



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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APOSTLES' FAST/SAINTS PETER & PAUL FAST

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Archimandrite Raphael, Father Peter Natishan, Father Gerald Olszewski, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Dragan Filipović, Father Elias Katras, Father Stevo Rocknage, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Deacon Joseph Bulkanowa, Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Joe Karas, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, Angela Wesolosky, Stella Peanoske, Joe Nezolyk, Nick Behun, Terry Reinhart, Bernie O'Masta, Grace Holupka, Virginia Bryan, Joseph Sliwinsky, Maria Balo, Linda Mechtly, Mary Mochnick, Mary Pekich, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Amy, Nigel Daniel, & Daniel Pocura, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Sandy Gamble, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Khoruia Joanne Abdalah, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 3-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 10-month old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Jeff, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Bill, Erin, Jimmy Fennel [6th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Peter Paul & Louise May Sprock, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Claudia [Horvath] Gradicheck, Alberta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Tony Notaro, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Pete Special, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Betsy Mallison, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Michael, Amy, Luke Brunermer—broken arm, Liz Stumpf, Aubrie—3-month-old with Cystic Fibrosis, Kathy Ciranni, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Sam Wamsun, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Elisabeth Arasin, and Homer Paul Kline. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

Please remember ALL American servicemen and women in the Middle East in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American servicemen and women—and bring them all home safely!

PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING YOUR “BOXTOPS FOR EDUCATION” AND CAMPBELL’S SOUP LABELS TO CHURCH. There is a shoebox in the basement for Alex’s Fourth Grade and Matt’s Second Grade collections. THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! *Alex and Matt*

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please call Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

Schedule of Services

Sunday, June 10 DIVINE LITURGY 10:30 AM
SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—ALL SAINTS OF UKRAINE & ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA, VENERABLE NICETAS-BISHOP OF CHALCEDON, HIEROMARTYRS EUTYCHIUS-BISHOP OF MELITENE, HELLADIUS-BISHOP IN THE EAST; SAINT IGNATIUS BISHOP AND WONDERWORKER OF ROSTOV, SAINT SOPHRONIUS-MONK OF BULGARIA, SAINT GERMANUS-BISHOP OF PARIS, ALL VENERABLE AND GOD-LOVING FATHERS OF THE HOLY MOUNTAIN—MOUNT ATHOS

Tone 1

Romans 2:10-16 & Hebrews 11:13-12:2
Matthew 4:18-23 & Matthew 4:25-5:12

Saturday, June 16 HIERARCHICAL DIVINE LITURGY 10:00 AM
Sts. PETER & PAUL-CARNEGIE, ORDINATION OF DEACON MARK SWINDLE

Sunday, June 17 DIVINE LITURGY 10:30 AM
3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—SAINT METROPHANES-1ST PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE, HIEROMARTYR ASTIUS-BISHOP OF DYRRACHIUM, MARTYR CONCORDIUS OF SPOLETO, MARTYRS FRONTASIUS, SEVERINUS, SEVERIAN, & SILANUS OF GAUL, VENERABLE ZOSIMUS-BISHOP OF BABYLON IN EGYPT, VENERABLE METHODIUS-ABBOT OF PEHNOSHA, SYNAXIS OF ALL SAINTS OF HALYCHYNA/GALICIA, HIEROMARTYR NICEPHORUS—EXARCH OF THE PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE IN UKRAINE, SAINT SOPHIA OF THRACE, SAINT JOHN-ABBOT OF MONAGRIA, SAINT ALONIUS OF SCETE IN EGYPT, SAINTS MARY AND MARTHA-SISTERS OF LAZARUS, SAINTS ELEAZAR & NAZARIUS-WONDERWORKERS OF OLONETS

Tone 2

Romans 5:1-10
Matthew 6:22-33

***Litany in Blessed Memory of All Deceased Fathers, Grandfathers, etc.—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Catherine Yakim—Ollie***

Sunday, June 24 DIVINE LITURGY 10:30 AM
4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—HOLY APOSTLES BARTHOLOMEW & BARNABAS, UNCOVERING RELICS OF VENERABLE EPHRAIM, VENERABLE BARNABAS OF VETLUGA, TRANSLATION OF RELICS OF SAINT ARCADIUS, COMMEMORATION OF

