for a God-pleasing life. But even in worldly cares She is an irreplaceable helper. "Joy of all who sorrow, and intercessors for the offended, and feeder of the hungry, consolation of travellers, harbour of the storm-tossed, visitation of the sick, protection and intercessor for the infirm staff of old age, Thou art the Mother of God on high, O Most Pure One" (Sticheron of the Service to the Hodigitria). "The hope and intercession and refuge of Christians", "The Mother of God unceasing in prayers" (Theotokion of the Third Tone). "She day and night doth pray for us and the sceptres of kingdoms are confirmed by Her prayers" (daily Nocturne).

There is no intellect or words to express the greatness of Her Who was born in the sinful human race but became "more honourable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim." "Seeing the grace of the secret mysteries of God made manifest and clearly fulfilled in the Virgin, I rejoice; and I know not how to understand the strange and secret manner whereby the Undeified has been revealed as alone chosen above all creation, visible and spiritual. Therefore, wishing to praise Her, I am struck dumb with amazement in both mind and speech. Yet still I dare to proclaim and magnify Her: She is indeed the heavenly Tabernacle" (Ikos of the Entry into the Temple). "Every tongue is at a loss to praise Thee as is due; even a spirit from the world above is filled with dizziness, when it seeks to sing Thy praises, O Theotokos. But since Thou art good, accept our faith. Thou knowest well our love inspired by God, for Thou art the

Protector of Christians and we magnify Thee" (Irmos of the 9th Canticle, Service of the Theophany).



The Orthodox Faith

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

... And in the Holy Spirit, Lord and Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father, who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the prophets ...

The Holy Spirit bears the title of Lord with God the Father and Christ the Son. He is the Spirit of God and Spirit of Christ. He is eternal, uncreated, and divine; always existing with the Father and the Son; perpetually worshipped and glorified with them in the oneness of the Holy Trinity.

Just like the Son, there was no time when there was no Holy Spirit. The Spirit is before creation. He comes forth from God, as does the Son, in a timeless, eternal **procession**. "He proceeds from the Father," in eternity in a divinely instantaneous and perpetual movement (*Jn 15:26*).

Orthodox doctrine confesses that God the Father is the eternal origin and source of the Spirit, just as He is the source of the Son. Yet, the Church affirms as well that the manner of the Father's possession and production of the Spirit and the Son differ according to the difference between the Son being "born," and the Spirit "proceeding." There have been many attempts -- by holy men inspired by God and with a genuine experience of His Trinitarian life to explain the distinction between the procession of the Spirit and the begetting or generation of the Son. For us it is enough to see that the difference between the two lies in the distinction between the divine persons and actions of the Son and the Spirit in relation to the Father, and so as well to each other and to the world. It is necessary to note further that all words and concepts about God and divinity, including those of "procession" and "generation" must give way before the mystical vision of the actual Divine Reality which they express. God may somehow be grasped by men as He has chosen to reveal Himself. However, the essence of His Triune existence remains -- and will always remain -- essentially inconceivable and inexpressible to created minds and lips. This does not mean that words about God are meaningless. It only means that they are inadequate to the Reality which they seek to express ...

At this point also it is necessary to note that the Roman and Protestant churches differ in their credal statement about God by adding that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father "and the Son" (*filioque*) -- a doctrinal addition unacceptable to Orthodoxy since it is both unscriptural and inconsistent with the Orthodox vision of God.

With the affirmation of the divinity of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of worshipping and glorifying him with the Father and the Son, the Orthodox Church affirms that the Divine Reality, called also the **Deity** or the **Godhead** in the Orthodox Tradition, is the [Holy Trinity](#).

The Holy Spirit is essentially one in his eternal existence with the Father and the Son; and so, in every action of God toward the world, the Holy Spirit is necessarily acting. Thus, in the Genesis account of creation it is written: "The Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters" (*Gen 1:2*). It is this same Spirit who is the "breath of life" for all living things and particularly for man, made in the image and likeness of God (*Gen 1:30; 2:7*). Generally speaking the Spirit in Hebrew is called the "breath" or the "wind" of Yahweh. It is he who makes everything alive, the "giver of life" who upholds and sustains the universe in its existence and life (e.g. *Ps 104:29; Job 33:4*).



