

# 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

We recently celebrated Vespers for the beginning of the new liturgical year, and we see before us, if we take the time to look and plan, many opportunities for spiritual growth in the year ahead of us as a parish. In the following address, issued at this time last year, Metropolitan Jonah calls upon us to reenter our lives as Christians who have been given the gift of the Holy Spirit through holy chrismation to care for the world around us.

The Lord said:

*The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me, Because He has anointed Me To preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives And recovery of sight to the blind, To set at liberty those who are oppressed; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD."* Luke 4:18f.

Dearly Beloved in Christ:

The Blessing of the Lord be upon you!

As we celebrate the Church's New Year, we meditate on the Gospel for this day, where the Lord went to Nazareth and was handed the Scriptures, and read the above. He then said, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." The question we have to ask ourselves is, How is this fulfilled in my life? How have I entered into the Lord's ministry, preaching the good news to the poor, healing the brokenhearted, giving liberty to captives, and so forth? Am I even paying attention to this?

Our Church has many challenges before it, financial, legal, organizational. But we must remember that, as important as these things are, as critical as they may be the life of our Church at this time, they can quickly become distractions from the one thing needful: to keep focused on Jesus Christ and the ministries which He has given us as a means of participation in His own ministry. While we might have budget challenges, there is nothing that can prevent us from preaching the Gospel, consoling those alone and abandoned and setting at liberty those held captive by their sins.

We have been "recreated in Christ for good works." Let us do that work, not because we expect a paycheck or recognition for doing it, but because it is the very nature of who we are as Christians: to manifest the Kingdom by showing love for our neighbor. Let us recover our spiritual sight, in Christ by the Spirit, so that we may know that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us, and has anointed us to do the Lord's will.

Each one of us has been anointed by the Lord do the works of God -- in chrismation. We don't have to wait for a program or a department to do them. In whatever walk of life, no matter who we are, we are called to enter into the Lord's labors. So let us put aside all distraction, keeping all things in their proper perspective, with our attention and focus firmly on Jesus Christ. We then might just find that our distractions and crises are not so big as we thought they were and that we have been given everything that we need to resolve them, if we indeed can maintain our awareness of Christ, striving for the fulfillment of His will.

With love in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a cross symbol followed by the name "Jonah" in a cursive script.

**+JONAH**

Archbishop of Washington

Metropolitan of All America and Canada



# 1 Parish and Local News, Notes, and Events

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

- 1) The All-Night Vigil (whether Resurrectional or Festal) combines two services of the daily cycle into one service of nighttime worship in preparation for the eucharistic Divine Liturgy that follows in the morning. What are these two services, and what characteristic hymns make symbolic reference to the sun in each?
- 2) In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus begins his ministry after the baptism and temptation by entering a synagogue on the sabbath and reading a passage from the Old Testament that spoke of his coming. What is that passage, and when is it read in the annual cycle of liturgical services?
- 3) What eighteenth-century saint did Fyodor Dostoevsky use as a model for the teaching of his fictional character Father Zosima in the *The Brothers Karamazov*?

Calendar Highlights:

**Sept. 7:** Festal Vigil @ 7pm

**Sept. 8:** Nativity of the Theotokos – Divine Liturgy @ 7am

**Sept. 9:** Inquirer Course @ 6pm, Bible Study @ 7pm

**Sept 13:** Festal Vigil @ 7pm

**Sept 14:** Exaltation of the Cross – Divine Liturgy @ 7am

**Sept 15:** Parish Council Meeting @ 7pm

**Sept 16:** Orthodox Studies @ 7pm

**Sept. 23:** Inquirer Course @ 6pm, Bible Study @ 7pm

**Sept. 25:** Resurrectional Vigil @6pm

**Sept 30:** Orthodox Studies @ 7pm

**Oct. 1:** Protection of the Theotokos – Moleben w/ Akathist @ 7pm

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**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL  
IOCC ANNUAL PAN ORTHODOX VESPERS, DINNER AND PROGRAM  
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 17, 2010 at 5:00 p.m.**

