

Year 2: Using our Senses in Worship

November: More Things we SEE in Church

- Parts of the church building
- The Iconostasis and Altar Area
- Icons (styles, symbols, colors)
- Sacred Space: How we should act in Church

Saints and Feasts This Month

- The Saints of North America:
St. John Kochurov of Chicago, October 31

Memory Verse:

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.” (Mathhew 5: 4-5)

**Monthly packets are also available online at:
www.saintalexio.org/youthministry.html**

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Sacred Space

The interior church is most importantly, both the background and the setting for Orthodox worship. The art and architecture are designed to contribute to the total experience of worship, which involves one's intellect, feelings, and senses. The Eucharist and the other sacramental mysteries take place in God's midst, and they bear witness to His presence and actions. Therefore, in the Orthodox tradition there is a very strong feeling that the church is the House of God and the place where His glory dwells. For this reason, all Orthodox churches are blessed, consecrated and set aside as sacred space. The whole church bears witness to God's indwelling among His people. As one old admonition says:

"Let the Christian consider well when he enters the church that he is entering another heaven. That same majesty of God which is in heaven is also in his church, and on this account the Christian must enter with reverence and awe."

<http://www.goarch.org/en/ourfaith/articles/article7100.asp>

Church Building Exterior

Orthodox churches generally take one of several shapes that have a particular mystical significance. The most common shape is an oblong or rectangular shape, imitating the form of a ship. As a ship, under the guidance of a master helmsman conveys men through the stormy seas to a calm harbor, so the Church, guided by Christ, carries men unharmed across the stormy seas of sin and strife to the peaceful haven of the Kingdom of Heaven. Churches are also frequently built in the form of a Cross to proclaim that we are saved through faith in the Crucified Christ, for Whom Christians are prepared to suffer all things. Less frequently churches are built in the shape of a circle, signifying that the Church of Christ shall exist for all eternity (the circle being one of the symbols of eternity) or in the shape of an octagon, signifying a star, for the Church, like a star, guides a man through the darkness of sin which encompasses him. Because of the difficulties of internal arrangement, however, the latter two shapes are not often used.

Almost always Orthodox churches are oriented East-West, with the main entrance of the building at the West end. This symbolizes the entrance of the worshipper from the darkness of sin (the West) into the light of Truth (the East). This rule is violated only if the building had been previously constructed for another purpose, or if services are conducted in a private home, for example, when the entrance and main portion have been arranged according to convenience.

On the roof of Orthodox churches are usually found one or more cupolas (towers with rounded or pointed roofs), called crests or summits. One cupola signifies Christ, the sole head of the Christian community; three cupolas symbolize the Most-Holy Trinity; five cupolas represent Christ and the four Evangelists; seven cupolas symbolize the Seven Ecumenical Councils which formulated the basic dogmas of the Orthodox Church, as well as the general use in the Church of the sacred number seven; nine cupolas represent the traditional nine ranks of Angels; and thirteen cupolas signify Christ and the Twelve Apostles.

Every cupola, or where there is none, the roof, is crowned by a Cross, the instrument of our salvation. The Cross may take one of many different shapes, generally according to the national tradition of a particular local Church. In the Russian Church, the most common form is the so-called three-bar Cross, consisting of the usual crossbeam, a shorter crossbeam above that and another, slanted, crossbeam below. Symbolically, the three bars represent, from the top, the signboard on which was written, in Hebrew, Latin and Greek, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews (John 19:19); the main crossbeam, to which the hands of Jesus were nailed; the lower portion, to which His precious feet were nailed.

The three-bar representation existed in Christian art from very early times in Byzantium, although usually without the bottom bar slanted, which is particularly Russian. The origin of this slanted footboard is not known, but in the symbolism of the Russian Church, the most common explanation is that it is the pointing upward to Paradise for the Good Thief on Jesus' right and downward to Hell for the Thief on His left (Luke 23).

*Excerpt taken from "These Truths We Hold - The Holy Orthodox Church: Her Life and Teachings".
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Church Building Interior

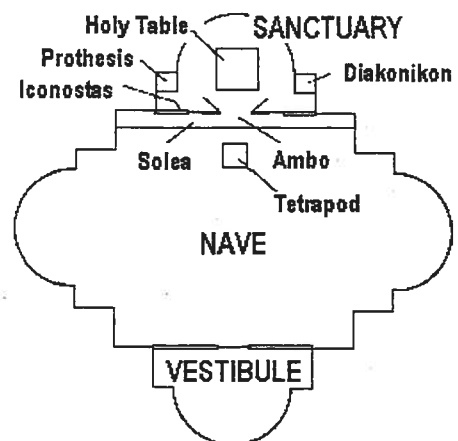
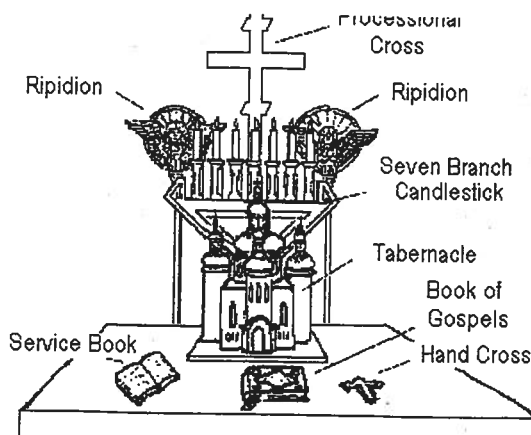
The interior of an Orthodox church is divided into several parts. One enters the church through the Porch where, in ancient times, the Weepers (Penitents forbidden to enter the church proper) stood. From the Porch one entered the Vestibule (Narthex; Lity Greek; Pritvor Russian), in ancient times a large, spacious place, wherein the Catechumens received instruction while preparing for Baptism, and also where Penitents excluded from Holy Communion stood. Here was found the Baptismal Font and it is here that the Church Typikon specifies that penitential services (such as Compline, Nocturns and the Hours) be served.

