



Holy Ghost Orthodox Church

714 Westmoreland Avenue
PO Box 3
Slickville, PA 15684-0003
[724] 468-5581
www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org
Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor
23 Station Street
Carnegie, PA 15106-3014
[412] 279-5640 home
[412] 956-6626 cell

APOSTLES' / SAINTS PETER AND 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, 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 Michael Mihalick [MS], Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Charles Mezzomo, Father Anthony Dimitri, Father Cuthbert Jack, 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, Mildred Manolovich, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Glen Lucas Burlack, Bernie Vangrin, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Stella Cherepko, Sam Wadrose, Cameron [a boy in Matt's class], Faith—a 7-year-old girl with rheumatoid arthritis, Isabella Olivia Lindgren—a 3-year-old with a brain tumor, Dillon, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Nick Malec [Maxine's brother], Erin, Jim Markovich, Jeff Walewski [thyroid cancer], Carol [Lotinski] Rose, Michael Miller, Dave May, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Alverta, Gary Zurasky, Michael Horvath, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Michael Miller, 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, Robert McKivitz, Marjorie Pershing, Tom Marriott, Joe Farkas, Liz Obradovich, Liz, Halyna Zelinska [Bishop Daniel's mother], Mary Ann, Charlotte, Peter Natishan, Michael Spak, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Brandi Thomas, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Peter Special, Amy Boe, Doris Artman, Maureen Sams, Nancy Barylak, Shirley Tkacik, Carol Kowalcheck, Martin Golofski, Joe Paouncic, Anthony Yerace, Joanne Brodrick, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier [2-year-old with cancer], Diane

Waryanka, Nathan Forbeck, Joseph Baloga, Andy Torick, Sarah Doyle, Sophie Carrera, Carmella Berardesca, and Daria Masur. ARNOLD: Stefania Lucci, Steve Sakal, Homer Paul Kline, and Steve Ostaffy. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

THIRD BANNES OF MARRIAGE: Robert Chicka and Allison Thiel will be joined in Holy Matrimony Saturday, June 27, at 2 PM in our parish. If you know of any reason they should not be married, please contact Father Bob as soon as possible.

Please remember James John Logue George Senita, & John Kirkowski assigned to Iraq, Matthew Machak, Tonia Dec, Michael Repasky, 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 Seventh Grade and Matt’s Fifth Grade collections.

THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR HELP! Love, 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 21 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM
SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA AND ALL SAINTS OF UKRAINE
ALL VENERABLE AND GOD-BEARING FATHERS OF MOUNT ATHOS, TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF THEODORE STRATELATES, VENERABLE EPHREM-PATRIARCH OF ANTIOCH, VENERABLE ZOSIMUS-MONK OF PHOENICIA, SAINT ATRE OF NITIRA IN EGYPT, SAINTS NAUCRATIUS-ABBOT OF STUDIO, SAINT THEODORE-BISHOP OF ROSTOV & SUZDAL, FINDING OF RELICS OF SAINTS BASIL & CONSTANTINE-PRINCES OF YAROSLAVL, TAINT THEOPHILUS OF LUGA & OMTUCH-DISCIPLE OF SAINT ARSENIUS OF KONEVITS/VALAAM
Tone 1
Romans 2:10-16
Matthew 4:18-23
Litany in Blessed Memory of All Deceased Fathers, Grandfathers, etc.—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Joseph Baloga—40 Days—Fr. Bob

Sunday, June 28 Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM
3RD SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