Do you want to meet Orthodox Christians in the Seattle area? Do you want to serve those in need around the world? Do you like eating food from around the world? If yes, then please plan to attend the **Fourth Annual IOCC Vespers, Dinner and Program** on Sunday, October 17, 2010, at the Saint Demetrios Greek Orthodox Church located at 2100 Boyer Avenue East in Seattle, Washington (206 325-4347). Pan Orthodox Vespers begin at 5:00 p.m. with a dinner, program and folk dance performance to follow. The dinner will consist of a wide variety of Greek,

Mediterranean, and Slavic specialties. All proceeds from this event will allow International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) to continue serving those in need around the world. For more information and to make prepaid reservations, please go to [www.iocc.org/seattle](http://www.iocc.org/seattle)

Please plan to attend this special event to give thanks for all that has been bestowed upon us and to help our brothers and sisters in need. IOCC was founded in 1992 as the official humanitarian aid agency of the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in Americas (SCOBA) and has implemented over \$300 million in relief and development programs in 33 countries around the world. Approximately 92% of IOCC's resources are spent on humanitarian relief and development programs with only 8% for fundraising and administrative costs.

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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 – ekstorelli@gmail.com.](mailto:ekstorelli@gmail.com)

## **Dostoevsky, by Nicholas Berdyaev**

-- A book review by Nancy Desmond

Dostoevsky is a compact but uniquely perceptive analysis of the spiritual themes in Fyodor Dostoevsky’s writings. Nicholas Berdyaev, the book’s author, was a Russian Orthodox religious philosopher of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (1874-1948). He was widely published in the West, and when I studied theology in school, he was the only Orthodox thinker whose name I saw frequently mentioned. One can get a good sense of Berdyaev’s own philosophy in reading this book, but what I like best are the exquisite insights he brings to my understanding of Dostoevsky. He also provides fascinating information on the intellectual and cultural currents in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe and Russia.

Fyodor Dostoevsky is considered by many to be a father of existentialism (along with Kierkegaard and Nietzsche). Existentialism was a 20<sup>th</sup> century movement in literature, philosophy and other disciplines. It focused on the importance of an individual’s existence - the decisions one makes and the actions arising out of them - and on the critical importance of choice: the freedom to make those decisions and act accordingly. Berdyaev was a Christian exponent of this movement, and Dostoevsky was a huge influence on him. This book illustrates why Dostoevsky had that influence – both on Berdyaev and on other existentialists. Although my aim is simply to pull out a few insights that I found helpful and interesting in understanding Dostoevsky, and not to demonstrate his inherent existentialism, some of what I relate may give you an inkling of how Dostoevsky influenced this movement.

Berdyaev claims that Dostoevsky was “Russia’s greatest metaphysician.” In Dostoevsky’s worldview, ultimate reality is found not in the “external forms of life, flesh and blood men, but [in] their inner depths, the destiny of the human spirit.” The reader will not understand Dostoevsky unless he is willing “to be immersed in [the] vast strange universe of ideas” that results from Dostoevsky’s intense exploration of the subterranean, spiritual aspects of human nature. Because of this deep focus on matters of the spirit, Berdyaev calls Dostoevsky a pneumatologist (pneuma = spirit in Greek).

Apparently Dostoevsky’s own intense passions caused him many problems in life. As he admitted to a friend, “...my nature is too passionate and unrestrained. I always go to extremes. I have exceeded the limit all of my life.” At least partly as a result of these experiences, he viewed the human spirit as having a cleavage—in which man is caught between God and Satan. He demonstrated this in *The Brothers Karamazov* through the relationship of Ivan Karamazov and Smerdyakov, as well as in Ivan’s relationship with the Devil. His strong affinity for the Book of Job also makes sense from this perspective (although Berdyaev does not focus on that.)

Dostoevsky always wanted to show the reader a light at the end of the tunnel (the light of Christ), while simultaneously creating characters who seem “tortured by a tragic destiny.” In developing his stories, he frequently used female characters to bring temptation and disorder into the lives of men. (This is certainly true in *The*

*Brothers Karamazov*.) He did this because he saw human love as being both sensual and a manifestation of self-will, a negative impulse that breaks up the human personality and sunders it in two. Dostoevsky drove home this point by describing the results of taking self-will to the extreme - the descent into debauchery. "Self-will begets inner division, which begets debauchery, and then the unity of human personality is lost."