The main body of the church is the Nave, separated from the Sanctuary (Altar) by an Icon screen with doors, called the Iconostasis (Icon stand). The walls of the Nave are usually decorated with Icons and frescoes or paintings, before many of which are hanging lit lamps (lampadas). Especially noticeable in traditional Orthodox churches is the absence of any seating (except perhaps for benches placed along the walls and at the rear). The Holy Fathers deemed it disrespectful for anyone to sit during the Divine services (except at certain explicit moments of instruction or Psalm reading) and the open spaces were seen to be especially conducive to the many bows and prostrations typical of Orthodox worship.

At the extreme Eastern end of the church is found the Altar (or Sanctuary), with two small rooms the Sacristy and the Vestry at either side, separated from the Nave by the Iconostasis. At the North end of the Altar (in ancient times a separate room, called the Sacristy or Chapel of the Oblation) is placed the Table of Oblation (offering or Prothesis) where the offerings are prepared during the Proskomedion or Liturgy of Preparation. Like the Holy Table, the Table of Oblation is covered with rich coverings and the wall around it is decorated with Icons. Upon it are placed the sacred vessels used in the preparation of Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. At the right (South) side of the Altar is a space reserved for the sacred vessels, books and vestments, called the Vestry (or Diakonnikon, since the Deacons are usually in charge of these items). In ancient times this was a separate room and here the faithful would bring all sorts of edible gifts (cheese, eggs, boiled rice or wheat, etc.) for the clergy.

The Iconostasis is placed near the edge of the platform upon which stands the Altar and the part of the platform which projects out into the Nave is called the Soleas (an elevated place) where the Communicants stand to receive Holy Communion and where the Celebrants come out for public prayers, sermons, etc. At the front of the Soleas, before the Holy Doors, is an extension of the Soleas, called the Ambo (ascent) which is the specific spot where the faithful receive Communion and where sermons are given. In some churches a special throne is set at the side of the Nave for the Bishop's use.

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Iconostasis

The most prominent feature of an Orthodox church is the Iconostasis, consisting of one or more rows of Icons and broken by a set of doors in the center (the Holy Doors) and a door at each side (the Deacon's Doors). In ancient times, the Iconostasis was probably a screen placed at the extreme Eastern end of the church, but quite early it was moved out from the wall as a sort of barrier between the Nave and the Altar, with the opening and closing of curtains making the Altar both visible and inaccessible.

The Holy Fathers envisioned the church building as consisting of three mystical parts. According to Patriarch Germanus of Constantinople, a Confessor of Orthodoxy during the iconoclastic controversies (7th-8th Centuries), the church is the earthly heaven where God, Who is above heaven, dwells and abides, and it is more glorious than the [Old Testament] tabernacle of witness..... Thus, according to St. Simeon the New Theologian, the [Vestibule] corresponds to earth, the [Nave] to heaven, and the holy [Altar] to what is above heaven [Book on the House of God, Ch. 12].

Following these interpretations, the Iconostasis also has a symbolic meaning. It is seen as the boundary between two worlds: the Divine and the human, the permanent and the transitory. The Holy Icons denote that the Savior, His Mother and the Saints, whom they represent, abide both in Heaven and among men. Thus the Iconostasis both divides the Divine world from the human world, but also unites these same two worlds into one whole a place where all separation is overcome and where reconciliation between God and man is achieved. Standing on the boundary between the Divine and the human, the Iconostasis reveals, by means of its Icons, the ways to this reconciliation.

A typical Iconostasis consists of one or more tiers (rows) of Icons. At the center of the first, or lowest, tier, are the Holy Doors, on which are placed Icons of the four Evangelists who announced to the world the Good News the Gospel of the Savior. At the center of the Holy Doors is often an Icon of the Annunciation to the Most-Holy Theotokos, since this event was the prelude or beginning of our salvation. Over the Holy Doors is placed an Icon of the Last Supper since, in the Altar beyond, the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist is celebrated in remembrance of the Savior Who instituted the Sacrament at the Last Supper. [Alternately, as is found at Saints Constantine and Elena, the traditional icon of the Holy Trinity, "The Hospitality of Abraham", is placed above the royal doors. This also speaks to communion with the Godhead.]

At either side of the Holy Doors are always placed an Icon of the Savior (to the right) and of the Most-Holy Theotokos (to the left). In addition, next to the Icon of the Theotokos is placed that of the church, i.e., an Icon of the Saint or Event in whose honor the church has been named and dedicated. Other Icons of particular local significance are also placed in this first row, for which reason the lower tier is often called the Local Icons. On either side of the Holy Doors, beyond the Icons of the Lord and His Mother, are two doors Deacon's Doors upon which are depicted either sainted Deacons or Angels who minister always at the heavenly Altar, just as do the earthly Deacons during the Divine services.

The tier immediately above consists of those icons representing the principal Feasts of the Lord and the Theotokos. The next tier above that contains Icons of those Saints closest to the Savior, usually the Holy Apostles. The next row usually contains the Old Testament Saints Prophets, Kings, etc. Icons of the Martyrs and Holy Bishops would be placed above the Old Testament Saints. At the very top of the Iconostasis is placed the Holy Cross, upon which the Lord was crucified, effecting thereby our salvation.