PROPHET AMOS, MARTYRS VITUS, MODESTUS, & CRESCENTIA AT LUCANIA, MARTYR DULAS OF CILICIA, BLESSED JEROME OF STRIDONIUM, VENERABLE DULAS THE PASSION-BEARER OF EGYPT, BLESSED AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, TRANSLATION OF THE RELICS OF SAINT THEODORE THE SYKEOTE, SAINT MICHAEL-FIRST METROPOLITAN OF KIEV, SAINT LAZARUS-PRINCE OF SERBIA, SAINTS GREGORY & CASSIAN-ABBOTS OF AVANEZH-K-VOLOGDA, SAINT EPHRAIM II-PATRIARCH OF SERBIA, SAINT ORSIESIUS-DISCIPLE OF SAINT PACHOMIUS THE GREAT, SAINT SYMEON-BISHOP OF NOVGOROD, MARTYR LEONIS OF SYRIA, SAINT ABRAHAM-ABBOT OF AUVERGNE-GAUL

Tone 2

Romans 5:1-10

Matthew 6:22-33

*Litany in Blessed Memory of Anthony Notaro—40 Days—Fr. Bob
Parastas in Blessed Memory of Joe Karas—Debbie & John Paouncic*

Sunday, July 5

Divine Liturgy

10:30 AM

4TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

HIEROMARTYR EUSEBIUS-BISHOP OF SAMOSATA, MARTYRS ZENO & SERVANT ZENAS OF PHILADELPHIA, MARTYRS GALACTEON, JULIANA, & SATURNINUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, SAINT ALBAN-PROTOMARTYR OF BRITAIN, SAINT ANASTASIA THE SERBIAN

Tone 3

Romans 6:18-23

Matthew 8:5-13

Litany in Blessed Memory of Anna Kitch, Olga Stock, Susan Justina Sredich, Igumen George [Owen], & Claudia Horvath—Fr. Bob

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 29 JUNE 2008

SUNDAY OF ALL SAINTS OF NORTH AMERICA AND UKRAINE
SAINT TIKHON-BISHOP OF AMATHUS IN CYPRUS, MARTYRS
TIGRIUS & EUTORPIUS OF CONSTANTINOPLE, VENERABLE
TIKHON OF KALUGA, VENERABLE TIKHON-WONDERWORKER OF
LUCHOV, SAINT MARK THE JUST OF APOLONNIAS-NEPHEW OF
APOSTLE BARNABAS, NEW-MARTYR HERMOGENES-BISHOP OF
TOBOLSK

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!

The hesychastic father Ephrem of Katounakia's desert (on Mt. Athos), the good teacher of the angelic life who is still living and teaching the athletes of Christ, told us:

Once, a small boat was passing by and I saw Father Dimoklytos, who was the physician at New Skete, and because my geronda was ill I went on board to ask him something about my elder. But I did not say anything to the captain, and he thought that I was going to Daphni also. After all the fathers came on board, the boat pulled away from the dock.

"Kosta," I said to the captain, "I am not traveling."

"Why did you not say anything to me?"

In reply I said, "I just wanted to say a word to the doctor until the other fathers came on board." Kosta took the boat back to the dock and I jumped out.

"Go to hell," he screamed.

I went to my elder and told him about what had happened with Kosta. I realized that I could not celebrate the liturgy. I decided that at noon when Kosta returned I would go to him and beg forgiveness.

At noon I went, "How are things, Kosta?" I asked.

"Everything is ok, Father."

"Blessed one, this morning I was at fault and caused you grief," I said. "Forgive me."

"God forgive you, Father," he replied, "and you forgive me."

"Let God forgive." And after we were reconciled I could celebrate the liturgy.

To the lay people he would say, "You should do the same with your friends and fellow workers; if you say something wrong, do not go ahead and communicate the Holy Mysteries. You are not even able to pray. The prayer cannot reach anywhere. You must be forgiven. Then you can proceed with your prayers and to the Holy Mysteries."

from An Athonite Gerontikon

The Enduring Mystery Of the Weeping Icons

By Katie Thomas--Newsday

Pagona Catsounis was kneeling before an icon of the Virgin Mary on March 16, 1960, when she saw something almost unbelievable—a small tear quivering on the cheek of the Blessed Mother.

She waited for almost a week as the tears continued to appear and then told her story. The announcement drew droves of pilgrims, skeptics, and sightseers to her Island Park home.