Debauchery is the end of man's freedom, of his ability to choose. This is illustrated by Fyodor Karamazov's obsession with Grushenka, a woman he hardly knows. Because of his debauched state, he cannot control his thoughts, actions or emotions towards her. He is affected not just morally or psychologically, but at a metaphysical and spiritual level. Of all the Karamazov brothers - who together have inherited this tendency to sensuality from their father, Fyodor - only Alyosha is able to maintain the integrity, the unity, of his personality. And he is able to do this only because he has chosen Christ.

These tiny "bits" of Dostoevsky's metaphysics come from the chapters on spirit and love. Berdyaev goes much more deeply into Dostoevsky's proto-existentialism in excellent chapters on man, freedom and evil. He examines other aspects of Dostoevsky in chapters on revolution/ socialism, Russia, and the Grand Inquisitor. (E.g., "In the most exact sense [Dostoevsky] was the prophet of the revolution; it took place in the way he said it would....") I found this book to be chock full of absorbing revelations, and recommend it highly to anyone who ever read a Dostoevsky novel and wondered what was really going on.

## **The Lives of the Saints - September 2: Venerable Anthony of the Kiev Caves**

Saint Anthony of the Kiev Caves was born in the year 983 at Liubech, not far from Chernigov, and was named Antipas in Baptism. Possessing the fear of God from his youth, he desired to be clothed in the monastic schema. When he reached a mature age, he wandered until he arrived on Mt. Athos, burning with the desire to emulate the deeds of its holy inhabitants. Here he received monastic tonsure, and the young monk pleased God in every aspect of his spiritual struggles on the path of virtue. He particularly excelled in humility and obedience, so that all the monks rejoiced to see his holy life.



The igumen saw in St Anthony the great future ascetic, and inspired by God, he sent him back to his native land, saying, "Anthony, it is time for you to guide others in holiness. Return to your own Russian land, and be an example for others. May the blessing of the Holy Mountain be with you.

Returning to the land of Rus, Anthony began to make the rounds of the monasteries about Kiev, but nowhere did he find that strict life which had drawn him to Mt. Athos.

Through the Providence of God, Anthony came to the hills of Kiev by the banks of the River Dniepr. The forested area near the village of Berestovo reminded him of his beloved Athos. There he found a cave which had been dug out by the Priest Hilarion, who later became Metropolitan of Kiev (October 21). Since he liked the spot, Anthony prayed with tears, "Lord, let the blessing of Mt. Athos be upon this spot, and strengthen me to remain here." He began to struggle in prayer, fasting, vigil and physical labor. Every other day, or every third day, he would eat only dry bread and a little water. Sometimes he did not eat for a week. People began to come to the ascetic for his blessing and counsel, and some decided to remain with the saint.

Among Anthony's first disciples was St Nikon (March 23), who tonsured St Theodosius of the Caves (May 3) at the monastery in the year 1032.

The virtuous life of St Anthony illumined the Russian land with the beauty of monasticism. St Anthony lovingly received those who yearned for the monastic life. After instructing them how to follow Christ, he asked St Nikon to tonsure them. When twelve disciples had gathered about St Anthony, the brethren dug a large cave and built a church and cells for the monks within it.

After he appointed Abbot Barlaam to guide the brethren, St Anthony withdrew from the monastery. He dug a new cave for himself, then hid himself within it. There too, monks began to settle around him. Afterwards, the saint built a small wooden church in honor of the Dormition of the Mother of God over the Far Caves.

At the insistence of Prince Izyaslav, the igumen Barlaam withdrew to the Dimitriev monastery. With the blessing of St Anthony and with the general agreement of the brethren, the meek and humble Theodosius was chosen as igumen. By this time, the number of brethren had already reached a hundred men. The Kiev Great Prince Izyaslav (+ 1078) gave the monks the hill on which the large church and cells were built, with a palisade all around. Thus, the renowned monastery over the caves was established. Describing this, the chronicler remarks that while many monasteries were built by emperors and nobles, they could not compare with those which are built with holy prayers and tears, and by fasting and vigil. Although St Anthony had no gold, he built a monastery which became the first spiritual center of Rus.

