



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Bishop Robert, 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 John Monronko, Father Michael Mihalick [MS], Ollie Pendylshok, Walt & Evelyn Burlack, Joshua Agosto and his family, Harley Katarina Rahuba, Mike and Hilda Holupka, Eva Malesnick, Helen Likar, 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, 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 6-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 2-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Bill, Erin, Jimmy Fennel [7th Grader], Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Margaret Mueller, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Rita Very & family, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Mildred Walters, Michael Miller, Mike Pelchar [Liz's brother], Jim Logue—throat cancer, Liz Stumpf, Ester Tylavsky, Ed Jamison, Theodore Nixon, Charles Johnson, Donna Kerr [stroke], Amy Forbeck, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Gloria Prymak [Liz's niece], Robert Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, John Sheliga, Sabrina, George & Mika Rocknage, Elizabeth Mitchell, Ann McKivitz, and Daria Masur. **ARNOLD:** Stefania Lucci, Kay Tomson, Ann Ostaffy, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

REMINDER: 2008 wall calendars and donation envelopes are available downstairs! Also, sign up in the back of the church for house blessing!

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 20 JANUARY 2008
SUNDAY AFTER THEOPHANY—SYNAXIS OF THE HOLY
GLORIOUS PROPHET AND BAPTIST JOHN, AFTERFEAST OF
THEOPHANY

TROPARION—TONE OF THE FEAST

When Thou, O Lord, was baptized in the Jordan,
The worship of the Trinity wast made manifest!
For the voice of the Father bare witness to Thee,
And called Thee His Beloved Son!
And the Spirit, in the form of a dove, confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ our God, who hast revealed Thyself to the world, Glory to Thee!

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

KONTAKION—TONE 4

Today Thou hast appeared to the universe,
And Thy light, O Lord, has shone on us
Who understand and praise Thee:
Thou hast come and revealed Thyself,
O Light Unapproachable!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 1

READER: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! God is the Lord
and has revealed Himself unto us!

**PEOPLE: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! God is the
Lord and has revealed Himself unto us!**

READER: O Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures
forever!

**PEOPLE: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! God is the
Lord and has revealed Himself unto us!**

READER: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

PEOPLE: God is the Lord and has revealed Himself unto us!

ALLELUIA VERSES

Offer to the Lord, O you sons of God! Offer young rams to the Lord!

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters, the God of glory thunders, the Lord,
upon many waters!

Commemorated on January 10/23

Saint Gregory, Bishop of Nyssa, was a younger brother of St Basil the Great (January 1). His birth and upbringing came at a time when the Arian disputes were at their height. Having received an excellent education, he was at one time a teacher of rhetoric. In the year 372, he was consecrated by St Basil the Great as bishop of the city of Nyssa in Cappadocia.

St Gregory was an ardent advocate for Orthodoxy, and he fought against the Arian heresy with his brother St Basil. Gregory was persecuted by the Arians, by whom he was falsely accused of improper use of church property, and thereby deprived of his See and sent to Ancyra.

In the following year St Gregory was again deposed in absentia by a council of Arian bishops, but he continued to encourage his flock in Orthodoxy, wandering about from place to place. After the death of the emperor Valens (378), St Gregory was restored to his cathedra and was joyously received by his flock. His brother St Basil the Great died in 379.

Only with difficulty did St Gregory survive the loss of his brother and guide. He delivered a funeral oration for him, and completed St Basil's study of the six days of Creation, the Hexaemeron. That same year St Gregory participated in the Council of Antioch against heretics who refused to recognize the perpetual virginity of the Mother of God. Others at the opposite extreme, who worshipped the Mother of God as being God Herself, were also denounced by the Council. He visited the churches of Arabia and Palestine, which were infected with the Arian heresy, to assert the Orthodox teaching about the Most Holy Theotokos. On his return journey St Gregory visited Jerusalem and the Holy Places.

In the year 381 St Gregory was one of the chief figures of the Second Ecumenical Council, convened at Constantinople against the heresy of Macedonius, who incorrectly taught about the Holy Spirit. At this Council, on the initiative of St Gregory, the Nicene Symbol of Faith (the Creed) was completed.