The Holy Spirit is also he who inspires the saints to speak God's word and to do God's will. He anoints the prophets, priests, and kings of the Old Testament; and "in the fullness of time" it is this same Spirit who "descends and remains" on Jesus of Nazareth, making him the Messiah (anointed) of God and manifesting him as such to the world. Thus, in the New Testament at the first **epiphany** (which means literally showing forth or manifestation) of Christ as the Messiah -- his baptism by John in the Jordan -- the Holy Spirit is revealed as descending and resting upon him "as a dove from heaven" (*Jn 1:32; Lk 3:22*, see also *Mt 3:16 and Mk 1:9*). It is important to note, both here and in the account of the Spirit's coming on the Day of Pentecost, as well as in other places in the Scriptures, that the

words "as" and "like" are used in order to avoid an incorrect "physical" interpretation of the events recorded where the Bible itself is literally speaking in quite a symbolical and metaphorical way.

Jesus begins his public work after his baptism, and immediately refers Isaiah's prophecy about the Messiah directly to himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ..." (*Is 61:1; Lk 4:18*).

All the days of his life Jesus is "full of the Holy Spirit" -- preaching, teaching, healing, casting out devils and accomplishing every sign and wonder of his messiahship by the Spirit's power (*Lk 4:11*). It is written that even his self-offering to God on the cross is made "through the eternal Spirit" (*Heb 9:14*). And it is through the same divine Spirit that he and all men with him are risen from the dead (*Ezek 37:1-4*).

On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples of Christ in the form of "tongues as of fire," with the sound "like that of a mighty rushing wind" (*Acts 2:1-4*). We note once more the use of "as" and "like." The coming of the Spirit on Pentecost is the final fulfillment of Christ's earthly messianic mission, the beginning of the Christian Church. It is the fulfillment of the Old Testamental prophecy that in the time of the messiah-king, the Spirit of God will be "poured out on all flesh" (*Joel 2:28; Acts 1:14*). It is the condition of the age of the final and everlasting covenant of perfect mercy and peace (*Ez 34:37; Jer 31-33; Is 11:42, 44, 61*).

The Christian Church lives by the Holy Spirit. The Spirit alone is the guarantee of God's Kingdom on earth. He is the sole guarantee that God's life and truth and love are with men. Only by the Holy Spirit can man and the world fulfill that for which they were created by God. All of God's actions toward man and the world

-- in creation, salvation and final glorification -- are from the Father through the Son (Word) in the Holy Spirit; and all of man's capabilities of response to God are in the same Spirit, through the same Son to the same Father.

Holy Spirit is the Spirit of life.

If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies through the Spirit who dwells in you (Rom 8:11).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth.

When the Spirit of Truth comes he will guide you into all the Truth; for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come (Jn 16:13; see also Jn 14:25; Jn 15:26).

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of divine sonship.

For all who are led by the Spirit are sons of God. For you did not receive the Spirit of slavery. ... but you received the Spirit of sonship. When we cry "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God (Rom 8:14; also Gal 4:6).

The Holy Spirit is the personal presence of the new and everlasting covenant between God and man, the seal and guarantee of the Kingdom of God, the power of the divine indwelling of God in man.

... you are a letter from Christ, delivered by us, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. ... our sufficiency is from God who has qualified us to be ministers of a new covenant, not in written code but in the Spirit, for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life (2 Cor 3:2-6).

Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you. ... For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are (1 Cor 3:16; also Rom 6:19).

... through him (Christ) we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and sojourners but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows in a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit (Eph 2:18-22; also 1 Pet 2:4-9).

In the Holy Spirit men have the possibility of receiving every gift from God, of sharing His divine nature and life, of doing what Christ has done by fulfilling his "new commandment" to love one another even as he has loved us, "because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit which he has given us" (Rom 5:5).

The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. ... And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, he who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life (Gal 5:22-25; 6:8).

Hymnography: August

August Troparia and Kontakia

August 1: Procession of the Honorable Wood of the Life-Giving Cross of the Lord 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!

August 6: The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ Troparion - Tone 7

You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ God,
revealing Your glory to Your disciples as far as they could bear it.
Let Your everlasting Light also shine upon us sinners,
through the prayers of the Theotokos.
O Giver of Light, glory to You!

Kontakion - Tone 7

On the Mountain You were Transfigured, O Christ God,
And Your disciples beheld Your glory as far as they could see it;
So that when they would behold You crucified,
They would understand that Your suffering was voluntary,
And would proclaim to the world,
That You are truly the Radiance of the Father!

