



**Holy Ghost Orthodox Church**  
**714 Westmoreland Avenue**  
**PO Box 3**  
**Slickville, PA 15684-0003**

[www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org](http://www.holyghostorthodoxchurch.org)

Very Rev. Father Robert Popichak, Pastor

23 Station Street

Carnegie, PA 15106-3014

[412] 279-5640 home

[412] 956-6626 cell

**ON THE MEND:** Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yuriy, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yuriy's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynech, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciow, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaele Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John

*Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Stroz [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Marianne Mulroy, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, Patrick Felice [Melanie's husband] Tim Sams, and Susan Pulcini—Father Ted*

*Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.*

**'Concern yourself with your own sins and not with those of your neighbor; then the workplace of your intellect will not be robbed.'**  
*St. Mark the Ascetic*

**PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!**

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

**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 ask 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, SEPTEMBER 15 DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM 10:30 AM**  
**13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYR MAMAS & PARENTS THEODOTUS & RUFINA; SAINT JOHN THE FASTER—PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE; 3,628 MARTYRS WHO SUFFERED IN NICOMEDIA**

*Tone 4*

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Matthew 21:33-42

**SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 21 NATIVITY OF THE MOST BLESSED THEOTOKOS**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 22 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL**  
**10:30 AM**  
**14<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY BEFORE THE EXALTATION; AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS; HOLY & RIGHTEOUS**

**ANCESTORS OF GOD JOACHIM & ANNA; MARTYR SEVERIAN OF SEBASTE; SAINT THEOPHANES THE CONFESSOR & FASTER OF MOUNT DIABENOS; MARTYRS CHARITON & STRATON; HOLY FATHERS OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> ECUMENICAL COUNCIL; UNCOVERING OF THE RELICS OF SAINT THEODOSIUS-ARCHBISHOP OF CHERNIHIV**

*Tone 5*

2 Corinthians 1:21-2:4; Galatians 6:11-18; Galatians 4:22-31  
Matthew 22:1-14; John 3:13-17; Luke 8:16-21

**FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 27 EXALTATION OF THE PRECIOUS AND LIFE-GIVING CROSS**

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM  
15<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; SUNDAY AFTER THE EXALTATION;  
AFTERFEAST OF THE EXALTATION; GREAT-MARTYR EUPHEMIA THE ALL-  
PRAISED OF CHALCEDON; SAINT SEBASTIANA; MARTYR MELITINA; MARTYRS  
VICTOR & SOSTHENES OF CHALCEDON; SAINT DOROTHEUS-HERMIT OF EGYPT;  
MARTYR LUDMILLA-GRANDMOTHER OF SAINT WENCESLAUS-PRINCE OF THE  
CZECHS; REPOSE OF SAINT CYPRIAN-METROPOLITAN OF KIEV**

*Tone 6*

2 Corinthians 4:6-15; Galatians 2:16-20  
Matthew 22:35-46; Mark 8:34-9:1

## **BULLETIN INSERT FOR 15 SEPTEMBER 2019**

**13<sup>TH</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYR MAMAS & PARENTS  
THEODOTUS & RUFINA; SAINT JOHN THE FASTER—PATRIARCH OF  
CONSTANTINOPLE; 3,628 MARTYRS WHO SUFFERED IN NICOMEDIA**

### **TROPARION—TONE 4**

When the women disciples of the Lord  
Learned from the angel the joyous message of Thy Resurrection;  
They cast away the ancestral curse and elatedly told the apostles:  
Death is overthrown! Christ God is risen,  
Granting the world great mercy.

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**

My Savior and Redeemer,  
As God rose from the tomb  
And delivered the earthborn from their chains.

He has shattered the gates of Hell,  
And as Master, He has risen on the third day!

**PROKEIMENON—TONE 4**

**READER:** O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

**PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.**

**READER:** Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord my God, Thou art very great!

**PEOPLE: O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.**

**READER:** O Lord, how manifold are thy works!

**PEOPLE: In wisdom hast Thou made them all.**

**ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 4**

Go forth and prosper and reign, because of truth and meekness and righteousness.

You love righteousness and hate iniquity.

**Why do we honor the Theotokos?** By Father Dave Urban  
Glory be to Jesus Christ!

As we are in the Feast of the Dormition, the question was recently posed, "Why do we honor the Theotokos so much?"