For his holiness of life, God glorified St Anthony with the gift of clairvoyance and wonderworking. One example of this occurred during the construction of the Great Caves church. The Most Holy Theotokos Herself stood before him and St Theodosius in the Blachernae church in Constantinople, where they had been miraculously transported without leaving their own monastery. Actually, two angels appeared in Constantinople in their forms (See May 3, the account of the Kiev Caves Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos). Having received gold from the Mother of God, the saints commissioned master architects, who came from Constantinople to the Russian land on the command of the Queen of Heaven to build the church at the Monastery of the Caves. During this appearance, the Mother of God foretold the impending death of St Anthony, which occurred on July 10, 1073.

Through Divine Providence, the relics of St Anthony remain hidden.



## Wisdom of the Fathers

### The Cross, Preserver of the Universe

by Saint John of Shanghai and San Francisco

IN THE prophet Ezekiel (9:6) it is said that when the Angel of the Lord was sent to punish and destroy the sinning people, it was told him not to strike those on whom the "mark" had been made. In the original text this mark is called "tau," the Hebrew letter corresponding to the letter "T," which is how in ancient times the cross was made, which then was an instrument of punishment.

And so, even then was foretold the power of the Cross, which preserves those who venerate it. Likewise by many other events in the Old Testament the power of the Cross was indicated. Moses, who held his arms raised in the form of a cross during the battle, gave victory to the Israelites over the Amalekites. He also, dividing the Red Sea by a blow of his rod and by a transverse blow uniting the waters again, saved Israel from Pharaoh, who drowned in the water, while Israel crossed over on the dry bottom (Exodus, chs. 14, 17).

Through the laying on of his hands in the form of a cross on his grandsons, Jacob gave a blessing to his descendants, foretelling at the same time their future until the coming of the "expectation of the nations" (Genesis, ch. 48).

By the Cross, the Son of God having become man, accomplished our salvation. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross (Phil. 2:8). Having stretched out His hands upon the Cross, the Saviour with them, as it were, embraced the world, and by His blood shed on it, like a king with red ink, He signed the forgiveness of the human race.

The Cross of the Lord was the instrument by which He saved the world after the fall into sin. Through the Cross, He descended with His soul into hell so as to raise up from it the souls who were awaiting Him. By the Cross, Christ opened the doors of paradise which had been closed after our first ancestors had been banished from it. The Cross was sanctified by the Body of Christ which was nailed to it when He gave Himself over to torments and death for the salvation of the world, and it itself was then filled with life-giving power. By the Cross on Golgotha, the prince of this world was cast out (John 12:31) and an end was put to his authority. The weapon by which he was crushed became the sign of Christ's victory.

The demonic hosts tremble when they see the Cross, for by the Cross the kingdom of hell was destroyed. They do not dare to draw near to anyone who is guarded by the Cross.

The whole human race, by the death of Christ on the Cross, received deliverance from the authority of the devil, and everyone who makes use of this saving weapon is inaccessible to the demons.

When legions of demons appeared to St. Anthony the Great and other desert-dwellers, they guarded themselves with the Sign of the Cross, and the demons vanished.

When they appeared to Saint Symeon the Stylite, who was standing on his pillar, what seemed to be a chariot to carry him to heaven, the Saint, before mounting it, crossed himself; it disappeared and the enemy, who had hoped to cast down the ascetic from the height of his pillar, was put to shame.

One cannot enumerate all the separate examples of the manifestation of the power of the Cross in various incidents. Invisibly and unceasingly there gushes from it the Divine grace that saves the world.

The Sign of the Cross is made at all the Mysteries and prayers of the Church. With the making of the Sign of the Cross over the bread and wine, they become the Body and Blood of Christ. With the immersion of the Cross, the waters are sanctified. The Sign of the Cross looses us from sins. "When we are guarded by the Cross, we oppose the enemy, not fearing his nets and barking." Just as the flaming sword in the hands of the Cherubim barred the entrance into paradise of old, so the Cross now acts invisibly in the world, guarding it from perdition.

The Cross is the unconquerable weapon of pious kings in the battle with enemies. Through the apparition of the Cross in the sky, the dominion of Emperor Constantine was confirmed and an end was put to the persecution against the Church. The apparition of the Cross in the sky in Jerusalem in the days of Constantius the Arian proclaimed the victory of Orthodoxy. By the power of the Cross of the Lord, Christian kings reign and will reign until Antichrist, barring his path to power and restraining lawlessness (Saint John Chrysostom, Commentary on 11 Thes. 2:6-7).