As pointed out, the central place of the Iconostasis is occupied by the Holy Doors, because the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist celebrated within the Altar, is brought forth through them to the faithful. They are also called the Royal Gates (or Doors), since the King of Glory passes through them in the Holy Eucharist. Behind the doors is placed a curtain which is opened or closed, depending on the solemnity or penitential aspect of a particular moment of the Divine services.

http://www.orthodoxed.org/about_orthodoxy.html"These Truths We Hold - The Holy Orthodox Church: Her Life and Teachings". Compiled and Edited by A Monk of St. Tikhon's Monastery. Copyright 1986 by the St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, South Canaan, Pennsylvania 18459.

Icons

Icons and frescoes — artistic representations of our Savior, the angels, the saints and biblical subjects — form an important part of an Orthodox church. Icons serve to remind us of God, of His deeds of goodness and of the realm of heaven. They convey in lines and colors what the Sacred Scriptures describe in words. These holy images create a prayerful atmosphere in the church. Without them the church would resemble a secular meeting hall.

When we pray before an icon, we must remember that we are not praying to the material of which it is made but to the Lord, the Mother of God and the saints who are depicted on it. Everything that we see and hear has an effect on our thoughts and our mood; that's the way our human nature works. For this reason we find it much easier to concentrate on prayer when we see the image of God before our eyes than if we just look at a bare wall or some object unconnected with prayer.

One of the most ancient icons is that called the image of the Saviour "Not Made by Hands." Tradition tells us that our Lord Jesus Christ sent a linen cloth bearing a miraculously imprinted image of His face to Abgar, Prince of Edessa, who was suffering from leprosy. After he had prayed before this image, Abgar was cured of his disease. St Luke the Evangelist was an artist; he painted a number of portraits of the Blessed Virgin Mary. These served as models for subsequent icons of her; many of them have also worked miracles.

In icons God is represented in the images in which He revealed Himself to man. For example, the Holy Trinity is portrayed in the image of three angelic travelers seated at a table. This is the way in which the Lord appeared to the righteous Abraham. On some icons, each of the Persons of the Most Holy Trinity receives a particular symbolic depiction. God the Father is shown as an old man, because He appeared to the Prophets Isaiah and Daniel thus. Jesus Christ is depicted in human form, just as He appeared when He came down to the earth and became man. God the Holy Spirit is depicted in the form of a dove, as He revealed Himself at our Lord's Baptism in the Jordan, or in the form of tongues of fire, as He descended visibly upon the holy Apostles on the fiftieth day after the Resurrection of Christ.

Icons are meant to be different from ordinary pictures or photographs. The images on icons must conform to the iconographic tradition, which has been worked out over the centuries. A newly-painted icon should always be blessed in church, sprinkled with holy water. After this it becomes a sacred object, through which the grace of the Holy Spirit acts invisibly. It is well-known that there are many miracle-working icons, which have brought about numerous healings.

Surrounding the head of the Savior and of the saints on icons there is depicted radiance, a circle of light, called a nimbus. The nimbus symbolizes the grace of God, which abides in the one whom it surrounds. The radiance of the light of God is ordinarily invisible to the physical eye, but there have been times when, by God's will, it has become visible to man. Thus, for example, the Prophet Moses had to cover his face with a veil, so as not to blind people with the light which shone from his face. On Mount Tabor the Apostles were allowed to see the radiance of Christ's Divinity. During a conversation with Motovilov the face of St Seraphim of Sarov became like the sun. Motovilov himself wrote that he was unable to gaze upon the saint's face at that time. Such accounts can be found in the lives of many other saints as well.

On icons of the Saviour, the Greek words *ho _n*, meaning "He Who is," are usually written in the nimbus, because He, being God, always is. On icons of the Mother of God, the Greek letters *MP ΘY* are written. They form an abbreviation for *Meter Theou* — Mother of God.

<http://www.orthodoxphotos.com/readings/temple/icons.shtml> : Missionary Leaflet # E50; Copyright © 2000 Holy Trinity Orthodox Mission; 466 Foothill Blvd, Box 397, La Canada, Ca 901011; Editor: Bishop Alexander (Mileant)