Catsounis' weeping icon was the first of three that would be discovered on Long Island that year. The second appeared one month later in the Oceanside home of Catsounis' aunt, Antonia Koulis. Four Newsday staff members, including reporter Jim Hadjin, witnessed the event.

"I had to be convinced. I was skeptical," said Hadjin, who retired from Newsday in 1986. But after a priest allowed him to examine the lithograph icon, he changed his mind. "Miracle is a pretty strong word, but I don't see what else it could have been," he said.

Chemists, engineers, art experts, and others were unable to explain the phenomenon. Skeptics dismissed the tears as the result of condensation. One team of chemists tested a sample and concluded the liquid did not contain enough salt or nitrogen to be human tears.

The first two icons are now enshrined at St. Paul's Greek Orthodox Cathedral in Hempstead, and draw more than 3,000 visitors a year, according to Rev. Nicholas J. Magoulias, who arrived at the church shortly after the icons were discovered.

"Tearing icons are not unusual. They happened before the fall of Constantinople, before the fall of France in the Second World War...The '60s were turbulent times," Magoulias said, explaining why he believes the weeping icons appeared at the dawn of the decade.

The third icon, discovered by Koulis shortly after the second, is still in her family's home. Although all three icons continue to perform what Magoulias called "miracles"—helping to heal the sick—only the third shows physical signs of its paranormal past.

According to Catsounis, who now lives in Oceanside, "If you go and pray with all your heart, sometimes the eyes open and close."

With regard to receiving the brethren, Abba Apollo said that one should bow before the brethren who come, because it is not before them, but before God that we prostrate ourselves. "When you see your brother," he said, "you see the Lord your God." He added, "We have learnt that from Abraham. When you receive the brethren, invite them to rest awhile, for this is what we learn from Lot who invited the angels to do so."

SOME THOUGHTS on the Holy Consecration of the Chapel of Saint Thomas at All Saints Camp in Emlenton.

Saturday evening, just prior to vespers, the Holy Relics of Saint John Chrysostom, the Archbishop of Constantinople, and one of the Three Holy Hierarchs, was carried in procession by His Grace, Bishop Daniel, from the Pavilion to a small table in front of the Icon of Christ in the chapel.

Sunday morning, the consecration service began with prayers and another procession—this time the chapel was emptied and the relics led a procession of all the faithful around the outside of the building one time, this time carried by His Eminence, Archbishop Antony. His Grace, Bishop Daniel, blessed the outside of the building with the sprinkling of Holy Water and prayers. The procession ended at the closed front doors of the chapel. His Beatitude, Metropolitan Constantine, in imitation of the Paschal Nocturnal Procession, prayed before the closed doors, then opened them after placing the sign of the cross on them with his Archiepiscopal Staff.

Upon entering the church, the bishops and vested clergy proceeded through the Holy Doors and proceeded to prepare the Holy Altar. The relics were placed in the prepared cavity and sealed with a mixture of beeswax, mastic, incense, and other blessed ingredients. The chamber was then sealed, followed by the sealing of the altar with four wooden nails.

The altar was then baptized with water and wiped with new sponges, wiped with rose water and wine, then Chrismated by His Beatitude. A plain white linen garment was placed over the altar and tied with a cord, representing the

winding cloth of our Crucified Savior. Finally the altar was vested in new brocade cloths and the objects for the Divine Liturgy placed on them: seven-branched candle stand, tabernacle, hand cross, gospel, and Antimens.

The building itself was also Chrismated for the purpose of holy prayer and sacrifice.

During the Divine Liturgy, Deacon Ihor Machlay was elevated to the honor of Protodeacon—he was the organizer and facilitator for the event.

After the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy, the beauty of the newly-consecrated chapel shone in the brilliant sunlight—another sign of God’s pleasure. It had been cloudy and stormy all weekend, while the services were all blessed with beautiful sunshine.