**THE APPEARANCE OF ARCHANGEL GABRIEL TO A MONK ON MOUNT ATHOS—
REVEALING THE HYMN “IT IS TRULY MEET...”**

Tone 3

Romans 6:18-23

Matthew 8:5-13

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Riznow Sisters & Brothers—Sonja Riznow Edwards

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 10 JUNE 2007

SECOND SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST—ALL SAINTS OF UKRAINE
& ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA, VENERABLE NICETAS-
BISHOP OF CHALCEDON, HIEROMARTYRS EUTYCHIUS-BISHOP
OF MELITENE, HELLADIUS-BISHOP IN THE EAST; SAINT
IGNATIUS BISHOP AND WONDERWORKER OF ROSTOV, SAINT
SOPHRONIUS-MONK OF BULGARIA, SAINT GERMANUS-BISHOP
OF PARIS, ALL VENERABLE AND GOD-LOVING FATHERS OF THE
HOLY MOUNTAIN—MOUNT ATHOS

TROPARION—TONE 1

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews;
While the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure Body;
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior, granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of life:
Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Thy Kingdom!
Glory to Thy Dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind.

**Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,
and unto ages of ages. Amen.**

KONTAKION—TONE 1

As God, Thou didst rise from the tomb in glory, raising the world with Thyself.
Human nature praises Thee as God, for death has vanished!
Adam exults, O Master!
Eve rejoices, for she is freed from bondage and cries to Thee:
Thou are the Giver of Resurrection to all, O Christ!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 1

READER: Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on
Thee.

PEOPLE: Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on
Thee.

READER: Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous! Praise befits the just!

PEOPLE: **Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us as we have set our hope on Thee.**

READER: Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us.

PEOPLE: **As we have set our hope on Thee.**

ALLELUIA VERSES

God gives vengeance to me, and subdues people under me.

He magnifies the salvation of the king, and deals mercifully with His Christ, with David and his seed forever!

Easter in the Liturgical Year

Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemmann

In the center of our liturgical life, in the very center of that time which we measure as year, we find the feast of Christ's Resurrection. What is Resurrection? Resurrection is the appearance in this world, completely dominated by time and therefore by death, of a life that will have no end. The one who rose again from the dead does not die anymore. In this world of ours, not somewhere else, not in a world that we do not know at all, but in our world, there appeared one morning Someone who is beyond death and yet in our time. This meaning of Christ's Resurrection, this great joy, is the central theme of Christianity and it has been preserved in its purity by the Orthodox Church. There is much truth expressed by those who say that the real central theme of Orthodoxy, the center of all its experience, the frame of reference of everything else, is the Resurrection of Christ.

The center, the day, that gives meaning to all days and therefore to all time, is that yearly commemoration of Christ's Resurrection at Easter. This is always the end and the beginning. We are always living after Easter, and we are always going toward Easter. Easter is the earliest Christian feast. The whole tone and meaning of the liturgical life of the Church is contained in Easter, together with the subsequent fifty-day period, which culminates in the feast of the Pentecost, the coming down of Holy Spirit upon the Apostles. This unique Easter celebration is reflected every week in the Christian Sunday, which we call in Russian "Voskresenie" (Resurrection Day). If only you would take some time to read the texts of Sunday Matins you would realize, though it may seem strange to you, that every Sunday we have a little Easter. I say "Little Easter," but it is really "Great Easter." Every week the Church comes to the same central experience: "Having seen Thy Resurrection..." Every Saturday night when the priest carries the Gospel from the altar to the center of the church, after he has read the Gospel of the Resurrection, the same fundamental fact of our Christian faith is