August 8: Afterfeast of the Transfiguration of our Lord Same as Feast

August 9: Glorification of the Venerable Herman of Alaska Troparion - Tone 7

Joyful North Star of the Church of Christ,
Guiding all people to the Heavenly Heavenly Kingdom;
Teacher and apostle of the True Faith;
Intercessor and defender of the oppressed;
Adornment of the Orthodox adornment of the Orthodox Church in America:
Blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
Pray to our Lord Jesus Christ
For the salvation of our souls!

Troparion - Tone 4

O blessed Father Herman of Alaska,
North star of Christ's holy Church,
The light of your holy life and great deeds
Guides those who follow the Orthodox way.
Together we lift high the Holy Cross

You planted firmly in America.
Let all behold and glorify Jesus Christ,
Singing his holy Resurrection.

Kontakion - Tone 3

The eternal light of Christ our Savior
guided you, blessed Father Herman,
on your evangelical your evangelical journey to America
to proclaim the Gospel of peace.
Now you stand before the throne of glory;
intercede for your land and its people:
Peace for the world and salvation for our souls!

**August 13: St. Tikhon, Bishop of Voronezh and Wonderworker of Zadonsk
Troparion - Tone 8**

From your youth you loved Christ, O blessed one.
You have been an example for all by word, life, love, faith, purity, and humility.
Therefore, you now abide in the heavenly mansions,
where you stand before the throne of the All-holy Trinity.
Holy Hierarch Tikhon, pray for the salvation of our souls.

Kontakion - Tone 8

Successor to the Apostles,
adornment of hierarchs, and teacher of the Orthodox Faith:
beseech the Master of all to grant peace to the universe
and to our souls great mercy.

**August 15: The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
Troparion - Tone 1**

In giving birth you preserved your virginity,
In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos.
You were translated to life, O Mother of Life,
And by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death.

Kontakion - Tone 2

Neither the tomb, nor death could hold the Theotokos,
Who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions.
For being the Mother of Life,
She was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

**August 16: Translation of the Image "Not-Made-By-Hands" of our Lord Jesus Christ
from Edessa to Constantinople**

Troparion - Tone 2

We venerate Your most pure image, O Good One,
and ask forgiveness of our transgressions, O Christ God.
Of Your own will You were pleased to ascend the Cross in the flesh
to deliver Your creatures from bondage to the Enemy.
Therefore with thanksgiving we cry aloud to You:
"You have filled all with joy, O our Savior,
by coming to save the world."

Kontakion - Tone 2

Uncircumscribed Word of the Father
as we behold the victorious image of Your true incarnation,
not made by hands, but divinely wrought

in Your ineffable and divine dispensation towards us,
we honor it with veneration!

August 22: Martyr Lupus the Salve of St. Demetrius of Thessalonica
Troparion - Tone 4

Your holy martyr Lupus, O Lord, through his suffering has received an incorruptible crown from You, our God. For having Your strength, he laid low low his adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons. Through his intercessions, save our souls!

Kontakion - Tone 2

As a steadfast warrior of the Lord,
you vanquished the enemy array, O Lupus.
Strengthened by divine love,
with strength surpassing that of man you prevailed in your contest.
Now you unceasingly intercede with Christ our God for us all.

August 29: The Beheading of the Holy Glorious Prophet, Forerunner, & 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 5

The glorious beheading of the Forerunner,
became an act of divine dispensation,
for he preached to those in hell the coming of the Savior.
Let Herodias lament, for she entreated lawless murder,
loving not the law of God, nor eternal life,
but that which is false and temporal.

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
James Demetrius
Juliana and CTBB
Emily and CTBB
Patty Joanna
Robert Gregory
Bistra
Jeanette
Sarah
Allan
Antonio
Steven

Departed

ND Curtis Alexander

Catechetical Challenge Answers:

- 1) His wife
- 2) All of the Orthodox living and departed members of our parish, other Orthodox Christians know to the priest, and Orthodox Christians listed by parishioners on our commemoration sheet.
- 3) They are added to the chalice after the communion of the faithful, with the following prayer: "Wash away, O Lord, the sins of those remembered here, by the precious blood and through the prayers of all thy saints."