The "sign of the Son of Man" (Matt. 24:30), that is, the Cross, will appear in the sky in order to proclaim the end of the present world and the coming of the eternal Kingdom of the Son of God. Then all the tribes of the earth shall weep, because they loved the present age and its lusts, but all who have endured persecution for righteousness and called on the name of the Lord shall rejoice and be glad. The Cross then will save from eternal perdition all who conquered temptations by the Cross, who crucified their flesh with its passions and lusts, and took up their cross and followed their Christ.

But those who hated the Cross of the Lord and did not engrave the Cross in their soul will perish forever. For "*the Cross is the preserver of the whole universe, the Cross is the beauty of the Church, the Cross is the might of kings, the Cross is the confirmation of the faithful, the Cross is the glory of angels and the scourge of demons*" (Octoechos: Exapostilarion, Monday Matins).



# The Orthodox Faith

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

## **The Symbol of Faith: The Holy Church**

### **In one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church ...**

Church as a word means those called as a particular people to perform a particular task. The Christian Church is the assembly of God's chosen people called to keep his word and to do his will and his work in the world and in the heavenly kingdom.

In the Scriptures the Church is called the Body of Christ (*Rom 12; 1 Cor 10, 12; Col 1*) and the Bride of Christ (*Eph 5; Rev 21*). It is likened as well to God's living Temple (*Eph 2; 1 Pet 2*) and is called "the pillar and bulwark of Truth" (*1 Tim 3:15*).

### **One Church**

The Church is one because God is one, and because Christ and the Holy Spirit are one. There can only be one Church and not many. And this one Church, because its unity depends on God, Christ, and the Spirit, may never be broken. Thus, according to Orthodox doctrine, the Church is indivisible; men may be in it or out of it, but they may not divide it.

According to Orthodox teaching, the unity of the Church is man's free unity in the truth and love of God. Such unity is not brought about or established by any human authority or juridical power, but by God alone. To the extent that men are in the truth and love of God, they are members of His Church.

Orthodox Christians believe that in the historical Orthodox Church there exists the full possibility of participating totally in the Church of God, and that only sins and false human choices (heresies) put men outside of this unity. In non-Orthodox Christian groups the Orthodox claim that there are certain formal obstacles, varying in different groups, which, if accepted and followed by men, will prevent their perfect unity with God and will thus destroy the genuine unity of the Church (e.g., the papacy in the Roman Church).

Within the unity of the Church man is what he is created to be and can grow for eternity in divine life in communion with God through Christ in the Holy Spirit. The unity of the Church is not broken by time or space and is not limited merely to those alive upon the earth. The unity of the Church is the unity of the Blessed Trinity and of all of those who live with God: the holy angels, the righteous dead, and those who live upon the earth according to the commandments of Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit.

### **Holy Church**

The Church is holy because God is holy, and because Christ and the Holy Spirit are holy. The holiness of the Church comes from God. The members of the Church are holy to the extent that they live in communion with God.

Within the earthly Church, people participate in God's holiness. Sin and error separate them from this divine holiness as it does from the divine unity. Thus, the earthly members and institutions of the Church cannot be identified as such with the Church as holy.

The faith and life of the Church on earth is expressed in its doctrines, sacraments, scriptures, services, and saints which maintain the Church's essential unity, and which can certainly be affirmed as "holy" because of God's presence and action in them.

## **Catholic Church**

The Church is also catholic because of its relation to God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The word catholic means full, complete, whole, with nothing lacking. God alone is full and total reality; in God alone is there nothing lacking.

Sometimes the catholicity of the Church is understood in terms of the Church's universality throughout time and space. While it is true that the Church is universal - for all men at all times and in all places -- this universality is not the real meaning of the term "catholic" when it is used to define the Church. The term "catholic" as originally used to define the Church (as early as the first decades of the second century) was a definition of quality rather than quantity. Calling the Church catholic means to define how it is, namely, full and complete, all-embracing, and with nothing lacking.