proclaimed: Christ is risen! St. Paul says: "If Christ is not risen, then your faith is in vain." There is nothing else to believe. This is the real center, and it is only in reference to Easter as the end of all natural time and the beginning of the new time in which we as Christians have to live that we can understand the whole liturgical year. If you open a calendar, you will find all our Sundays are called Sundays after Pentecost, and Pentecost itself is fifty days after Easter. Pentecost is the fulfillment of Easter. Christ ascended into heaven and sent down His Holy Spirit. When He sent down His Holy Spirit into the world, a new society was instituted, a body of people, whose life, though it remained of this world and was shared in its life, took on a new meaning. This new meaning comes directly from Christ's Resurrection. We are no longer people who are living in time as in a meaningless process, which makes us first old and then ends in our disappearance. We are given not only a new meaning in life, but even death itself has acquired a new significance. In the Troparion at Easter we say, "He trampled down death by death." We do not say that He trampled down death by the Resurrection, but by death. A Christian still faces death as a decomposition of the body, as an end; yet in Christ, in the Church, because of Easter, because of Pentecost, death is no longer just the end but it is the beginning also. It is not something meaningless which therefore gives a meaningless taste to all of life. Death means entering into the Easter of the Lord. This is the basic tone, the basic melody of the liturgical year of the Christian Church. Christianity is, first of all, the proclamation in this world of Christ's Resurrection. Orthodox spirituality is paschal in its inner content, and the real content of the Church life is joy. We speak of feasts; the feast is the expression of joyfulness of Christianity.

The only real thing, especially in the child's world, which the child accepts easily, is precisely joy. We have made our Christianity so adult, so serious, so sad, so solemn that we have almost emptied it of that joy. Yet Christ Himself said, "Unless you become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of God." To become as a child in Christ's terms means to be capable of that spiritual joy of which an adult is almost completely incapable. To enter into that communion with things, with nature, with other people without suspicion of fear or frustration. We often use the term "grace." But what is grace? Charisma in Greek means not only grace but also joy. "And I will give you the joy that no one will take away from you..." If I stress this point so much, it is because I am sure that, if we have a message to our own people, it is that message of Easter joy which finds its climax on Easter night. When we stand at the door of the church and the priest has said, "Christ Is Risen," then the night becomes in the terms of St. Gregory of Nyssa, "lighter than the day." This is the secret strength, the real root of Christian experience. Only within the framework of this joy can we understand everything else.

Does God Exist?

A man went to a barbershop to have his hair cut and his beard trimmed. As the barber began to work, they began to have a good conversation. They talked about so many things and various subjects. When they eventually touched on the subject of God, the barber said: "I don't believe that God exists."

"Why do you say that?" asked the customer.

"Well, you just have to go out in the street to realize that God doesn't exist. Tell me, if God exists, would there be so many sick people? Would there be abandoned children? If God existed, there would be neither suffering nor pain. I can't imagine a loving a God who would allow all of these things."

The customer thought for a moment, but didn't respond because he didn't want to start an argument. The barber finished his job and the customer left the shop. Just after he left the barbershop, he saw a man in the street with long, stringy, dirty hair and an untrimmed beard. He looked dirty and unkempt. The customer turned back and entered the barber shop again and he said to the barber: "You know what? Barbers do not exist."

"How can you say that?" asked the surprised barber.

"I am here, and I am a barber. And I just worked on you!"

"No!" the customer exclaimed. "Barbers don't exist because if they did, there would be no people with dirty long hair and untrimmed beards, like that man outside."

"Ah, but barbers DO exist! What happens, is, people do not come to me."

"Exactly!"-affirmed the customer. "That's the point! God, too, DOES exist! What happens, is, people don't go to Him and do not look for Him. That's why there's so much pain and suffering in the world."

UPCOMING EVENT—MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

On Saturday, June 16, Saints Peter & Paul in Carnegie will celebrate with a Hierarchical Divine Liturgy as His Beatitude, Metropolitan Constantine, will ordain Subdeacon Mark Swindle to the Holy Diaconate. Divine

Liturgy will begin at 10:30 AM and refreshments will follow.

SCOBA

The Standing Conference of the Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas
8 East 79th Street, New York, NY 10021

Global Climate Change: A Moral and Spiritual Challenge 5/23/07

To all of the faithful clergy and laity of the Holy Orthodox Church throughout the Americas,
Beloved Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"For favorable weather, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and temperate seasons, Let us pray to the Lord."