Through Holy Scripture, Holy Tradition, the Church Fathers, and the results of the Ecumenical Councils, we have an understanding and spiritual guidelines in knowing the Ever-Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, the Mother of God, and the Mother of our Church. We honor her because the Archangel Gabriel did (Luke 1:28) as did Christ (Luke 2:51 and John 19:26-27 to name a couple). Christ is the center of the Church, but we venerate the Theotokos and pray that she intercedes for us. We pray (and sing), O Mary, Mother of God, pray for us! (O Marije, Mati Boža molisja za nas!) but we can think of it as *Please help us toward salvation by your prayers!*

**Monasteries: Centers for Spiritual Healing and Intercessory Prayer**

Posted on September 2, 2019 | by Abbot Tryphon |



Monastics are an integral part of the Church and should not be seen as independent of the Church Universal. Monks are bound by the same Gospel as other Christians and need to avail themselves to the missionary and pastoral needs of the Church, as needed. Although a primary role of monasticism is to be found in worship and contemplative prayer, monks also have a long history as missionaries.

Many of the great monasteries of Russia, as an example, were founded in remote places but became centers of pilgrimage, attracting countless people. Whole cities often formed around monasteries, precisely because the monks had reached out with the Gospel and worked among the people. Where there was a need, monks responded with charity and evangelical witness.

In these difficult times where people are suffering economic hardship, loss of jobs and foreclosure on homes, monks can bring a different perspective that can give hope to those who've lost all hope. Monasteries become centers of spiritual healing and empowerment. People who've been struggling to find meaning in their lives can walk away with a new vision, gained through the interior work of the monks who've availed themselves as therapists for those who are hurting.

The strength of Orthodox monasticism is not to be found in the sameness of every monastery, for each monastic community has its own expression, often quite different from other monasteries. In Greece and Russia, there are monastic communities that run printing presses, care for the elderly and infirm, run Orthodox bookstores in cities, live as hermits, run large retreat facilities, teach in schools, and even, on occasion, serve parishes.

Monasticism is not something that is mastered through academic pursuits, but is rather acquired over many years of struggle, through obedience, long nights of prayer, ascetical practice, and communal life. A monastic, who is true to his vocation, will often see himself as just a beginner, even though he's been a monk for forty years, for he realized how far he is from the perfection that comes with total surrender to Christ.

Many would wish to see monasticism in a romantic way, with monks quietly and silently living out hidden lives, yet there are monks who work with people as spiritual fathers, preachers, teachers, participating in an active way in service to the world. Each monk, and each monastery is called apart for the service of God and His Church, as God wishes. Thus, it is dangerous ground when we judge a monastery or a monk from our own fanciful image of what we think they should be like, for even on the Holy Mountain of Athos, there are many varieties of monastic expression, none being better than the other, and all based on the prompting of the Holy Spirit, as the monk attempts to live out the evangelical life of the Gospels.

Although the Orthodox Church does not have religious orders as the Latin Church does, there are in Orthodoxy different styles of monastic life, both individually and in community. Generally speaking, some monasteries may be more liturgically oriented, while others may be more ascetic, while still others may have a certain mystical tradition, and others be more inclined to spiritual guidance and openness to the world for the purpose of care and counseling. These various styles of monasticism, which take both a personal as well as a corporate form, are not formally predetermined or officially legislated. They are the result of organic development under the living grace of God.

Yet all monastics share the common vows of poverty, chastity, stability, and obedience, ever following the words of Jesus which are the cornerstone for this life, "be ye perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect."

With love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon

**If you can help a person—help, if you cannot help—pray, if you do not know how to pray—think about the person in a good way! And this will already be a help, because goodly thoughts are also a weapon! St. Nicholas Serbian**

### **The Stony Heart**

*"A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezekiel 36:26)*

What a suffering when we recognize that our heart is stony! Has your soul become cold? Do you feel you are detached from God, that you are dead, joyless, hopeless? Your prayers fell silent, your light faded, you are oppressed by spiritual poverty, and you wonder whether the Lord can love

you, unfeeling, unworthy, maybe unfaithful? Look then at the endless, unchanging love, which is the same from century to century; it does not hesitate because of the changes taking place in you, it can warm your stony heart up, transforming it completely with its power.