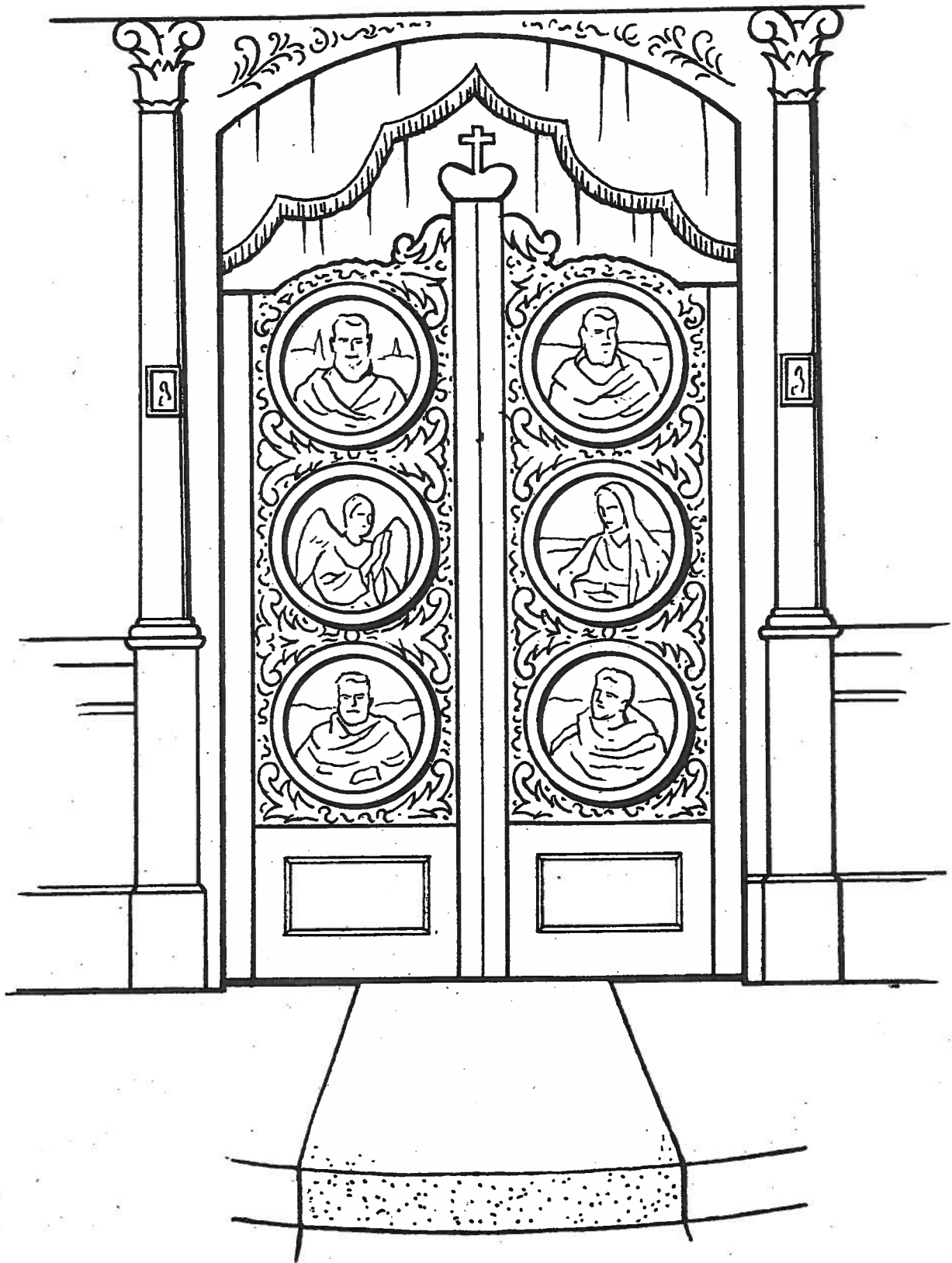
THE ROYAL DOORS

Inside the Orthodox Church is divided into three parts: 1) the Vestibule, or the Narthex, 2) the Nave, and 3) the Sanctuary. In the early days of Christianity persons preparing for baptism, penitents and heathens stood in the Narthex, because those who were not baptized were not allowed to enter a church. The middle part of the church (the Nave) is where the congregation prays. The Sanctuary is separated from the Nave by the Iconostas, a kind of wall with three openings — three doors. The large middle double doors are called the “Royal or Holy Doors” because Christ, the King of Glory, Who is mystically present in the Holy Eucharist, enters through them. Only the bishops, priests and deacons may pass through the Royal Doors, and then only during the service. The small side doors are called the “North” and “South” or “Deacon” Doors and are used more often to go in and out of the Sanctuary.

There are many icons in the Iconostas and they are set in a special order. On the right side of the Royal Doors there is always an icon of the Savior. On the left side there is an icon of the Most Holy Mother of God. On the Royal Doors there are icons of the four Evangelists: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, and icons of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin as “the beginning of our salvation.” Above the Royal Doors is usually an icon of the Mystic (Last) Supper to remind us of the Mystery of the Holy Eucharist (Communion) instituted by Our Lord and celebrated at the Divine Liturgy.

The opening of the Royal Doors during the services symbolizes the opening of the Heavenly Kingdom to those who follow the teachings of Christ. When the Royal Doors are closed, such as during Vespers or Lent, we should remember that our sins still separate us from God's Kingdom.

The Iconostas is usually built upon an elevated platform with the height of two or three steps. The space in front of the Iconostas is called the AMVON (AMBO). The space directly in front of the Royal Doors usually protrudes a little. That is called the Solea. Here the Priest stands to read the Gospel and to deliver the sermon.