At every Divine Liturgy the Orthodox Church repeats this petition.

And the Book of Prayers (Euchologion) contains numerous prayers for gardens, animals, crops, water and weather conditions. In her wisdom, then, the Church has always known that human beings are dependent upon the grace of God through the world around us to nurture and sustain civilized society. Indeed, "God has worked our salvation through the material world" (St. John Damascene, On Divine Images 1,16). While God is the Source of all that we have, and His presence fills the entire world (see Acts 17.28), we humans share a God-given responsibility to care for His creation and offer it back to Him in thanksgiving for all that we have and are.

"Thine own of thine own, we offer unto thee, in behalf of all and for all."

The action of returning creation back to God in gratitude and praise summarizes the commands that God gave humanity in the first chapters of Genesis. These commandments are intended to guide us into a fullness of the spiritual and material goods that we need. God tells us to "have dominion over the earth" (Genesis 1.28), which means that we are to care for the earth as the Lord would care for it. In the original Hebrew, the word for dominion (radah) means to rule in the place of the Lord. In the Greek Septuagint, the word for full dominion (katakryrieuo) contains the root word kyrios, the same word that we use for Christ as Lord Ruler over all. From this, it follows that our responsibility as human beings is to enter into His will and to rule as the Lord would rule.

God also tells us that we are "to cultivate and keep the Garden of Eden" (Genesis 2.15, LXX). The literal meaning of this passage is that humans are required to serve the earth as well as to

protect it from desecration or exploitation. We are responsible to God for how we use and care for the earth in order that all people may have a sufficiency of all that is needful. It is through our proper use of the material and natural world that God is worshipped: "Through heaven and earth and sea, through wood and stone ... through all of creation visible and invisible, we offer veneration and honor to the Creator." (Leontius of Cyprus, Sermon 3 on Icons)

What is further implied in the same commandment is thanksgiving to God for all that we have received through the physical world. Thus, each person has a "priestly" responsibility before God (1 Peter 2.5) to offer back to God that which belongs to Him. All this is implied in the Divine Liturgy, when the presbyter offers back to God what He has placed into human care. Indeed, the commandment "to cultivate and keep" the Garden also implies an expectation that we are to share the things of the world with those who are suffering, with those in need, and to have concern for the good of humanity and the entire creation. Even though our first parents fell away through disobedience, our Lord restored this priestly responsibility to humanity through His life-giving Death and Resurrection.

In our day, however, society has failed to remember these holy mandates about the right conduct of human beings. In our pride, gratitude has often been replaced with greed. As a people, we have forgotten God and foregone our mandated responsibilities. We no longer strive for sufficiency and moderation in all things. Too often, instead of receiving the gifts of God as He would bestow them, we heedlessly take from the earth and needlessly waste its resources, disregarding the impact that our greed exerts upon the life of our neighbors and the life of the world. There is no doubt that the pollution and degradation of the world is directly related to the pollution and the degradation of our hearts. "Look within yourself," writes St. Nilus of Ancyra, "and there you will see the entire world." (Epistles 2,119)

As Church leaders, our concern is service to our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, whose Gospel of love teaches us that our response to the welfare of our neighbor and respect for the creation are expressions of our love for God. This means that we are all personally responsible to identify and adopt appropriate moral and ethical approaches to the changing conditions of the world.

Faithful to the responsibility that we have been given within God's good creation, it is prudent for us to listen to the world's scientific leaders as they describe changes occurring in the world's climate, changes that are already being experienced by many people throughout the world. Global climate change assumes many different shapes and appearances within our own country. In Alaska, for instance, the average temperature has risen by 7°F, causing glaciers to retreat and the Arctic Ocean to lose its summer ice. In Florida, Hawaii and the islands of the Caribbean, coral reefs are dying. In ocean waters such as those off the coast of San Francisco, higher temperatures now result in lower concentrations of plankton, reducing a primary food source for fish and bird life, and ultimately, for humans. Across the western states, a modest increase in temperature has contributed to a six-fold increase in forest fires over the past two decades. In many parts of America, previously distant tropical diseases, such as West Nile virus and dengue fever, are appearing as a direct result of rising temperatures.