The Lord loved Peter also when, shortly before his denial, he followed Him from afar. The look of the Lord's vigilant love crushed Peter's heart and lit faded fire in him. This faithful love of God belongs to you too. Hold on to it, hang on to it, enter immediately into its miraculous scope.

Do you yearn for those who were once a rejoicing of your life, and now they are in the kingdom of heaven? Are you exhausted from longing, from the bitterness of separation? The hearty connection with them is still alive. When your soul longs for communication with them, look to the height of Christ's love.

The same love, triumphing in glory with those saved and delivered from earthly sin, listening to their praises, extends to your longing, embracing your empty heart from all sides and forming a living connection between you and them.

The same love, embracing heaven and earth, is glad for those who returned there and abides with those who remain here. Believe that your stony heart will come to life and will beat faster under the influence of this love, for neither longitude of painful days, nor breadth of hard earthly experience, nor the depth of suffering, nor the height of desires "shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord"(Romans 8:39).

**Saint John [Climacus] urges his readers to "pray in all simplicity" and to forget over-complicated words in prayer. The "simple and unadorned lisping" of children is enough to win the heart of the Lord.**

**Despondency is the same as laziness, only worse. Due to despondency, you are weakened both in body and spirit. You don't want to work or pray; you go to church carelessly; and the whole person is weakening. *St. Ambrose of Optina***

It is difficult, very difficult to love people, because people have a lot of anger, a lot of repulsive things, a lot of untruth. But force yourself to love



them, force yourself: remember that God is love, remember that without love, the entrance to the Kingdom of God is closed to you.

Be kinder than it's common among people, because everyone has their own war, battles and losses. Live simply, love generously, see into needs of a neighbor intently, speak softly. And leave the rest for the Lord. Neither faith, nor dogma, nor mysticism, nor asceticism, nor fast, nor long prayers make up the true image of a Christian. Love does it. Everything loses its strength if there is no the core—love for a man. *St. Luke of Crimea*

**Christ did not always conformed to the niceties of oratory; on the contrary, His first recorded words to the people gathered around Him were very blunt: "Repent for the kingdom of heavens is at hand!" (Mathew 4:17).**

"It is truly a new spectacle, never before conceived of: a woman who surpasses the heavens in purity of nature enters the holy tabernacle of the heavenly sanctuary; a virgin, who surpasses the very nature of the Seraphim by the miracle of giving birth to God, draws near to God, the first of natures and begetter of all things; a mother, who has brought forth life itself, produces an ending of her own life to match that of her Son. It is a miracle worthy both of God and of our faith! For as her womb was not corrupted in giving birth, so her flesh did not perish in dying. What a miracle!" *St. Andrew of Crete, On the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin Mary*

It's time to finally remember the words of Christ: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 7:21). The point of faith is in the inner transformation of a man; and if such a goal is not set, then faith quickly becomes bigotry and hypocrisy, or simply a ritual designed to convince a person that he is "spiritual" and "a believer". We must realize that there are an overwhelming majority of good people in the world, but they are all far too stuck on themselves. It's not the good who help, but the unindifferent. And this is what we should strive for - to become unindifferent. *Fr. Roman Matukov*

### **Fruit of the Spirit-Gentleness**

**2 Samuel 22:36-Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy gentleness hath made me great. (KJV)**

Let us learn gentleness from the Lord God and fill our lives with acts of gentleness. May we never get tired of being gentle in this world of aggression and violence. Open eyes and hearts will see the benefit of being gentle in this difficult world. The Lord God guides believers' hearts seeking to live in ways pleasing to Him. The Holy Spirit does not disappoint prayerful believers reaching out in strong faith. The Lord protects and is a refuge for gentle believers earnestly seeking salvation

**Psalm 18:35-Thou hast also given me the shield of thy salvation: and thy right hand hath holden me up, and thy gentleness hath made me great. (KJV)**

The Lord God provides believers with the gentleness to live in this world each day. The Lord's teachings are found in the Church and revealed through active prayer. Eyes and hearts of faith see and understand the presence of the Lord in daily life. The Lord's joy becomes evident in acts of gentleness completed in great faith. The Holy Spirit is understood by believers to be everywhere and fills all things. Gentleness makes a decided long-term, life-changing difference in believers' lives.