THE TABLE OF OBLATION

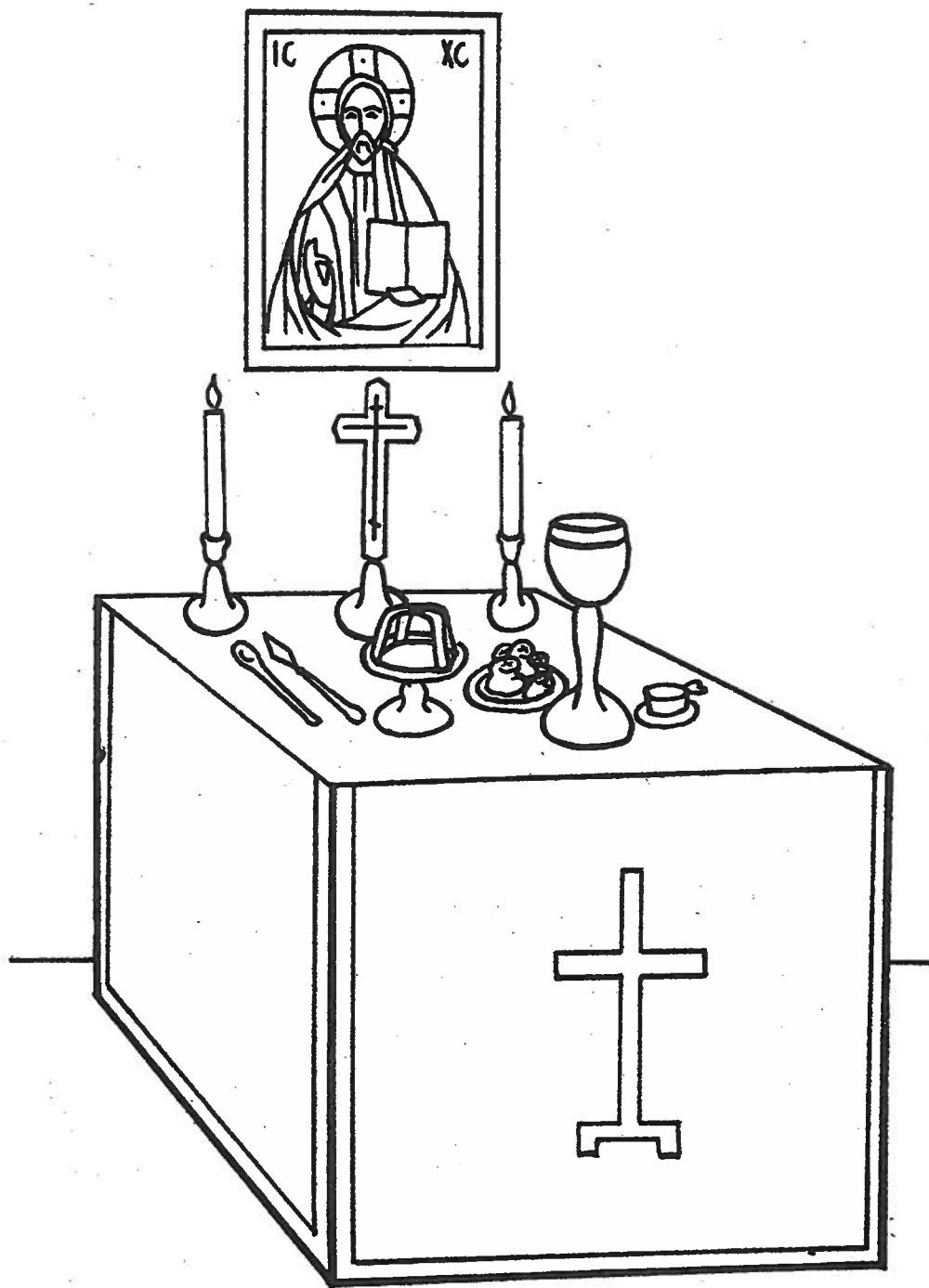
On the left side of the Sanctuary against the wall is a table which is called the Preparation Table or the Table of Oblation (*Zhertvennik*). Here the first part of the Divine Liturgy is celebrated—the *Proskomedie*—which is the Preparation of the elements of bread and wine that are to be consecrated at Divine Liturgy. The other two parts of Divine Liturgy are: the Liturgy of the Learners (Catechumens); and the Liturgy of the Faithful.

The sacred articles on the Table of Oblation are: 1) Chalice, 2) Diskos or Paten, 3) The Star (or Asterisk); 4) The Lance (or Spear); 5) Communion Spoon; and 6) One Large, or Five Small Prosphoras (Altar Breads). There may be one or two candlesticks, a Cross, cruets for water and wine, and an icon of Christ on the wall.

Five prosphoras are used in the *Proskomedie* in remembrance of the five loaves with which Our Lord fed five thousand people. Each prosphora is made in two parts, one on top of another, to remind us of the two natures of Jesus Christ, Who was both God and man. The top part is stamped with a seal in the shape of a cross and the letters IC, XC, NI KA (“Jesus Christ conquers”).

The Priest takes one of the five prosphoras and marks it with a sign of the cross, saying: “In memory of Our Lord and God and Savior Jesus Christ,” and then with the spear cuts a cubic particle and lifts it out of the bread. This particle is called the *Lamb*, because it represents the suffering Savior. The Lamb is laid in the middle of the Diskos. This is later consecrated for Communion. Then the Priest pours wine and water into the Chalice. From the second prosphora a small particle is cut out in honor and memory of the Mother of God, through whose prayers we ask God to accept those holy sacrifices. It is placed on the right side of the Lamb. Out of the third prosphora nine particles are cut in honor of the nine ranks of saints. These particles are set in three rows on the left side of the Lamb. Out of the fourth prosphora the Priest takes particles with a prayer for the living members of the Church; these are set below the Lamb. Out of the fifth prosphora particles are taken in memory of the dead and set below the living. So in this symbolic way the whole Church in heaven and earth is represented gathered around the Lamb, “the Bread of Life” her King and Redeemer.

The service of Preparation reminds us of Our Lord who became the Lamb ready to sacrifice Himself for our sins. He was also the King Who gathered all believers around Himself as His servants.



We Worship God Coloring Book. Kivco, Rt. Rev. John, Pistey, Joseph, Matusiak, John (Eds.), DEPARTMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA

THE ALTAR

The Holy Altar is a square table in the center of the Sanctuary on which the bloodless sacrifice is offered during the celebration of Divine Liturgy. It is "Holy" because it is dedicated to the holiest act of Christian worship—the Holy Communion. It is also called the "Throne" of Our Lord Jesus Christ. On the Altar the elements of Bread and Wine are consecrated and become the Body and Blood of Our Lord. The Altar must be blessed by a Bishop. At the time of blessing the Bishop places in the Altar a portion of a relic of some Saint.

On the Altar there is an *Antiminsion* — a silk or linen cloth, with a picture of Our Lord's burial, and a relic of a Saint sewn in it. It has to be blessed by a Bishop and signed with his name. It is spread on the Altar and the Diskos and Chalice stand on it during consecration. Divine Liturgy cannot be celebrated without it. After the service it is folded and wrapped in another piece of cloth. Where there is no church, the Antimins is still necessary to celebrate the Holy Eucharist.