Together with the other bishops St Gregory affirmed St Gregory the Theologian as Archpastor of Constantinople.

In the year 383, St Gregory of Nyssa participated in a Council at Constantinople, where he preached a sermon on the divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit. In 386, he was again at Constantinople, and he was asked to speak the funeral oration in memory of the empress Placilla. Again in 394 St

Gregory was present in Constantinople at a local Council, convened to resolve church matters in Arabia.

St Gregory of Nyssa was a fiery defender of Orthodox dogmas and a zealous teacher of his flock, a kind and compassionate father to his spiritual children, and their intercessor before the courts. He was distinguished by his magnanimity, patience and love of peace.

Having reached old age, St Gregory of Nyssa died soon after the Council of Constantinople. Together with his great contemporaries, Sts Basil the Great and Gregory the Theologian, St Gregory of Nyssa had a significant influence on the Church life of his time. His sister, St Macrina, wrote to him: "You are renowned both in the cities, and gatherings of people, and throughout entire districts. Churches ask you for help." St Gregory is known in history as one of the most profound Christian thinkers of the fourth century. Endowed with philosophical talent, he saw philosophy as a means for a deeper penetration into the authentic meaning of divine revelation.

St Gregory left behind many remarkable works of dogmatic character, as well as sermons and discourses. He has been called "the Father of Fathers."

St. John the Almsgiver said: When I was in Cyprus and was but a stripling of about fifteen years old, I saw one day in my sleep a certain maiden whose countenance outshone the sun and who was adorned beyond all human imagining, and she came and stood by my bed and touched me on the side. I woke up and saw her really standing there and I perceived that she was no woman. I crossed myself and said to her: 'Who are you, and how did you dare to come into my room while I was sleeping?' She had too, a wreath of olive branches on her head. And then with a joyous countenance and a smile on her lips she said to me: 'I am the first of the daughters of the King.' On hearing this I at once did obeisance to her. And then she said to me: 'If you will have me as a friend, I will lead you into the presence of the King. For no one has as free access to Him as I have. For I caused Him to put on man's nature on earth and bring salvation to men.' With these words she disappeared.

When I came to myself I understood the vision and said, Verily she is either Sympathy or Charity, and for this reason she had a wreath of olive leaves on her head. For it was certainly sympathy with, and pity for mankind that made our Lord become incarnate in our flesh'. I dressed quickly and without waking anyone in the house I made my way to the church. For it was already dawn. And on my way I met a brother shivering with cold, so I took off my goatskin and gave it to him, saying to myself, 'Now by this I shall know whether my vision was really a true one or sent by a demon'. And truth bore

witness, for before I reached the church a man clad in white suddenly met me and handed me a bag with 100 nomismata in it saying, 'Take this, brother, and use it as you like'. In my joy I turned round directly I had taken it, wishing to give him back the bag as I was not in want, but I could not see anybody. Then I said: 'Certainly it was not my imagination.

From that time on I would often give alms to a fellow brother and would say to myself, 'Let me see whether God will repay me a hundredfold as He said'. In this way I tempted God, acting wrongly, and after I was fully satisfied by the facts themselves in various ways, I said: 'Leave off wretched soul, tempting Him who cannot be tempted.' To think that when my humble soul has received such ample proofs from God these faithless folk should come today hoping to persuade me as well as themselves to show a want of pity!

Leontius, Life of St. John the Almsgiver, 8--commemorated 12/25 November icon and Troparion at: <http://www.comeandseeicons.com/j/spe07.htm>

Abba Cyril, the disciple of Abba Julian the Stylite, told this story: I and my father and brother, hearing what was said about Abba Julian, came to him from our own country. I had an incurable disease which no doctor was able to heal. The elder healed me with prayer as soon as I arrived. So the three of us stayed with him and renounced the world. The elder appointed my father to be in charge of the grain. One day my father came to Abba Julian and said, "We have no grain." The elder replied, "Go, gather together whatever you can find and grind it up. God will take care of tomorrow for us." My father was troubled by this command for he knew that there was nothing left in the granary. He withdrew to his cell. When need became pressing, the elder indicated that he was to come to him, and as soon as he entered, he said to him, "Brother Conon, go and prepare whatever you find for the brethren." Almost in anger, he took the keys of the granary and went off, intending to bring back some earth. Having released the lock, he wanted to open the doors, but he could not do so because the granary was completely filled with grain. When he saw this, he humbly prostrated himself before the elder, glorifying God.