These are all clear signs of a rapidly changing climate. It cannot be predicted in precise detail how climate change is going to unfold, but the seriousness of this situation is widely accepted. And, while it is true that the world's climate has also undergone changes in past centuries, three crucial considerations make the current changes serious and unprecedented:

* The rapid extent of temperature increase is historically unparalleled. Past changes in climate occurred over extended periods of time and were considerably less severe.

* The human role in changing the climate is unique today. In earlier centuries, people did not have the technological capability to make such radical changes to the planet as are now taking place.

* The impact that climate change will exert upon society is great and diverse, inevitably including conditions which deeply disrupt the lives and livelihoods of people on an unprecedented scale.

Climatologists label these changes as the result of measurable increases of carbon dioxide and other so-called "greenhouse gases" in the atmosphere. These gases are produced primarily by the burning or combustion of gasoline, coal and other fossil fuels. Among the many consequences, the atmosphere and the oceans are warming; wind and rainfall patterns are changing; and sea levels are rising. Forces of climate change also increase the acidity of the oceans; they raise the ferocity of storms, especially hurricanes; they cause droughts and heat waves to become more intense; and, in some areas, they disrupt normal agriculture. Furthermore, the changes are not occurring evenly: some parts of the world experience drought and others greater rainfall, even flooding. Importantly, the conditions that we observe now are only the early alterations to our climate. Much larger and far more disruptive changes will result unless we reduce the forces causing climate change.

It should be clear to all of us that immediate measures must be taken to reduce the impact of these changes to the world's climate. If we fail to act now, the changes that are already underway will intensify and create catastrophic conditions. A contributing root cause of these changes to our climate is a lifestyle that contains unintended, nevertheless destructive side effects. It may be that no person intends to harm the environment, but the excessive use of fossil fuels is degrading and destroying the life of creation. Moreover, the impact of our thoughtless actions is felt disproportionately by the poorest and most vulnerable, those most likely to live in marginal areas. By our lack of awareness, then, we risk incurring the condemnation of those who "grind the face of the poor" (Isaiah 3.15) As Church leaders, it is our responsibility to speak to this condition inasmuch as it represents a grave moral and spiritual problem.

Therefore, we wish to emphasize the seriousness and the urgency of the situation. To persist in a path of excess and waste, at the expense of our neighbors and beyond the capability of the planet to support the lifestyle directly responsible for these changes, is not only folly; it

jeopardizes the survival of God's creation, the planet that we all share. In the end, not only is it sinful; it is no less than suicidal.

But there is hope. Society can alter its behavior and avoid the more serious consequences of climate change. To do this, however, we must work together to reduce the way that we have exploited the earth's resources, especially its fossil fuels. As Americans, we comprise barely 4% of the world's people; yet we consume over 25% of its resources and energy. Justice and charity for our neighbors demand a more frugal, simple way of living in order to conserve the fruits of creation.

In order to make the required changes, we are called to pray first and foremost for a change in our personal attitudes and habits, in spite of any accompanying inconvenience. Such is the depth of metanoia or repentance. The issue is not merely our response to climate change, but our failure to obey God. We must live in a manner that is consistent with what we believe and how we pray. Our heart must be 'merciful, burning with love for the whole of creation.' (Abba Isaac the Syrian, Mystic Treatises, Homily 48) At minimum, this means caring about the effect of our lives upon our neighbors, respecting the natural environment, and demonstrating a willingness to live within the means of our planet. Such a change will invariably require reduction in our consumption of fossil fuels as well as acceptance of alternative energy sources such as solar or wind power, and other such methods that minimize our impact upon the world. We can do these things, but it will require intentional effort from each of us.

Nevertheless, we cannot stop there. We must also learn all that we can about the emerging situation of climate change. We must set an example in the way that we choose to live, reaching out and informing others about this threat. We must discuss with fellow-parishioners and - since climate change is not only an issue for Orthodox Christians – we must raise the issue before public officials and elected representatives at the city, state and national levels. We are all responsible for this situation, and each one of us can do something to address the problem.