Even before the Church was spread over the world, it was defined as catholic. The original Jerusalem Church of the apostles, or the early city-churches of Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome, were catholic. These churches were catholic -- as is each and every Orthodox church today -- because nothing essential was lacking for them to be the genuine Church of Christ. God Himself is fully revealed and present in each church through Christ and the Holy Spirit, acting in the local community of believers with its apostolic doctrine, ministry (hierarchy), and sacraments, thus requiring nothing to be added to it in order for it to participate fully in the Kingdom of God.

To believe in the Church as catholic, therefore, is to express the conviction that the fullness of God is present in the Church and that nothing of the "abundant life" that Christ gives to the world in the Spirit is lacking to it (Jn 10:10). It is to confess exactly that the Church is indeed "the fullness of him who fills all in all" (*Eph 1:23; also Col 2:10*).

## **Apostolic Church**

The word apostolic describes that which has a mission, that which has "been sent" to accomplish a task.

Christ and the Holy Spirit are both "apostolic" because both have been sent by the Father to the World. It is not only repeated in the Scripture on numerous occasions how Christ has been sent by the Father, and the Spirit sent through Christ from the Father, but it also has been recorded explicitly that Christ is "the apostle ... of our confession" (*Heb 3:1*).

As Christ was sent from God, so Christ Himself chose and sent His apostles. "As the Father has sent me, even so I send you ... receive ye the Holy Spirit," the risen Christ says to His disciples. Thus, the apostles go out to the world, becoming the first foundation of the Christian Church.

In this sense, then, the Church is called apostolic: first, as it is built upon Christ and the Holy Spirit sent from God and upon those apostles who were sent by Christ,

filled with the Holy Spirit; and secondly, as the Church in its earthly members is itself sent by God to bear witness to His Kingdom, to keep His word and to do His will and His works in this world.

Orthodox Christians believe in the Church as they believe in God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. Faith in the Church is part of the creedal statement of Christian believers. The Church is herself an object of faith as the divine reality of the Kingdom of God given to men by Christ and the Holy Spirit; the divine community founded by Christ against which "the gates of hell shall not prevail" (Mt 16:18).

The Church, and faith in the Church, is an essential element of Christian doctrine and life. Without the Church as a divine, mystical, sacramental, and spiritual reality, in the midst of the fallen and sinful world there can be no full and perfect communion with God. The Church is God's gift to the world. It is the gift of salvation, of knowledge and enlightenment, of the forgiveness of sins, of the victory over darkness and death. It is the gift of communion with God through Christ and the Holy Spirit. This gift is given totally, once and for all, with no reservations on God's part. It remains forever, until the close of the ages: invincible and indestructible. Men may sin and fight against the Church, believers may fall away and be separated from the Church, but the Church itself, the "pillar and bulwark of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15) remains forever.

*... [God] has put all things under His [Christ's] feet and has made Him the head over all things for the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

*... for through Him we ... 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 the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built into it for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.*

*... Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her, that he might sanctify her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present the Church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish ... This is a Great Mystery ... Christ and the Church ... (Eph 1:21-23; 2:19-22; 5:25-32).*

# Hymnography: September

## **Cherubic Hymn**

By Megan Martha

*Let us who mystically represent the cherubim,  
and who sing the thrice-holy hymn to the life-creating Trinity,  
now lay aside all earthly cares,  
that we may receive the King of All,  
who comes invisibly upborne by the angelic host.  
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

There are many points in the Liturgy in which the human participants join the angelic ones with the thrice-holy hymn. At the Little Entrance, when the priest brings out the Gospel, we sing the Trisagion: "Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!" At the Anaphora, immediately before the gifts become the Body and Blood of Christ, we sing "Holy, holy, holy, Lord of Sabaoth, heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!"

In between those two events is the Great Entrance, during which the priests and deacons process through the church carrying the gifts to the altar. The church fathers understood this procession to be an imitation of the angels' worship of Christ in heaven. St. Germanus of Constantinople went further, saying that angels are invisibly *present* in the Great Entrance and chant the "Alleluia" with us. In larger churches altar servers may carry feathered or metal fans with angels engraved upon them during the Great Entrance, another reminder that the angels celebrate with us. It seems natural, therefore, that we would refer to the angelic "thrice-holy hymn" at this point in the service.