John Moschus, Leimonarion (The Spiritual Meadow) 28

One of the old men came to Abba Theodore and said to him, "Look how such and such a brother has returned to the world." The old man said to him, "Does that surprise you? No, rather be astonished when you hear that someone has been able to escape the jaws of the enemy."

Will the 21st Be the Orthodox Century?

Fascination with the Great Tradition may signal deep changes for both evangelicals and the Orthodox.



**Orthodox nun lights candles during an Eve of the Nativity of Christ (Rozhdestvenskyi Sochel'nik) ceremony in Riga January 6, 2007.
Reuters**

Jaroslav Pelikan, the late professor of history at Yale University, wrote of the Christian tradition on a scale that no one else attempted in the 20th century. Then after nearly a lifetime of studying the history of doctrine, Pelikan, a lifelong Lutheran, was received into the Orthodox Church, just a few years before he died last May at age 82.

Pelikan is just one of a growing number of people who are joining the Eastern Orthodox Church. It makes me wonder if the 21st century will be the century of the Orthodox. Will there be a rebirth of the church's theological vision, if not its numerical growth? I'm not a prophet, nor do I want to evangelize evangelicals or reinvent Orthodox identity. But I would like to (a) offer a theological explanation for why I believe more and more Christians, especially evangelicals, may well be attracted to Orthodoxy in the 21st century, and (b) explain why more and more Orthodox need to become more evangelical.

I haven't merely thought about Orthodox and evangelical compatibility; for most of my life, I have lived it. I'm a Lebanese American who grew up in the Orthodox Church of Antioch and was transformed by Christ during my high school days in Wichita, Kansas, through the leading of evangelical friends. I did my doctoral studies under the late Orthodox theologian Fr. John Meyendorff. A portion of my scholarship over the past two decades has been devoted to introducing the Orthodox tradition to evangelical students and faculty in North America. I've also pioneered dialogues between Orthodox believers and evangelicals, and I have spoken on the subject at World Council of Churches meetings in Egypt and Germany.

Thus, I bring an intellectual and experiential knowledge of both communities, which is probably why I have a love/hate relationship with them. I'm not fully at peace with either one. Although I'm absolutely committed to the theological truth of the Orthodox

church, I'm equally persuaded that we have not made that truth meaningful or accessible to our own parishioners or to those who peer inside our windows. And because of my Orthodoxy, I'm also committed to the evangelical faith.

The Rebirth of Orthodoxy

Scholars define the Great Tradition as the theological consensus of the first 500 to 1,000 years of Christian history (there is some disagreement on exact dates). This consensus encompasses the church's universally agreed upon creeds, councils, fathers, worship, and spirituality. Some key teachings and figures include the Nicene Creed, the Chalcedonian Definition, the works of Athanasius, the Cappadocian Fathers (Basil the Great, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Gregory of Nyssa), the spiritual writings of monks like Anthony of Egypt, and certain biblical commentaries and pastoral works.

During the past two decades, mainline and evangelical scholars have rediscovered the creative relevance of the Christian East, with its insistence on the authority of the first 500 years of Christian teaching and practice. One recent sign of evangelical interest is Thomas Oden's *The Rebirth of Orthodoxy: Signs of New Life in Christianity* (HarperSanFrancisco, 2002), in which Oden uses the lowercase o in order to embrace all Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox Christians who adhere to the first 500 years of the Great Tradition. Oden sets forth six layers of evidence to show that there is, indeed, a widespread rekindling of "the orthodox spirit" at the dawn of the 21st century. These layers include:

(1) Personal transformation stories. The lives of ordinary Christians and leading academics who have been dramatically changed by the testimony of the classic tradition, including Jaroslav Pelikan and Richard Swinburne, who became Eastern Orthodox, and Robert Wilken and Richard John Neuhaus, who joined the Catholic church.

(2) Faithful scriptural interpretation. Patristic methods of exegesis are receiving more attention now than at any time during the previous century. They are fast becoming a core concern of biblical studies, as evidenced by the growing number of ancient translations and commentaries being made widely available by publishing companies such as InterVarsity, Baker, and Eerdmans.

(3) The multicultural nature of orthodoxy. No modern multiculturalism is as deep or fertile as the ecumenical multiculturalism of antiquity. The cross-cultural richness of the early church is becoming increasingly evident today.

(4) Well-established doctrinal boundaries. After decades of uncritical permissiveness in the church, we are now witnessing a renewed energy for drawing boundaries around

questions of religious truth. Thousands of the faithful are together relearning how to say no to heresy on behalf of a greater yes for the truth of classical orthodoxy.

(5) Ecumenical roots reclaimed. Confessing and renewing movements in Protestantism are changing local congregations and even entire denominations.

(6) Rise of a new ecumenism. Actually, what we're seeing is a revival of the ancient ecumenical method of theological decision-making set forth by Vincent Lerins: "We hold to that which has been believed everywhere, always, and by all." Laypeople can easily grasp this, and they are doing so.

Organically Connected

The problem with the usual Protestant approach to the Great Tradition, however, is the gaps and inconsistencies in retrieval efforts. To many, the Great Tradition is like a library, a place you go to pick out the books you find most helpful. You can discard the ones that no longer seem relevant, while choosing the ones that have proven to be of lasting value.

So what makes me think that this renewed interest in the Great Tradition may lead to more Christians joining Eastern Orthodoxy, or at least embracing its theological vision? Simply put, I think more and more people will recognize the vital relationship between the major movements and themes of Christian antiquity and the organic life of the Eastern Orthodox Church from whence these themes came.

In two areas, especially, the Orthodox church has maintained its unbroken succession with Christian antiquity, and these areas are particularly attractive to an increasing number of Christians.

Scripture. We all agree that the Spirit's witness through the Bible is the main criterion of the church's faith. Tradition simply witnesses to, safeguards, and corrects itself by the integrity of the biblical message. But it was the churches of the early centuries (both East and West) that decided, piecemeal, which texts constituted the canon of Scripture, by virtue of their apostolic origin and wide acceptance within the worshipping community. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the Spirit embraced the believing community through the choosing of the canon, rather than that the church chose the canon. Still, the canon was composed within the context of the believing community by members of the church. Scripture was never "external" to the believing community. This does not mean that Scripture owes its authority to the church, but that the Spirit was inseparably united to the church and its sacred texts. The church functioned as the mediating authority that bore witness to the work of God within it.

So whether they are aware of it or not, every time evangelicals pick up their Bibles, they are relying on the historic church's judgment on the colossal issue of canonicity! Without acknowledging it, evangelicals validate the authority of the Spirit-led tradition in determining canonicity. That same Spirit-led tradition has governed the Orthodox church over the centuries.

I believe an increasing number of people fascinated with the early church will see that the Spirit, the Bible, tradition, and real, historical, identifiable churches are inseparably united, then as now.

Historical continuity. I imagine that the deeper evangelicals delve into church history, the less they will confine the meaning of "orthodoxy" to the first 500 or 1,000 years. They will come to embrace the "whole story" of the faithful, not just the parts they personally like. They will discover that the fullness of Christian orthodoxy does not end with a date in the history books, but lives on in what Georges Florovsky called "the mind of the church" and what John Meyendorff described as the church's "living tradition." Evangelicals will see that the theological and institutional history of the Great Tradition is directly tied to the Great Church—namely, the contemporary Orthodox churches of the Middle East, Greece, Russia, Eastern Europe, and their children in the West. They will recognize that today's "rebirth of orthodoxy" cannot do justice to classical Christian faith without keeping it connected to the church that most fully produced and inherited its achievements. Few will dispute the historical continuity between the modern Patriarchate of Antioch, for example, and the Book of Acts.

Of course, faithfulness to the truth of the Great Tradition, not organizational continuity, is what counts most. My point is simply that those who value classical faith will increasingly engage with Orthodox churches, which incarnate the Great Tradition day by day as a living tradition. I'm not arguing that the Great Tradition is the exclusive property of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It is not. Early church fathers, mothers, ascetics, councils, creeds, art, music, and spirituality are the rightful heritage of all orthodox Christians—Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox alike. There is no room here for Orthodox triumphalism or romanticism. All orthodox believers share a common ecumenical heritage. But few historians would dispute the conclusion that in comparison to the 20,000 Protestant denominations in existence today, the Orthodox community can most justifiably claim to be the fullest heir apparent of the Great Tradition.

Evangelical Orthodoxy

At the same time, my evangelical passions prompt me to suggest that this renewed fascination with the Great Tradition may indirectly revive Orthodoxy. And if it doesn't, it should. Little by little, our parishioners are being touched by evangelicals who are

rediscovering the creative relevance of the Christian East and repackaging it far more attractively than we have been doing for ourselves.

But revival will not happen automatically. Dialogue at the local church level will help, even if evangelicals learn more from the Orthodox than the Orthodox are willing to learn from evangelicals. The time has come for us Orthodox to rediscover the evangelical character of our faith on its own terms, not defined by using some form of the model of evangelicalism. Because of our maximalist vision of theology, our evangelical identity will look and act very differently than yours. I wouldn't exhort my Orthodox brethren to regain their evangelical focus as passionately as I do in lectures and articles if I didn't think they would respond, and thankfully they are doing so in increasing numbers.

So I suggest that the Great Tradition of our Great Church cuts both ways, and we ourselves are judged by it! Even if the gospel is formally a part of the life of the Orthodox church, as we believe, that does not mean our people have understood and appropriated its message. "Catholicity" (i.e., "the whole and adequate" expression of the faith) must be discerned and applied if the church is to be spiritually viable in today's world.

More and more Orthodox, as they study the Great Tradition, are admitting that our leaders and laity don't have a mature grasp of their own faith. They recognize that the church isn't free from ethnocentrism or religious bigotry, that it hasn't contextualized its faith and liturgy in the modern world, and that it hasn't figured out how to relate to unchurched people in North America (its converts consist mostly of disillusioned believers from other Christian traditions). More and more Orthodox, as they explore the early church afresh, see that there are parts of its ancient liturgies that seem to have no biblical justification and that we cannot simply regard the Reformation and the last millennium in the West as nothing more than a sideshow.

To be sure, there are countless cases of people whose spiritual lives are flourishing in vibrant Orthodox communities. Still, the most urgent need in world Orthodoxy is the need to engage in an aggressive "internal mission" of spiritual renewal and rededication of our priests and people to Jesus Christ. I know from experience that it's possible to be "religious, but lost." That's why all of us Orthodox—bishops, priests, and people—need to make the gospel crystal clear and absolutely central in our lives and in our parishes. We must constantly recover the personal and relational aspects of God in every life-giving action of the church. Naturally, if this happens, it will lead to a revival within Orthodoxy, which will cause the church to blossom in unprecedented ways.

Yes, these predictions and exhortations are speculative; they may never come to fruition as I hope and imagine. And I admit that my commitment to an evangelical

Orthodoxy predisposes me to hope like this. That being said, I still see signs that suggest that these two great expressions of the Christian faith, the evangelical and the Orthodox, are gradually coming together in vision, if not in worship, and that the 21st century may be known as the Orthodox century.

Bradley Nassif is associate professor of biblical and theological studies at North Park University and is currently writing the Westminster Handbook to Eastern Orthodox Theology (Westminster John Knox, 2009). He is a member of the Antiochian Orthodox Church.