My cousin, Father Paul, read this column he had written during his career as a Navy and Marine Corps chaplain, at his mother’s funeral. My Aunt Rose would have been beaming! I dedicate this to all of our mothers and fathers...Fr. Bob.

We had the meanest mother in the world!

**By Very Rev. Father Paul Pynch—Commander, U.S. Navy, Retired
From The Chaplain’s Corner—U.S. Navy Chaplain Corps**

I had the meanest mother in the whole world! While other kids ate candy for breakfast, I had to have cereal, eggs, toast, juice, and milk. When others had Cokes and candy for lunch, I had to eat a sandwich—of course, no pizza either. As you may have guessed, my supper was different from the other kids, too.

My mother insisted upon knowing where we were at all times. You’d think we were on a chain gang.

And I had to refer to adults as “Sir” or “Ma’am”—never by their first names. My mother even expected me to clean my room and to help with chores around the house. My sisters and I were in charge of washing and drying the dishes every day.

The worst is yet to come. We had to be in bed by nine each night and up early the next morning. We couldn’t sleep until noon like our friends.

I forgot to mention, while my friends were dating at the mature age of 12 and 13, my old-fashioned mother refused to let me date

until the ages of 15 and 18: 15, that is, if you only went to a school function—and that was only once or twice a year.

My mother was a complete failure as a mother. None of us has ever been arrested or suspected of any crime. She ended up with a son who is a priest, two daughters who are registered nurses, and a daughter who teaches folk dancing and ballet. And who do we have to blame for this terrible way we turned out? You're right. Our mean mother.

Just look at all the other things we missed. She taught us responsibility at an early age and forced us to grow into God-fearing, educated, honest, mature adults!

Using this as a background, I raised my three daughters, two of whom are nurses, and one a media journalist. I know that I stand a little taller and am filled with pride when my daughters call me mean, because, you see, I thank God for giving me the meanest mother in the whole world.

A farmer had some puppies he needed to sell. He painted a sign advertising the 4 pups and set about nailing it to a post on the edge of his yard. As he was driving the last nail into the post, he felt a tug on his overalls. He looked down into the eyes of little boy.

'Mister,' he said, 'I want to buy one of your puppies.'

'Well,' said the farmer, as he rubbed the sweat off the back of his neck, 'These puppies come from fine parents and cost a good deal of money.'

The boy dropped his head for a moment. Then reaching deep into his pocket, he pulled out a handful of change and held it up to the farmer.

'I've got thirty-nine cents. Is that enough to take a look?'

'Sure,' said the farmer. And with that he let out a whistle. 'Here, Dolly!' he called.

Out from the doghouse and down the ramp ran Dolly followed by four little balls of fur.

The little boy pressed his face against the chain link fence. His eyes danced with delight. As the dogs made their way to the fence, the little boy noticed something else stirring inside the doghouse. Slowly another little ball appeared, this one noticeably smaller. Down the ramp it slid. Then in a somewhat awkward manner, the little pup began hobbling toward the others, doing its best to catch up...'I want that one,' the

little boy said, pointing to the runt. The farmer knelt down at the boy's side and said, 'Son, you don't want that puppy. He will never be able to run and play with you like these other dogs would.'

With that the little boy stepped back from the fence, reached down, and began rolling up one leg of his trousers.

In doing so he revealed a steel brace running down both sides of his leg attaching itself to a specially made shoe.

Looking back up at the farmer, he said, 'You see sir, I don't run too well myself, and he will need someone who understands.'

With tears in his eyes, the farmer reached down and picked up the little pup. Holding it carefully he handed it to the little boy.

'How much?' asked the little boy. 'No charge,' answered the farmer, 'There's no charge for love.'

The world is full of people who need someone who understands...

Feast of Pentecost

John 7:37-52, 8:12

Today is a day of great celebration and joy in the Holy Orthodox Church. Today Orthodox believers think extensively about the Holy Spirit. Today believers think about the Church through the centuries.