**2 Corinthians 10:1-Now I Paul myself beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ, who in presence am base among you, but being absent am bold toward you: (KJV)**

The Holy Apostle Paul's embracement of the ways of Christ is instructive for us. We benefit from the example and teachings of the Apostle Paul on gentleness. Our desire to learn and follow Christ will be reflected in our interest in gentleness. The world seems more filled with violence and aggression with each passing day. Gentle acts are rarely recognized, promoted and honored in today's public forum. Gentleness does not seem to receive the same amount of attention as aggression.

**Galatians 5:22-But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, (KJV)**

We find lasting value in the teachings of the Apostle Paul on the fruit of the spirit. Our lives greatly improve when we adhere to the teachings of the Apostle Paul. Initiative and active faith are necessary for the Apostle's teachings to be followed. Repentance and rejection of sin leads believers to fully enjoy the fruit of the Spirit. Great love of the Lord God hastens faithful believers to live in gentleness each day. Each moment results in decisions being made about faithfully following the Lord.

*Holy Martyr Agathonicus; Holy Hieromartyr Gorazd of Prague.*

*August 22/September 4, 2019. Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania. Father Rodney Torbic*

## **Theotokos: The Bridge by Which God Descended**

Posted on [September 7, 2019](#) | by Archimandrite George (Kapsanis) |

So, the Lord Jesus gives us this possibility to unite with God and return to the primary purpose which God ordained for man. Therefore He is described in Holy Scripture as the way, the door, the good shepherd, the life, the resurrection, the light. He is the new Adam who rights the wrong of the first Adam. The first Adam separated us from God with his disobedience and his egotism. With His love and His obedience to the Father, obedience unto death, to "death on the cross," the second Adam, Christ, brings us back once more to God. Once again, He orients our freedom towards God, so that by offering Him our freedom, we unite with Him.

The work of the new Adam pre-supposes the work of the new Eve, the Panagia who put right the wrong done by the old Eve. Eve drove Adam to disobedience. The new Eve, the Panagia, contributes to the incarnation of the new Adam who will guide the human race towards obedience to God. Therefore, as the first human person who achieved Theosis—in an exceptional and, of course unrepeatable, way—the Lady Theotokos played a role in our salvation which was not only fundamental, but both necessary and irreplaceable.

According to St. Nicholas Cabasilas, the great 14th century theologian, if the Panagia, in her obedience, had not offered her freedom to God, had she not said "yes" to God—God would not have been able to incarnate. Once God had given freedom to man, He would not have been able to violate His gift, so He would not have been able to incarnate if there had not been such a pure, all holy, immaculate psyche as the Theotokos, who would offer her freedom, her will, all of herself totally to God so as to draw Him towards herself and towards us. We owe so much to Panagia. This is why our Church honours and venerates the Theotokos so much, so that St. Gregory Palamas, summarising Patristic theology, says that our Panagia holds the second place after the Holy Trinity; that she is god after God, the boundary between the created and the uncreated. "She leads those being saved," according to another fine expression by a theologian of our Church. Recently St. Nicodemus of the Holy Mountain, the steadfast luminary and teacher of the Church, pointed out that the angelic ranks themselves are illumined by the light they receive from the Panagia.

Therefore, she is praised by our Church as "more honourable than the Cherubim and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim." The incarnation of the Logos and the Theosis of man are the great mystery of our Faith and Theology. Our Orthodox Church lives this every day with its Mysteries, with its hymns, with its icons, with its whole life. Even the

architecture of an Orthodox Church witnesses to this. The great dome of the churches, on which the Pantocrator is painted, symbolises the descent of Heaven to earth; it tells us that the Lord "bent down the Heavens and descended." The Evangelist St. John writes that God became man "and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). So, we represent the Theotokos in the apse of the altar to show that God comes to earth and to men through her, because He became man through the Theotokos. She is "the bridge by which God descended," and again, "she who conducts those of earth to Heaven," the Platytera of the Heavens, the space of the uncontainable, who contained the uncontainable God within herself for our salvation. To continue, our Churches show deified men; those who became gods by Grace because God became man. In our Orthodox Churches we can picture not only the incarnate God, Christ, and His immaculate Mother the Lady Theotokos, but we also show the saints around and below the Pantocrator; on all the walls of the Church we paint the results of God's incarnation: sainted and deified men.

Thus, when we enter an Orthodox Church and see the beautiful holy icons, this is an immediate experience through which we learn what God's plan is for man; what is the purpose of our life. Everything in the Church talks to us about the incarnation of God and the Theosis of man.