In each generation, God sends some great tests that challenge the life and future of society. One of the tests for our time is whether we will be obedient to the commands that God has given to us by exercising self-restraint in our use of energy, or whether we will ignore those commands and continue to seek the comforts and excesses that over-reliance on fossil fuels involves.

At every Divine Liturgy, we pray for seasonable weather. Let us enter into this prayer and amend our lives in whatever ways may be necessary to meet the divine command that we care for the earth as the Lord's. If we can do this, if we can render our lives as a blessing rather than a curse for our neighbors and for the whole creation, then, God willing, we may live and flourish. This is not an optional matter. We will be judged by the choices we make. The Scriptures bluntly tell us that if we destroy the earth, then God will destroy us (see Revelation 11:18).

Let us all recall the commands of God regarding our use of the earth. Let us respond to the divine commandments so that the blessings of God may be abundantly upon us. And let us

responsibly discern the right, holy and proper way to live in this time of change and challenge. Then we shall "perceive everything in the light of the Creator God." (St. John Climacus, Ladder of Divine Ascent, Step 4,58)

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh
Sunday of Saint Thomas
17 April 1977

In the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Twice in the Gospels we read the solemn declaration of a man who has recognized in Christ his Lord and his God. The first time was at the beginning of the Lord's ministry: after His Baptism, when He was entering upon the way of the cross, He met Nathaniel and testified to the others that here was a man pure and without guile. Nathaniel asked how He knew this, and the Saviour answered with the mysterious words, "Before Philip called thee, when thou wast under the fig tree, I saw thee." And Nathaniel reverencing Him said, "My Lord and my God." In a life of the holy Apostle Nathaniel we read that at the time of his call he was standing before God in prayer, and that Christ's words about seeing him under the fig tree suddenly lifted a veil from his eyes and he realized that he was standing before the very God to whom he had been praying.

Later this testimony is somehow obscured; the apostles were blinded, as we all are, by the visible, and only very slowly did they begin to perceive the invisible. During a period of just over three years Christ gradually revealed His true nature to them: the fact that He is indeed a true, genuine man, but that at the same time He is God who has taken flesh and come to save the world. This gradually dawning understanding found its expression only on the way to Jerusalem, just before Christ's death, when the apostle Peter testified, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God."

Before His crucifixion Christ gradually revealed Himself to disciples as God; after it He repeatedly and persistently, in a series of appearances, revealed Himself to them as man risen in the flesh. Everything we hear of Christ's Resurrection brings us face to face with this fact; this is not a ghost, this is not a vision; the disciples not only hear His voice, they touch His body, they see Him eating food with them. Later, St. John speaking of their witness rightly says that they spoke of what their eyes had seen, their ears had heard, their hands had felt: Christ had truly risen in the body, the body sanctified, the body transfigured, the body which had become entirely spirit without ceasing to be flesh. Together with the Apostle Thomas we too worship the risen Christ and believing in Him, knowing Him as our God but also as Jesus of Nazareth risen from the dead, we hail Him, "My Lord and my God!"

On this fact the whole life of the Church depends, the whole Christian outlook, the greatness of man, the boundless humility of God. In Christ the one and the other is revealed to us, and we rejoice not only because God is the God of love and our Saviour, but because in Him we are shown how great Man is. He is so great that God can be contained in him. He is so great that He can pass through the gates of death into eternal life carrying us with Him as a torrent; that having united Himself with us in our humanity in every way except sin, He unites us completely with His Divinity if only we lay ourselves open to His influence. How wonderful that is!

So, during the next forty days Christ constantly appeared to His disciples and revealed to them the mysteries of the Kingdom of God; He showed them the name of God as Love, He unfolded to them the comprehension of the Church as a society of people who are bound by love; He explained to them that this temporal life will inevitably pass away, but that they have been granted eternal life, which is that life of God already planted in them, already working in them and conquering all.

And in the ensuing weeks each Gospel reading will tell us of this triumph of life, of the victory of life, of the victory of love over everything else. Let us be glad and rejoice that the risen Christ has not only conquered death for Himself and in Himself, but that in us and for us He has conquered death, sin, fear — everything, and that we have now become close and intimate with the living God. Amen.