Believers are renewed in the Holy Spirit. Believers are united in the Holy Spirit. The Creed recited at each Divine Liturgy refers to the Holy Spirit speaking by the prophets. [1]

Parish churches and monasteries of God's Holy Church are united with each other and with parish churches and monasteries through the centuries. This unity influences believers and the communities in which they live and worship.

At the beginning of each Divine Liturgy, the celebrant turns to the Holy Spirit in prayer. [2] When praying over the Holy Gifts, the celebrant says: "Making the change by Thy Holy Spirit." [3]

Each time a believer makes the "Sign of the Cross", the believer confesses belief in the Holy Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Orthodox Christian believers are inseparable from the Holy Spirit in their identity.

When Chrismated, believers are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.[4] Believers have a responsibility to be sensitive and attentive to the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit.(I Cor. 6:19)

Prayers to the Holy Spirit benefit the believer. Believers are expected to live in ways honoring the body as the temple of the Holy Spirit. Believers are expected to live in ways pleasing to God.

With the help of God, believers can more effectively sort through the choices confronting them during every moment of life. Help from God comes through prayer, fasting and a commitment to please and glorify God.

Help from God comes when the believer maintains a strong interest in life as God would have the believer live it. Believers cannot follow Satan and make choices pleasing to Satan while at the same time expecting to please God.

The Lord Jesus Christ said: "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other." (Mt. 6:24)

When praying to the Holy Spirit, believers ask the Holy Spirit to "Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls." [5] Believers have a great responsibility to battle sin with every fiber of their being.

Believers have a responsibility to choose the way of God with every decision made. The joy of following Christ entails discipline in choosing the narrow way. (Mt. 7:13)

The fullness of the life in Christ brings peace to the heart and soul. Believers find completeness in the Christian life. Completeness comes through giving one's life to God to be used as God would have the life to be used.

Every person is blessed with talents and resources from God. Each person determines whether the talents and resources will be used in ways pleasing to God.

A person need not look far in daily life to see gifts from God are often wasted.

Abusing and wasting gifts from God demonstrates a lack of reverence for God. At times an individual may not be blessed with much, but he or she may use what little they have for the glory of God.

The widow giving all that she had, the two mites, is held up as an example by Jesus. (Mk. 12:41-44). The Holy Spirit helps believers apply talents and resources for the glory of God and in ways intended by God.

Each day is a day to experience the fullness of life. We find true fullness in God Who gives life and provides for eternal life. Wise individuals choose God and the ways of God and make every effort to remain true to God throughout life.

Being attentive to the Holy Spirit throughout life challenges and inspires the believer to follow the ways pleasing to God. Choosing to experience the joy that comes from God is a lasting experience.

St. George Serbian Orthodox Church, Carmichaels, Pennsylvania. Feast of Pentecost. May 25/June 7, 2009. Very Rev. Father Rodney Torbic

[1] The Divine Liturgy According to St. John Chrysostom. St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, Pennsylvania. 1977, p. 61.

[2] Ibid, p.24

[3] Ibid, p.67.

[4] The Great Book of Needs, Vol. 1. St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, Pennsylvania, 2000, p.40.

[5] The Divine Liturgy According to St. John Chrysostom, p.3.

Fr. Thomas Hopko Arrives in Albania to Serve with OCMC

Author, speaker, and noted theologian Fr. Thomas Hopko is serving with OCMC in Albania this month. Fr. Hopko will be teaching various classes at the seminary in Tirana, running a student retreat and a clergy retreat, and speaking at the Commencement ceremony honoring this year's graduates. Please pray for Fr. Hopko as he participates in this vital work of the Church.



SERENITY

Just before the funeral services, the undertaker came up to the elderly widow and asked, 'How old was your husband?' '98,' she replied. 'Two years older than me' 'So you're 96,' the undertaker commented. 'Hardly worth going home, is it?' she responded.