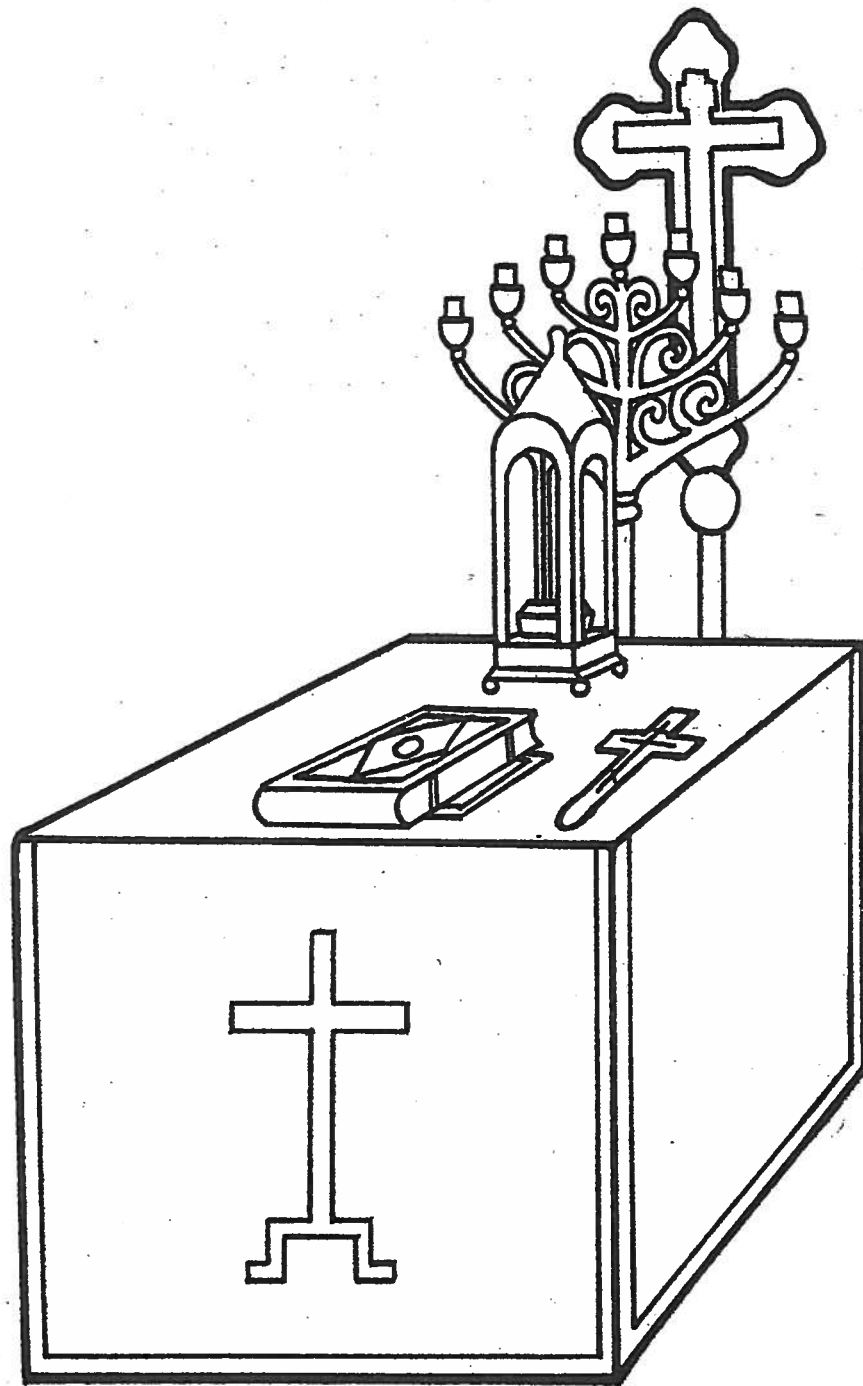
On the Altar there is also a Tabernacle in which Holy Communion is kept to be given in an emergency, such as giving Communion to the sick at home or in the hospital. These Gifts are usually prepared on Holy Thursday.

The Gospel Book (*Evangelion*) is on the Altar, and also a Hand Cross. With this cross the Priest gives the final benediction at the end of the service and offers it to the faithful for reverence. There are also candlesticks on the Altar.

In the back of the Altar there is a seven-branch candleholder. In back of the candlelabra stands a large Cross with a painting of the crucified Christ to remind us of the supreme sacrifice of Our Lord for the sins of all mankind.

The Altar is away from the wall. That space behind the Altar is called the "High Place," where the Priest stands and gives us God's blessing.

Nothing else is to be placed upon the Altar and no one but the ordained should touch the Altar.



Some Things You Should Know while in Church

Standing vs. Sitting

The traditional posture for prayer and worship in the Orthodox Church has been to **stand**. In the Orthodox “old countries”, there are usually no pews in the churches. Chairs or benches on the side walls are usually reserved for the elderly and infirm. In North America, we have tended to build our Churches with pews, and since we have them, we need to figure out when we may sit and when we should stand. First of all, it is fully acceptable (even preferable) to stand for the entire service. If you prefer this, it would be better to find a place closer to the back or side of the church so as not to stand out or block someone’s view.

When should you definitely stand? Always during the Gospel reading, the Little and Great Entrances, the Anaphora, the distribution of Holy Communion, whenever the priest gives a blessing, and the Dismissal. In many parishes, the Divine Liturgy books in the pew have suggested times when sitting is acceptable. Follow those instructions (it’s probably safer than to follow what the people are doing in the first couple of rows). When in doubt, stand. It is never wrong to stand in Church.