Sent From:

Fr. Joshua

St. John Orthodox Christian Church

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You really need to be aware of this. This is very clear and historically indisputable. From Fr. Joshua.

Message from Father Aris (Archpriest at Holy Trinity, Columbia, SC):

Sometimes I am asked, “What’s up with all these people receiving Communion every Sunday?” That’s a reasonable question, and one that is easy to answer. Ancient Christian sources (most notably, St. Basil the Great) call us to frequent Communion. The canons prescribe ex-communication to all who hear the Gospel during Liturgy and do not receive. Quite simply, people who commune frequently are doing what they’re supposed to do.

That being said, many people worship faithfully and regularly, but only partake of the Eucharist a few times per year. Are they wrong? Not if we consider the cultural context in which they were raised. Pietistic beliefs and practices that shape much of Old World Orthodoxy teach that we can only “make ourselves worthy (ouch!)” of Communion a few times per year. Persons raised in this environment can’t be faulted for doing what their parents and grandparents taught them to do.

But what about the third category of communicants: those who come to Liturgy once or twice a year and boldly approach the chalice without a second thought? Is there a place in the Tradition of the Church for these folks? Yes, the sacrament of Confession. **The Church prescribes ex-communication to those who miss three Sundays in a row.** The remedy for this is Confession. This makes sense since Confession is a liturgical recommitment to Christ.

What’s wrong with popping into to the church once a year, never to be heard from for another 12 months? Here’s what St. Paul says: ***“Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For any one who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment upon himself.”*** (1 Corinthians 11:27-29).

Orthodox Christians will pass the entire month of March 2007 observing Great Lent. It is the time of year when most of the regular worshipers that I know (frequent and infrequent communicants alike) will go to Confession. It is also the season when people who have been infrequent worshipers place their salvation in jeopardy by not confessing—particularly if they plan to draw near to the Body and Blood of the Risen Lord with ***“the fear of God, faith, and with love.”***

In Florida, an atheist became incensed over the preparation of Easter and Passover holidays. He decided to contact his lawyer about the discrimination inflicted on atheists by the constant celebrations afforded to Christians and Jews with all their holidays while atheists had no holiday to celebrate.

The case was brought before a wise judge. After listening to the long passionate presentation by the lawyer, the Judge banged his gavel and declared, "Case dismissed!"

The lawyer immediately stood and objected to the ruling and said, "Your honor, how can you possibly dismiss this case? The Christians have Christmas, Easter and many

other observances. Jews have Passover, Yom Kippur and Hanukkah...yet my client and all other atheists have no such holiday!"

The judge leaned forward in his chair and simply said, "Obviously your client is too confused to even know about, much less celebrate his own atheists' holiday!"

The lawyer pompously said, "Your Honor, we are unaware of any such holiday for atheists. Just when might that holiday be, your Honor?"

The judge said, "Well it comes every year on exactly the same date---April 1st! Since our calendar sets April 1st as 'April Fools Day,' consider that Psalm 14:1, Psalm 53 states, 'The fool says in his heart, there is no God.' Thus, in my opinion, if your client says there is no God, then by scripture he is a fool, thus April 1st is his holiday! Get it?"

SOME REALLY BAD PUNS

King Ozymandias of Assyria was running low on cash after years of war with the Hittites. His last great possession was the Star of the Euphrates, the most valuable diamond in the ancient world.

Desperate, he went to Croesus, the pawnbroker, to ask for a loan.

Croesus said, "I'll give you 100,000 dinars for it."

"But I paid a million dinars for it," the King protested.

"Don't you know who I am? I am the king!"

Croesus replied, "When you wish to pawn a Star, makes no difference who you are."

Evidence has been found that William Tell and his family were avid bowlers.

However, all the Swiss league records were unfortunately destroyed in a fire, and we'll never know for whom the Tells bowled.

A man rushed into a busy doctor's office and shouted "Doctor! I think I'm shrinking!!!"

The doctor calmly responded, "Now, settle down. You'll just have to be a little patient."