Reporters interviewing a 104-year-old woman: 'And what do you think is the best thing about being 104?' the reporter asked. She simply replied, 'No peer pressure.'

I've sure gotten old! I've had two bypass surgeries, a hip replacement, new knees, and fought prostate cancer. I'm half blind, can't hear anything quieter than a jet engine, take 40 different medications that make me dizzy, winded, and subject to

blackouts, have bouts with dementia, have poor circulation, can't remember if I'm 85 or 92, have lost all my friends. But, thank God, I still have my driver's license!

I feel like my body has gotten totally out of shape, so I got my doctor's permission to join a fitness club and start exercising. I decided to take an aerobics class for seniors. I bent, twisted, gyrated, jumped up and down, and perspired for an hour. But...by the time I got my leotards on, the class was over.

My memory's not as sharp as it used to be. Also, my memory's not as sharp as it used to be.

Know how to prevent sagging? Just eat till the wrinkles fill out.

It's scary when you start making the same noises as your coffee maker.

These days about half the stuff in my shopping cart says, 'For fast relief.'

THE SENILITY PRAYER :

Grant me the senility to forget the people
I never liked anyway,
The good fortune to run into the ones I do, and
The eyesight to tell the difference.

Always Remember This:

**You don't stop laughing because you grow old,
You grow old because you stop laughing!!**

Now Theophilus (patriarch of Alexandria, 385-412) had a nephew, his sister's son, named Cyril, whom he had instructed and brought up to the best of his power. And after some time the patriarch sent him to the Mount of Nitria, to the desert of St. Macarius. And Cyril dwelt there five years in the monasteries, reading the books of the Old and New Testaments; for Theophilus urged him to apply himself assiduously to his studies, saying to him, "By these studies thou wilt someday arrive in Jerusalem on high, which is the dwelling place of the saints." For Cyril was the attendant of Theophilus in the patriarchal cell, and was ordained reader. The patriarch, when he sent Cyril to the desert, entrusted him to Serapion the Wise, and charged him to teach Cyril the doctrines of the Church, which are the true doctrines of God; so Cyril learnt all the Scriptures by heart... During most of his nights he would read through in a single night the Four Gospels, and the Catholic Epistles, and the Acts, and the first Epistle of the Blessed Paul, namely, that addressed to the Romans; and on the morrow after this, Cyril's teacher would know by looking at his face that he had studied all

night. And the grace of God was with Cyril, so that when he had read a book once, he knew it by heart. And in these years in the desert he learnt by heart all the canonical books.

After this, the patriarch Theophilus sent to him and brought him back to Alexandria, and there Cyril dwelt with the patriarch in his cell and read aloud in his presence; and the priests and the learned men and philosophers were astonished at him, and rejoiced over him on account of the beauty of his form and the sweetness of his voice which never changed, as it is written in the Psalms, "I opened by mouth and drew in my breath." And all the people, when they heard him read, desired that he might never cease reading because he read so sweetly, and was so beautiful in countenance. And his uncle Theophilus loved him greatly, and thanked God that he had granted him a spiritual son who had grown in grace and wisdom. Cyril's conduct was excellent, and his humility was great; and he never ceased to study theology, nor to meditate upon the words of the doctors of the orthodox Church: Athanasius, and Dionysius (of Alexandria) and Clement, patriarch of Rome, and Eusebius and Basil, bishop of Armenia, and Basil, bishop of Cappadocia. These are the orthodox fathers whose works he studied.

History of the Patriarchs 1. 11 (ed. Evetts), p. 427 9 <163 5> St. Cyril of Alexandria, commemorated 9/22 June

While these disputations were being carried on (the Council of Nicaea, 325), certain of the pagan philosophers became desirous of taking part in them; some, because they wished for information as to the doctrine that was inculcated; and others, because, feeling incensed against the Christians on account of the recent suppression of the pagan religion, they wished to convert the inquiry about doctrine into a strife about words, so as to introduce dissensions among them, and to make them appear as holding contradictory opinions. It is related that one of these philosophers, priding himself on his acknowledged superiority of eloquence, began to ridicule the priests, and thereby roused the indignation of a simple old man, highly esteemed as a confessor, who, although unskilled in logical refinements and wordiness, undertook to oppose him. The less serious of those who knew the confessor, raised a laugh at his expense for engaging in such an undertaking; but the more thoughtful felt anxious lest, in opposing so eloquent a man, he should only render himself ridiculous; yet his influence was so great, and his reputation so high among them, that they could not forbid his engaging in the debate; and he accordingly delivered himself in the following terms: "In the name of Jesus Christ, O philosopher, hearken to me. There is one God, the maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. He made all things by the power of the Word, and established them by the holiness of His Spirit. The Word, whom we call the Son of God, seeing that man was sunk in error and living like unto the beasts pitied him, and vouchsafed to be born of woman, to live among

men, and to die for them. And He will come again to judge each of us as to the deeds of this present life. We believe these things to be true with all simplicity. Do not, therefore, expend your labor in vain by striving to disprove facts which can only be understood by faith or by scrutinizing the manner in which these things did or did not come to pass. Answer me, dost thou believe?" The philosopher, astonished at what had occurred, replied, "I believe"; and having thanked the old man for having overcome him in argument, he began to teach the same doctrines to others. He exhorted those who still held his former sentiments to adopt the views he had embraced, assuring them on oath, that he had been impelled to embrace Christianity by a certain inexplicable impulse.

It is said that a similar miracle was performed by Alexander, who governed the church of Constantinople. When Constantine returned to Byzantium, certain philosophers came to him to complain of the innovations in religion, and particularly of his having introduced a new form of worship into the state, contrary to that followed by his forefathers, and by all who were formerly in power, whether among the Greeks or the Romans. They likewise desired to hold a disputation on the doctrine with Alexander the bishop; and he, although unskilled in such argumentative contests, and perhaps persuaded by his life, seeing that he was an excellent and good man, accepted the struggle at the command of the emperor. When the philosophers were assembled, since every one wished to engage in the discussion, he requested that one whom they esteemed worthy might be chosen as spokesman, while the others were to remain silent. When one of the philosophers began to open the debate, Alexander said to him, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ not to speak." The man was instantaneously silenced. It is then right to consider whether it is a greater miracle that a man, and he a philosopher, should so easily be silenced by a word, or that a stone-wall should be cleft by the power of a word, which miracle I have heard some attribute to Julian, surnamed the Chaldean. I have understood that these events happened in the way above narrated. *Sozomen, Ecclesiastical History 1. 18*

From the Kontakion on the Ascension by St. Romanos the Melodist, 6th century

1

Abandoning on earth the things of earth, leaving to the dust the things of ash, now, let us come to our senses and raise on high our eyes and minds.

Mortals, let us make our sight together with our senses fly to heaven's gates.

Let us imagine we are standing on the Mount of Olives and that we bend our gaze on the Redeemer as he rides upon a cloud.

For, from where the Lord has hastened back to heaven, there too the One who loves to give has distributed his gifts to his apostles, cherishing them as a father and crying out to them, "I am not parting from you.

I am with you and there is no one against you."

17

..... the disciples of the Deliverer, Christ and God, who had been taken up, then came down from the Mount (of Olives) with gladness and rejoicing.

And arriving below, as the Scripture teaches, bowing down, they worship the God on high, and addressed words full of praise to the mountain as they extolled the Mount of Olives, because it had been found worthy of such honor, "Mount Sinai," they said, "you have surpassed.

For it received the steps of Moses, but you, those of God Himself.

On the former was the law, but on you the grace which both fashioned Moses and said to us, 'I am not parting from you.

I am with you and there is no one against you.'"

From the sayings of Saint Isaac the Syrian: "From genuine prayer the love of God is born, for love comes of prayer."