[Many parishes also follow the practice of kneeling on Sundays during the Cherubic Hymn, the consecration, and the **Lord’s Prayer**. Strictly speaking, this is not correct, because every Sunday is a “little Pascha” in which the Resurrection is remembered — hence, no kneeling. The “kneeling prayers” said five weeks after Pascha are said **after** the Sunday Liturgy, “reinstating” kneeling for Vespers, Matins, and weekday Liturgies only. If the tradition of the parish you are visiting is to kneel, and everyone kneels, it’s better to do so than to stick out like a sore thumb. If there is a mixture of standing and kneeling, then stand. — NTK]

Lighting Candles

Lighting candles is an important part of Orthodox worship. We light them as we pray, making an offering to accompany our prayers. Orthodox typically light candles when coming into the church — and that is usually the best time to light them, but there are times when candles should **not** be lit. It is not proper to light candles during the Epistle or Gospel readings, during the Little or Great Entrances, the sermon, and most of the times when the faithful are standing. If you find yourself arriving to Church after the Liturgy has begun, a good rule of thumb to remember is — if everyone is standing, wait until they are sitting to light a candle (unless they are sitting for the sermon, of course). Other than that it is probably all right to light a candle.

Entering Church (Late)

The time to arrive at Church is before the service starts, but for some unknown reason, it has become the custom — or rather the bad habit — for some to come to Church late. If you arrive after the Divine Liturgy begins, try to enter the church quietly — and observe what is happening. If the Epistle or Gospel is being read or the Little or Great Entrance is taking place, wait until it is finished to quickly find a seat. If Father is giving the sermon, stay in the back until he has concluded. If in doubt, check with one of the ushers to see if it is a good time to seat yourself. Try not to interrupt the Liturgy with your entrance.

By the way, the best way to avoid this problem is to arrive on time — then you don't have to wonder if it's okay to come in or not. People who come late to the Liturgy should **not** partake of the Eucharist!

Crossing those Legs?

In some Orthodox cultures, crossing one's legs is taboo and considered to be very disrespectful. In our North American culture, while there are no real taboos concerning crossing one's legs, we tend to cross our legs to get comfortable while sitting.

Should we cross our legs in Church? No. Not because it is “wrong” to ever cross legs, but rather because it is too casual — and too relaxed — for being in Church. Just think about it, when you get settled in your favorite chair at home, you lean back, cross your legs, and then your mind can wander anywhere it wants to.

Remember that sitting in Church is a **concession**, not the normative way of prayer. You surely don't want to get too relaxed and let your mind wander off too much. In fact, when you do sit in Church, you should sit attentively — and not too comfortably. When sitting in Church, keep those feet on the floor, ready to stand at attention (which is what “Let us attend” means). Cross yourself with your fingers and hand, but not your legs! [I admit it: I am a subconscious leg-crosser. I have even been caught in the front pew sitting during the sermon on one leg with the other dangling, like I do when I am working at my office computer. My compromise is to cross my ankles, which is more ladylike and less conspicuous. — NTK]

In and Out

In and out? It's a hamburger place in LA, but shouldn't be the traffic pattern by the back door during services. On some Sundays, it almost seems like we have a revolving door in the back of the church — and it is used by both children and adults.

Use the restroom before coming to Church. You shouldn't need to get a drink of water during the service (especially if you are taking Communion!). Don't come to Church to go to the fellowship hall — come to pray.

[Taking restless little ones out is a different matter. If a child is disruptive, take him/her quickly and quietly out of Church, just long enough to settle him down, then return to Liturgy. Follow the rules for entering late: not during readings, sermons, or Entrances. My toddler, who is just beginning potty training, needed to leave in the middle of the sermon last week. On returning, she announced loudly to all that “I went potty all by my self, see?” and pulled up her dress to show off her new panties. I was so embarrassed, but Father just smiled and continued. — NTK]

Leaving Before Dismissal

Leaving Church before the Dismissal — besides being rude — deprives us of a blessing. Worship has a beginning (“Blessed is the Kingdom...”) and an end (“Let us depart in peace...”). To leave immediately after Communion is to treat Church like a fast food restaurant where we come and go as we please. We live in a fast-paced world where we seem to be hurrying from place to place. But in God’s presence, we need to make every attempt to fight this pressure to move on to the next thing on the day’s agenda. We deprive ourselves of blessings by not being still and participating in God’s holiness. Eat and run at McDonald’s — but stay in Church and thank God for his precious gifts.

Blot that Lipstick!

Have you ever looked at an icon in just the right light and seen the lip prints all over it? It’s disgusting, isn’t it? In fact, it’s downright gross. Lipstick may look fine on lips, but it looks horrible on icons, crosses, the Communion spoon and the priest’s or bishop’s hand. Icons have been ruined by lipstick; and even though the cross can usually be cleaned after everyone venerates it, it just isn’t considerate to others to impose your lipstick on them. What is the answer? If you insist on wearing lipstick to Church, blot your lips well before venerating an icon, taking Communion, or kissing the cross or the priest’s or bishop’s hand. Even better, wait until after Church to put it on. After all, God is not impressed with how attractive you look externally — your makeup or clothing — but how attractive you are internally, your adornment with good works and piety.

Venerating Icons

When you enter the church, it is traditional to venerate the icons. Usually there are icons at the entrance to the church and many Churches have icon stands in the front as well. When venerating (kissing) an icon, pay attention to **where** you kiss. It is not proper to kiss an icon in the face. You wouldn’t go up and kiss the Lord or His mother on the lips, would you? You would kiss their hand, and only if they invited you would you even dare to kiss them on the cheek.

Pay attention to what you are doing. When you approach an icon to venerate it, kiss the Gospel, scroll, or hand cross in the hand of the person in the icon, or kiss the hand or foot of the person depicted. As you venerate an icon, show proper respect to the person depicted in the icon — the same respect you would show the person by venerating him or her in an appropriate place.