However, the Great Entrance has not always been accompanied by the Cherubic Hymn. In the early part of the sixth century, the congregation and choir often sang Psalm 24: 7-10, "Lift up your heads, O gates, and be lifted up, O ancient doors, that the King of glory may come in!" (RSV) Some church authorities saw a theological problem with the use of that hymn, however. Patriarch Eutychius complained: "They act stupidly ... the people say that they bear in the King of glory, and refer in this way to things being brought up, even though they have not yet been consecrated ...." In other words, the people were worshipping plain bread and wine, thinking that they were the Body and Blood of Christ.

To solve this problem, the Byzantine Emperor Justin II introduced the Cherubic Hymn into the Divine Liturgy in 573 or 574. The words "that we may receive the King of All" described a future action, and were therefore less objectionable. At first, the Cherubic Hymn was sung as a refrain between the verses of Psalm 24, but it eventually replaced the Psalm altogether. Psalm 24 is still included in the Prayers of Preparation for Holy Communion.

One cannot conclude an article on the Great Entrance without mentioning one more hymn. On Holy Saturday the Cherubic Hymn is replaced with "Let all mortal flesh," which expresses the same sentiments as the Cherubic with different words:

*Let all mortal flesh keep silent  
and in fear and trembling stand,  
pondering nothing earthly-minded.*

*For the King of Kings, and the Lord of Lords, comes to be slain,  
to give Himself as food for the faithful.*

*Before Him go the ranks of angels,  
all the principalities and powers,  
the many-eyed cherubim and six-winged seraphim,  
covering their faces with their wings,  
as they sing this hymn: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!*

## **September Troparia and Kontakia**

### **September 5: Prophet Zacharia and Righteous Elizabeth**

#### **Troparion - Tone 2**

The memory of Your prophets Zachariah and Elizabeth  
We celebrate today, O Lord.  
By their prayers, we beseech You,  
O Christ God, save our souls!

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

Robed in the vestments of the priesthood,  
according to the Law of God you offered whole-burnt offerings in a sacred  
manner, wise Zachariah.  
You became a luminary and a seer of the mysteries,  
bearing within yourself the signs of grace, all-wise one.  
Slain by the sword in the temple of God, O prophet of Christ,  
intercede together with the Forerunner  
that our souls may be saved.

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

Today the prophet Zachariah, priest of the Most High and parent of the  
Forerunner,  
has prepared a banquet to his memory to nourish the faithful,  
mixing the drink of righteousness.  
Therefore we praise him as a divine initiate of the grace of God.

### **September 8: The Nativity of the Theotokos**

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

Your Nativity, O Virgin,  
Has proclaimed joy to the whole universe!  
The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God,  
Has shone from You, O Theotokos!  
By annulling the curse,  
He bestowed a blessing.  
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal Life.

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

By Your Nativity, O Most Pure Virgin,  
Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness;  
Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death.  
And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you:  
The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life!

**September 12: Leavetaking of the Nativity of the Theotokos**  
Same as Feast above.

**September 14: The Exaltation of the Precious and Life-Giving Cross**  
**Troparion - Tone 1**

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

**Kontakion - Tone 4**

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

**September 19: Afterfeast of the Exaltation of the Cross**  
Same as Feast above.

**September 26: Repose of the Holy Apostle and Evangelist John the Theologian**

**Troparion - Tone 2**

Beloved apostle of Christ our God,  
hasten to deliver a defenseless people.  
He who allowed you to recline on His breast,  
receives you as you bow before Him.  
Implore Him, John the Theologian,  
to disperse the persistent threat from the heathens,  
entreating for us peace and great mercy.

**Kontakion - Tone 2**

Who shall declare your greatness,  
O virgin disciple,  
for you pour forth wonders and are a source of healings,  
and pray for our souls as Theologian and friend of Christ.

# 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  
Bistra  
Sarah  
Allan  
Antonio

## Departed

Catechetical Challenge Answers:

- 1) The two services are Great Vespers and Matins (often the First Hour is also added to the Vigil). The hymns for each that make reference to the sun are O Gladsome Light at Vespers (marking the "setting of the sun," but reminding us that Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness) and the Great Doxology at Matins (marking the sunrise, and reminding us that in Christ, God has "shown us the light").
- 2) The passage is Isaiah 61:1-2, and it is read at Vespers for September 1, the beginning of the liturgical year (known as Indiction). The passage in Luke is 4:16-21.
- 3) Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk.