



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

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GREAT LENT

ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Metropolitan Constantine, Patriarch Pavle, Metropolitan Theodosius, 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, 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], 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, 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, Amari Clark, Lorraine Gardner, 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.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family of Chuck Shumski, who fell asleep in the Lord on Tuesday, March 11. His funeral and burial will be

in Florida. May God grant His newly departed servant Charles the Kingdom of Heaven and Life Everlasting! Vechnaya Pam'yat!

Please remember Homer Paul Kline of Arnold in your prayers. He is in Forbes Regional Hospital after emergency surgery on Tuesday, March 11.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: Our Annual Parish Meeting will be after the Obednitza on Sunday, March 30. There will also be a Soup and Bread Luncheon. See Debbie, Liz, Evelyn, or Pani Gina for details.

REMINDER: The Orthodox Clergy Brotherhood of Greater Pittsburgh will celebrate the Sunday of Orthodoxy this afternoon at Saint Nicholas Carpatho-Russian Orthodox Church in Homestead, PA. The pastor is Slickville's own Very Rev. Father Robert Buczak! The speaker will be His Eminence, Metropolitan Nicholas. Light Lenten refreshments will follow. The biennial Icon Festival, Sale, and Show is in the church hall.

Please remember James John Logue, assigned to Iraq, and 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 Fifth Grade and Matt's Third 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, March 16 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY—MARTYR EUTROPIUS OF AMASEA & CLEONICUS & BASILISCUS WITH HIM,
VENERABLE PIAMA-VIRGIN & ALEXANDRA OF ALEXANDRIA, RIGHTEOUS ZENO & ZOILUS, SAINT
CALUPPAN OF AUVERGNE
SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY—SAINT NICHOLAS C R O CHURCH—HOMESTEAD 5:00 PM

Tone 1
Hebrews 11:24-26, 32-12:2
John 1:43-51

Litany in Blessed Memory of Joseph Vangrin & Bernie O'Masta—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Frank & Helen Riznow—Riznow Family

Sunday, March 23

Divine Liturgy

10:30 AM

SAINT GREGORY PALAMAS—ARCHBISHOP OF THESSALONICA
MARTYRS CODRATUS AND THOSE WITH HIM AT CORINTH, MARTYRS CODRATUS, SATURNINUS, &
RUFINUS OF NICOMEDIA, VENERABLE ANASTASIA THE PATRICIAN OF ALEXANDRIA, NEW MARTYR
MICHAEL OF THESSALONICA

Tone 2
Hebrews 1:10-2:3
Mark 2:1-12

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Tillie Kuzman—Debbie & John Pauncic

Sunday, March 30

Obednitsa

10:30 AM

VENERATION OF THE MOST HOLY AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS
VENERABLE ALEXIS—MAN OF GOD, MARTYR MARINUS-VENERABLE ABBOT & WONDERWORKER OF
KALYAZIN, MONK-MARTYR PAUL OF CYPRUS, SAINT PATRICK-ENLIGHTNER OF IRELAND
*******ANNUAL MEETING AND SOUP & BREAD LUNCHEON*******

Tone 3
Hebrews 4:14-5:6
Mark 8:34-9:1

Parastas in Blessed Memory of Charles Batch—Harry Batch & Family

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 16 MARCH 2008

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY

MARTYR EUTROPIUS OF AMASEA & CLEONICUS & BASILISCUS WITH
HIM, VENERABLE PIAMA-VIRGIN & ALEXANDRA OF ALEXANDRIA,
RIGHTEOUS ZENO & ZOILUS, SAINT CALUPPAN OF AUVERGNE

SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY—DOXOLOGY

SAINT NICHOLAS CARPATHO-RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH
HOMESTEAD—5:00 PM

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!

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS BEGIN GREAT LENT MARCH 10 SUNDAY OF ORTHODOXY CELEBRATED WORLDWIDE MARCH 16 ORTHODOX EASTER TO BE OBSERVED APRIL 27TH

New York, NY- Orthodox Christians will begin observing the Great Lent on Monday, March 10th, in preparation for *Pascha* (Easter), the most sacred and holy day of the Orthodox Church's ecclesiastical year. This year Orthodox Christians will celebrate Pascha on April 27th.

“Once again”, says Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America in his Lenten Encyclical, “we express our gratitude to God for bringing us to the beginning of Great and Holy Lent. We recognize this as an extension of our time on this Earth to experience another Lenten season, another period to come closer to Him and to His infinite and saving love. We begin the period of Great and Holy Lent on this day known as Clean Monday, an appropriate term that implies purity of mind, heart, and soul. This purity is paramount to a productive start to our Lenten journey, which we begin with vigilant prayer, fasting, and worship so that we may properly orient ourselves as we enter the Lenten season. Throughout this forty day period, we review with heightened scrutiny our shortcomings, our inadequacies, our inability to live up to our full potential as Christians, and the myriad of ways in which we may have fallen short of expressing the fullness of our love to God and neighbor.”

The Orthodox date for Pascha is based on a decree of the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea, Asia Minor, held in 325 A.D. under Emperor Constantine the Great. According to this decree,

Pascha must be celebrated on the Sunday following the first full moon of the vernal equinox but always after the Hebrew Passover to maintain the Biblical sequence of events of the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. The Orthodox Christian churches have adhered strictly to this formula established by an Ecumenical Council.

Orthodox Lent

The Orthodox Christian Lent always begins on the Monday, followed by the Sunday of Orthodoxy. It is designated as “*Clean Monday*”, the “*Monday of cleansing or purification*”. On that day Orthodox faithful are required to begin a spiritual and moral purification through fasting, prayer, meditation, repentance, attending Lenten religious services and partaking of the Sacraments of Confession and Communion.

Religious services during the Lenten period are particularly spiritual and mystagogic and are especially beloved by Orthodox faithful. They include the Compline, the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts, the Salutations to the Virgin Mary including the magnificent Akathist Hymn, sung during the first five Friday evenings of Lent, and the inspiring Liturgy written by St. Basil the Great in the 4th Century, every Sunday during Lent.

Sunday of Orthodoxy

Over 250 million Orthodox Christians worldwide, including some six million in North America, will celebrate the “*Triumph of Orthodoxy*” on the First Sunday of Great Lent, March 16th, to commemorate the restoration of Holy Icons to the Church in the Ninth Century.

In 843 A.D. when the veneration of icons was solemnly proclaimed at Saint Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople, on the basis of a decision by the Seventh Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 787 A.D., monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place.

This event came to be known as the “*Sunday of Orthodoxy*”, and since that time is commemorated on the First Sunday of Lent. The Sunday of Orthodoxy is traditionally celebrated in Orthodox Churches worldwide with special services as an act of rededication to Orthodoxy. During these services the clergy and the congregations following a Procession of Icons recite the Declaration of Faith. This service also commemorates the suffering, martyrdom and persecution of Orthodox faithful throughout the centuries.

GREAT LENT AND PASCHA IN THE ORTHODOX CHURCH 2008

Great Lent Begins March 10

Holy Week (Palm Sunday through Holy Saturday) April 20-April 26

Holy Pascha April 27

Ascension Day June 5

Pentecost Sunday June 15

The March 2008 "Seat Belt Enforcement Mobilization" will be conducted from March 17-30, 2008. The Carnegie Police Department, in cooperation with "Buckle Up Pa", will be aggressively enforcing the Pennsylvania Seat Belt Laws during this period. Please remember to buckle up. It is the law, and it can save you from injury or death if you are involved in a crash.

PENNSYLVANIA SEAT BELT LAW

Child Passenger Safety Law

Primary Enforcement

Section 4581 (a)(1) Restraint Systems

- All drivers are responsible to secure children from birth to age 4 in an approved child passenger restraint system.

FINE: Maximum fine of \$100.00 plus court costs, CAT, EMS, JCP or proof of car seat purchase.

Secondary Enforcement

Section 4581 (a)(1.1)

- All drivers are responsible to secure children from 4 years of age up to 8 years of age in a seat belt system and an appropriately fitting child booster seat.
- Exemptions are allowed under the law.
Guidelines have been prepared by the Department of Transportation to provide guidance for exemptions for Section 4581 (a)(1.1).

A copy of the guidelines can be obtained from 1-800-CAR BELT.

FINE: Failure to comply with the provisions in 4581 (a)(1.1) shall be guilty of a summary offense with a maximum fine of \$100.00 plus CAT, EMS, JCP or proof of car seat purchase.

Safety Belt Use Law

Secondary Enforcement

Section 4581 (a)(2) Restraint Systems

- Driver and all front seat passengers must be restrained.
- Drivers are responsible for themselves and to secure all children from 8 years of age up to 18 years of age in a seat belt system any where in the vehicle.
- Exemptions include carriers of medical or psychological excuses signed by a physician, rural letter carriers, deliverers of goods or service vehicle operators driving at speeds less

than 15 mph and making frequent stops, drivers, and front seat passengers of automobiles manufactured before July 1, 1966.

FINE: \$10.00 plus CAT, EMS and JCP when convicted of a primary offense.

Primary Enforcement

Section 4581 (a)(3) Restraint Systems

- A driver who is under 18 may not operate a motor vehicle in which the number of passengers exceeds the number of available seat belts in the vehicle. (Primary)

FINE: \$10.00 plus CAT, EMS, and JCP- no court costs assessed.

Chief Jeffrey C. Harbin
179th Session FBINA
Carnegie Police Department

Protocol Number 293 - **Corrected Copy**

CATECHETICAL ADDRESS ON THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOLY AND GREAT LENT

+ B A R T H O L O M E W

BY THE MERCY OF GOD ARCHBISHOP OF CONSTANTINOPLE

NEW ROME AND ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH

TO THE PLENITUDE OF THE CHURCH GRACE AND PEACE FROM OUR SAVIOR AND LORD JESUS CHRIST, AND FROM US BENEDICTION BLESSING AND FORGIVENESS

During this period of Holy and Great Lent, our Church calls us to repentance. Doubtless, as contemporary man hears this invitation to repentance, he does not feel comfortable, because he has accustomed himself to a certain way of life, and does not wish to question his own rectitude. Calling one's own rectitude into question produces feelings of insecurity, because the ideological structure within which you have sure and certain refuge is clearly risked.

However, a deeper examination of the issue compels us to accept that people's convictions do not conform to objective reality, on the basis of reasonable judgment. Rather, they create a justification that is pleasing to self, namely: "*excuses in sins*" (Psalm 140:4). When a person justifies his or her actions and self-vindicates on the basis of erroneous values, significant harm happens, because inevitably, the moment comes when the truth emerges, and we find ourselves without excuse. Moreover, there may be no more time to adjust our convictions: that is, to repent of our sinful deeds and erroneous beliefs, through which we have tried to justify our behavior.

Now as Christians, we are used to both hearing about and practicing repentance, and we do not feel a conflict with our Church's call to repentance. However, there is a need

for us to make a deliberate and conscious effort to realize that a complete repentance has two objectives.

The first objective is threefold: a renunciation of our sins, a decision to cease and desist from sinful deeds and habits, and a decision to make amends for the consequences of our sins. For example, the publican Zaccheus, who sincerely repented during his encounter with Christ, demonstrated his repentance in a practical way by repaying fourfold the very people from whom he had unjustly seized wealth.

The second objective of repentance is that we should change our mentality. We should replace our understandings with other higher and loftier ones; or in the words of the Psalmist: *to "ascend in our hearts"* (Psalm 83:6). This second objective needs to be pursued especially by those who are unconvinced by their consciousness about specific sins. For example, our understanding of love surely falls short of perfection; likewise our understanding of humility. For when we compare our own spiritual state to the perfection of God, a perfection we are called to imitate, surely we will see our shortcomings and realize the endless road we must traverse in order to find ourselves in the path of those who are like unto God.

As we examine the quality of our inner peace, we ascertain that we fall short of the peace of Christ *"which surpasses all understanding"* (Philippians 4:7). Pondering the level to which we trust our lives to God's Providence, we sadly realize that we are often seized by anxiety and uncertainty about the future, as if we were either of little faith or even without faith. In general, upon examination of the purity of our conscience, we realize that we fall short of understanding correctly the many feelings we harbor within ourselves that are detrimental to our purity, often mistaking them as healthy. Thus, a new and more complete enlightenment of our conscience is needed through the teachings of the Fathers and of the Gospel, so that we will be in a better position to think critically about ourselves and our shortcomings, in line with the judgment of God. Since no one can claim to judge himself perfectly, by the same token no one can claim that he has no need of a renewed mind, a more enlightened mind, a transformation of mind, a correction of mind and mentality, i.e. a need of repentance.

The call of our Orthodox Church to repentance is not merely a call to self-reproach. Self-reproach can be useful, as are deep contrition and tears of repentance; but they are not of themselves sufficient. We need to experience the joy emanating from the forgiveness granted to us by God, the sense of deliverance from the burdens of the bondage of sin, and the sense of God's love for us. Our repentance does not deprive us from the joy of life, making us indignant when we hear a sermon calling us to repentance. Repentance means cleansing and enlightenment of our minds, more ardent love for Christ and His creation, freedom and joy through the newness of life

into which we continually enter through our constant repentance.

The one who constantly repents, ever progresses, ever rejoices through new ascents, finds constant satisfaction in deeper understandings of all things. Through the transformation of mentality and understanding, the one who repents better understands the whole world, becomes wiser, more judicious, more discreet, nobler and a true friend of Christ. Therefore, the preaching of repentance should be favorably received by wise persons who are able to appreciate any improvement that comes from the renewal of the human person through repentance.

Therefore, brothers and sisters and beloved children in the Lord, let us accept the invitation of our Church to repentance as we have set forth above. Let us who have fallen short through sin cleanse ourselves from sin through confession. Let us constantly examine our own presuppositions, so our judgments and thoughts may be godly and pure, just and true.

Finally, we paternally pray that all of you may enjoy the every assistance and help of the Lord on your road to repentance and throughout your renewed life in Christ.

Holy and Great Lent 2008

BARTHOLOMEW of Constantinople

The fervent intercessor for you all before God



Beginning of Great Lent

In the Orthodox Church, the last Sunday before Great Lent - the day on which, at Vespers, Lent is liturgically announced and inaugurated - is called Forgiveness Sunday. On the morning of that Sunday, at the Divine Liturgy, we hear the words of Christ: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses..." (Mark 6:14-15).

Then after Vespers - after hearing the announcement of Lent in the Great Prokeimenon": Turn not away Thy face from Thy child, for I am afflicted! Hear me speedily! Draw near unto my soul and deliver it!", after making our entrance into Lenten worship, with its special melodies, with the prayer of St Ephraim the Syrian, with its prostrations - we ask forgiveness from each other, we perform the rite of forgiveness and reconciliation. And as we approach each other with words of

reconciliation, the choir intones the Paschal hymns, filling the church with the anticipation of Paschal joy.

What is the meaning of this rite? Why is it that the Church wants us to begin the Lenten season with forgiveness and reconciliation? These questions are in order because for too many people Lent means primarily, and almost exclusively, a change of diet, the compliance with ecclesiastical regulations concerning fasting. They understand fasting as an end in itself, as a "good deed" required by God and carrying in itself its merit and its reward. But the Church spares no effort in revealing to us that fasting is but a means, one among many, towards a higher goal: the spiritual renewal of man, his return to God, true repentance and, therefore, true reconciliation. The Church spares no effort in warning us against a hypocritical and pharisaic fasting, against the reduction of religion to mere external obligations. As a Lenten hymn says:

"In vain do you rejoice in not eating, O soul! For you abstain from food, But from passions you are not purified. If you persevere in sin, you will perform a useless fast!"

Now, forgiveness stands at the very center of Christian faith and of Christian life because Christianity itself is, above all, the religion of forgiveness. God forgives us, and His forgiveness is in Christ, His Son, whom He sends to us so that by sharing in His humanity we may share in His love and be truly reconciled with God. Indeed, Christianity has no other content but love. And it is primarily the renewal of that love, a growth in it, that we seek in Great Lent, in fasting and prayer, in the entire spirit and the entire effort of that season. Thus, truly forgiveness is both the beginning of, and the proper condition for, the Lenten season.

One may ask, however: Why should I perform this rite when I have no "enemies?" Why should I ask forgiveness from people who have done nothing to me, and whom I hardly know? To ask these questions is to misunderstand the Orthodox teaching concerning forgiveness. It is true that open enmity, personal hatred, real animosity may be absent from our life, though if we experience them, it may be easier for us to repent, for these feelings openly contradict Divine commandments. But the Church reveals to us that there are much subtler ways of offending Divine Love. These are indifference, selfishness, lack of interest in other people, of any real concern for them - in short, that wall which we usually erect around ourselves, thinking that by being "polite" and "friendly" we fulfill God's commandments. The rite of forgiveness is so important precisely because it makes us realize - be it only for one minute - that our entire relationship to other men is wrong, makes us experience that encounter of one child of God with another, of one person created by God with another, makes us feel that mutual "recognition" which is so terribly lacking in our cold and dehumanized world.

On that unique evening, listening to the joyful Paschal hymns we are called to make a

spiritual discovery: to taste of another mode of life and relationship with people, of life whose essence is love. We can discover that always and everywhere Christ, the Divine Love Himself, stands in the midst of us, transforming our mutual alienation into brotherhood. As I advance towards the other, as the other comes to me - we begin to realize that it is Christ who brings us together by His love for both of us.

And because we make this discovery - and because this discovery is that of the Kingdom of God itself: the Kingdom of Peace and Love, of reconciliation with God and, in Him, with all that exists - we hear the hymns of that Feast, which once a year "opens to us the doors of Paradise." We know why we shall fast and pray, what we shall seek during the long Lenten pilgrimage.

Forgiveness Sunday: the day on which we acquire the power to make our fasting - true fasting; our effort - true effort; our reconciliation with God - true reconciliation.

+Father Alexander Schmemmann

Blessed by a Miracle!! [The Myrrh-Streaming Icons of Hawaii](#)

In the November / December 2007 Issue of the (Holy Theotokos of Iveron Russian Orthodox) parish's newsletter, Orthodox Hawaii, Father Anatole Lyovin wrote the following: *"By now all our parishioners living in Honolulu have heard about the blessing that has been bestowed on us sinners, unworthy though we may be, by the grace of the Almighty and the love and concern for us by the All Holy Theotokos. I have asked our Reader Nectarios, in whose home the two icons began streaming myrrh, to describe in his own words what has happened."*

Courtesy of: <http://www.orthodoxhawaii.org/link2.html>

The letter from Reader Nectarios...

Dear beloved in Christ,

In humility and with extreme trepidation, I will attempt to relate to you what actually occurred before rumors spread, evolve, and eventually become untruths.

Many have asked me to explain the events that have taken place in recent weeks regarding the two myrrh-streaming icons at the Holy Theotokos of Iveron Russian Orthodox Church in Honolulu, Hawaii. It has been hard to put into words the recent events that have taken over my life. I can't imagine how others would have reacted if they were in my shoes, God only knows. I pray God will guide me, and my family, to do and say things that are not contrary to His Will. I will attempt to tell the story of how these humble icons came into my life and how they changed it. Everything I write here is true.

The icons in question are two: 1) One is a mounted-print made, I believe, at the Sofrino Church factory near Moscow. It is an exact copy of the Montreal Myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon of the Holy Theotokos; this was the icon cared for by Blessed Martyr Brother José Muñoz. It is a small icon, roughly 7 x 9 inches and approximately one inch thick. My parish priest, Fr. Anatole Lyovin, gifted it to me for my Name's Day. He said he purchased it at a church bookstore in Toronto when the parish in which he had grown up celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of its founding. The icons from Sofrino have a distinctive style with a beautiful silk-screen riza (or oklad) built into the icon. This is done so that those who cannot afford beautiful and very expensive icons can have something equally beautiful from Sofrino for less. 2) The second icon is a hand-painted icon in the shape of a Cross with the image of Our Lord's crucifixion in the traditional Byzantine style of iconography. A Greek monk from the Holy Mountain painted it. It is roughly 8 x 11 inches and approximately 1 1/2 inches thick. I purchased a set of two near identical Cross icons and gave one to my father as a gift; I kept the other.

Before I relate to you the full story of the icons, let me say how it all began ...

Over three months ago, sometime around June or July of 2007, my wife and I noticed a hint of the scent of roses in the area surrounding our icon corner in our home chapel. Something made us look at our Cross icon of Christ (located behind our family reliquary), we noticed a small bead of liquid around the side wound on the image of the Christ, where the "soldier pierced His side with a lance". The liquid smelled very sweet, like myrrh. My experience with myrrh is quite limited, my only contact being a cotton ball soaked with myrrh from the Montreal myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon and several cotton balls of myrrh from the myrrh-streaming St. Nicholas Icon. We told no one of this and proceeded to "keep an eye" on the icon for any new developments or any possible continuation of the "streaming". The bead of myrrh eventually dried out and we eventually forgot about it.

Now on to the most recent developments in my story ...

During the last week of September I began to notice an unbelievably strong smell of myrrh, at home, in my car, even at work. I couldn't explain it. Was it all in my head? I asked my wife and she said she didn't smell anything. I spoke with several other people who visited our home, and they too said they didn't smell anything. (One of these people was our Serbian Orthodox kuma – she, too, couldn't smell anything.) I was convinced it was all in my imagination. This was on September 27th, the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross.

Then in the first week of October, my wife and I were extremely ill and missed Vespers that night. We don't miss too many of the church's divine services, so we did take notice of the date, October 6th. Around 10:30 p. m. that night, I was working in my office, which also doubles as our home chapel where our icon corner is located. My cat, Steve, walked into the office and began to sniff around as if he smelled something. I did not smell anything. He proceeded to walk toward the area where our reliquaries are kept. I thought this was strange since he would never go near the

reliquaries; amazingly something always stopped him, and he's a nosy cat. Yet this time he stood on his hind legs and sniffed around, I assume in order to figure out what the smell was. I still didn't smell anything. I proceeded to pick him up and then I noticed the scent. It was so strong, even overwhelming. Never have I smelled anything like that in my life. I couldn't explain why I hadn't smelled it before. It was like a thousand roses had fallen into the room. I crossed myself and guarded myself with the Jesus Prayer. I put the cat down and proceeded to look at the icons. I admit I was afraid to look at the icons near the reliquaries. I finally came to the icon of the Cross and noticed that the bead of myrrh by the side-wound of Christ was still dry, for a split second I regained some composure, even as the smell of roses was getting stronger. I then looked down and my hand was wet -- it was myrrh. How did it get there? The icon was dry? Or was it? I then noticed that the left knee of the image of Our Lord was forming a bead of myrrh right before my eyes. I then called out to my wife. She came running, and when I asked her if she had spilled anything on the icons, she said no. She hadn't gone near them. I showed her the icon. She was in shock. I told her the smell is too strong. Help me look at the other icons. So she did. In my office I have two bookshelves, at the top of them are icons. We have many icons, maybe too many. I stood on my toes to reach for the icons at the top of my bookshelves. My wife did the same. Finally I grabbed the icon of Iveron given to me by Fr. Anatole. It was completely wet. And then the smell got even stronger. Even my wife could smell it. For those of you who don't know my wife, my wife's sense of smell is very limited; she is only capable of smelling citrus scents. We were afraid. We asked one another if we cleaned or anointed the icons recently, and both of us said 'no'. 'What is going on?' I asked. I put the icons back where they were; we took a few pictures with our digital camera. Then I said an Akathist to the Mother of God in honor of her Iveron Icon and went to bed, or at least tried to.

The next day, Sunday October 7th (Feast day of the Conception of St. John the Baptist), after much debate, we left the icons at home and went to church. After the Liturgy we spoke to our kuma, who instructed us to speak with the priest immediately. We told Fr. Anatole what had happened. He listened patiently and said, 'Bring the icons to church!' We then arranged with the priest, to bring the icons to church the next Wednesday, October 10th. Up until that Wednesday, the icons continued to stream. I collected the myrrh on cotton and before them I said prayers for my sister who was ill and for several other people. [Fr Anatole's Note: The next day, his sister called her father to say that her doctor cannot explain it, but that her pancreas, which had completely stopped functioning had returned to its normal state and that her diabetes was under control.]

We couldn't wait until Wednesday.

On Wednesday October 10th, we brought the icons to church and placed them on two analogia (lecterns) in the center of the church. Fr. Anatole inspected them and wiped them down with cotton and proceeded to start the service of the Akathist Hymn of the Iveron Icon. After the service, the icons were wiped down again; they had

streamed a little during the service. Fr. Anatole confirmed to us that it is 'definitely streaming myrrh' and that it is 'a very pure myrrh'. The smell of roses filled the air. I asked him what we were to do? He asked us to leave the icons in church for the time being. No one knew about the icons; they were safe at church.

The next Saturday, October 13th, just happened to be "clean the church day". We were preparing our church for the upcoming feasts; our parish feast day (November 24th), Christmas, the Serbian bishop's visit, etc. So my wife, myself and another person were put in charge of cleaning. While we were cleaning the church we couldn't take our eyes off the two myrrh-streaming icons, which slowly streamed while we were cleaning. The smell of roses was quite pungent. The icons seemed to exude a strong smell of roses. The Icon of the Mother of God seems to smell more like 'roses' than the other icon. The Cross has a spicier smell to it. I can't explain it. While we were cleaning the church, our kumovi (Colette and her family) came to see the icons. Not many folks could wait for Vespers that evening. Colette later remarked to me that she's the 'doubting Thomas' and really couldn't believe it until she saw it for herself. Understandable. She didn't realize that the icons were actually streaming as we were cleaning. (They don't stream continuously.) She venerated the Cross and kissed the feet of Our Lord. She got a nice helping of myrrh in her mouth. Like the doubting Apostle Thomas who put his fingers in Christ's Hands and Side, she put her mouth right in the myrrh, where myrrh wasn't supposed to be! I couldn't help but laugh.

The next day, Sunday October 14th, was the Feast of the Protection of the Mother of God, and Fr. Anatole revealed the icons to the people. The icons streamed quite heavily; there was enough myrrh for everyone. They have continued streaming ever since. Many have come to see the icons, Greeks, Serbs, Roman Catholics, Protestants. All who approach the icons feel the Grace of God! There have been days when the icons have been completely dry, while on other days they are covered in myrrh. Yet whether they stream or not, they continuously give off an extremely strong scent of roses. It is truly a great miracle! I sometimes wonder if it is a warning. Now that I look back, it seems that 'revelation' has been the central theme of late. The icons initially revealed themselves to us on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. We revealed them to our priest on the Feast of the Conception of St. John the Baptist. He was the one man who revealed Christ to the world. Our priest revealed the myrrh-streaming icons to the church on the Feast day of the Protection of the Mother of God. These cannot be coincidences!

Our parish is dedicated to the original Myrrh-streaming Iveron Icon, an icon that had never traveled to Hawaii. Br. José wanted to come here, but never made it. I must confess to you, sometimes I feel that our fellow Orthodox brethren on the mainland have forgotten our little parish, our little community. Living out here in the middle of the Pacific Ocean, we struggle to survive as an Orthodox parish. Struggle to pay the bills, struggle to make the rent. I sometimes wonder, when will we have a church of our own? Has the Lord forgotten us? Are we to struggle forever? Have we done something wrong? Have we angered You, O Lord? Whether or not our fellow

clergy, our fellow Orthodox faithful have forgotten us, one thing is clear... The Most Holy Mother of God has not forgotten us. She has not abandoned us. She will not abandon us! Through these icons, I now have hope that there IS a light at the end of the tunnel. Whether or not we are blessed to have a church of our own, it really doesn't matter; God has shown us that He has not forgotten us! And that's all that is needed. God is telling us that He is real! Dare we ignore this revelation? Dare we turn our backs on this great miracle? Dare we forget Christ? May God forgive us if we do.

In Christ's Love,
Rdr. Nectarios

***RECENT NEWS:** According to various ROCOR clergy in San Francisco, the two myrrh-streaming icons were taken to the ROCOR Cathedral "Joy of All Who Sorrow" in San Francisco, where they were inspected by the Archbishop Kyrill. They are to return to Hawaii at the end of March. According to sources, they've continued to stream myrrh since being separated from their Keeper. Since time memorial, when miraculous and myrrh-streaming icons are removed from their Keepers, historically they tend to slowly cease streaming (or weeping), sometimes permanently. Some Theologians deduce the reasoning being the link between the miracle-working icon and the Grace-bearing Keeper is severed in an untimely and in some cases unscrupulous manner. Which in no way can be pleasing to God. The Hawaiian icons continue streaming until today.*