Pew Blocking

Never heard of pew blocking? It’s that practice of sitting right next to the aisle so that no one else can get by to sit in the middle of the pew. Everyone has seen it. In fact, the best pew blockers come early so they can get their coveted aisle seats and then be sure that no one can get past them. The most effective form of pew blocking takes place when two people take their places at opposite ends of the pew, occupying both the center and aisle seats. This effectively eliminates anyone else from sitting on that row. There are two solutions to pew blocking. The first is to move towards the middle of the pew, leaving the aisle seats for those coming later. And for those of you who just can’t handle sitting in the middle of the pew [or those with small children who may need to make a fast exit — NTK], take the outside aisle spot and graciously allow those coming after you to go past (by

moving out for them so they can get by). Remember, pew blocking isn't hospitable — nor is it an efficient method of seating. So don't be selfish. Move on over towards the middle. Don't be a pew blocker.

Talking during Church

Isn't it great to come to Church and see friends and family members? But wait until coffee hour to say "Hi" to them. It just isn't appropriate to greet people and have a conversation with them during the services. Besides being disrespectful towards God, it is rude towards the other people in the church who are trying to worship. Talk to God while in Church through your prayers, hymns, and thanksgiving, and to your friends in the hall afterwards.

Kiss (Don't Shake) the Priest's or Bishop's Hand

Did you know that the proper way to greet a priest or bishop is to ask his blessing and kiss his right hand? How do you do this? Approach the priest or bishop with your right hand over your left hand and say "Father (or "Master", in the case of the bishop), bless." [He will make the sign of the cross, and place his right hand over yours.] This is much more appropriate (and traditional) than shaking their hands. After all, the priest and bishop are not just "one of the boys." When you kiss their hands, you show respect for their office — they are the ones who "bless and sanctify" you and who offer the Holy Gifts on your behalf. So next time you greet your priest or bishop, don't shake his hand, ask for his blessing.

Sunday Dress

Remember the time when people put on their "Sunday best" to go to Church? In fact, dress clothes were often referred to as Sunday clothes. In some parts of the country, this is not common today. In fact, all too often, dress in Church has become too casual. In all areas of our lives, we should offer Christ our best. And the same is true of our dress. We should offer Christ our "Sunday best", not our everyday or common wear. And we should dress modestly, not in a flashy way that would bring attention to ourselves. Our dress should always be becoming of a Christian — especially at Church. Here are some specific guidelines we use in our parishes:

Children

Only young children (under 10) should wear shorts to Church — and then only dress shorts. Athletic shorts, cut-offs, and spandex shorts are never appropriate Church wear (for children or adults!). Shoes or sandals should be clean and tied. No one should wear T-shirts with any kind of writing on them ("This Bud's for You!" is definitely out).

Women

Dresses should be modest. No tank tops or dresses with only straps at the shoulders, no short skirts (mini-skirts), and no skin-tight dresses. Dresses should have backs and not be cut low in the front. If women wear pants to Church, they should be dress pants (not jeans, leggings, etc.). Shorts of any type are not appropriate for Church.

15.

Men

Men should also dress modestly. While coat and tie are not mandatory, shirts should have collars and be buttoned to the collar (the actual collar button may be left undone, but two or three buttons undone is inappropriate). Slacks should be cleaned and pressed. Jeans (of any color) are usually too casual for Church, especially ones with patches or holes. Again, shorts are **not** appropriate Church wear.

If you're going somewhere after Church where you need to dress casually, bring a change of clothing with you and change after coffee hour. Remember, use your best judgment and good taste when dressing for Church. After all, you don't go to be seen by everyone else — you go to meet and worship God.

To Cross or Not To Cross

Anyone who has looked around on a Sunday morning will notice that different people cross themselves at different times (and sometimes in different ways). To a certain extent, when to cross oneself is according to personal piety and not an issue of dogma. But there are times when it is specifically **proper** to cross yourself, and times when you should **not**. Here is a brief list of when to cross and when not to cross:

To Cross

When you hear one of the variations of the phrase, "Father, Son and Holy Spirit"; at the beginning and end of the liturgical service or your private prayers; entering or exiting the church, or when passing in front of the Holy Altar; before venerating an icon, the cross, or Gospel book.

Not to Cross

At the chalice before or after taking Communion (you might hit the chalice with your hand); when the priest or bishop blesses saying, "Peace be to all" — bow slightly and receive the blessing; when receiving a blessing from a bishop or a priest (kissing the right hand of the bishop or priest is appropriate, but not making the sign of the Cross).

Touching the Hem of Father's Garments

Many people like to touch the hem of Father's phelonion as he goes through the congregation for the Great Entrance. This is a nice, pious custom by which you "attach" your personal prayers to the prayer of the entrance with the holy gifts. At the same time, you need to be careful neither to grab too hard and trip up the Great Entrance, nor to push people out of the way. And be sure to help your children so that they observe these guidelines as well.

Snacks for Children

You can always tell where young children have been sitting in the church. The tell-tale signs are graham-cracker crumbs, Cheerios, and animal crackers. Parents often bring snacks and a cup of fruit juice along for children during Church. And for young children (0-2 years old), this is fine. But by the time children are 3-4 years old, they should be able to make it through Liturgy without eating anything, and by the time they reach seven (the age of their first Confession), they should begin fasting on Sunday morning for Communion (or at least make an attempt at fasting by cutting back on the amount of breakfast and eating "fasting"-type foods — talk to your priest about this). For those

children who get snacks, please don't feed them while in the line for Holy Communion. They need to come to Communion **without** food in their mouths. Try to keep the snack mess down to a minimum. The floor should not be covered with Cheerios! Finally, gum-chewing is a "No, No" for everyone while in Church!

Handling the Holy Bread

After taking Holy Communion and at the end of the Liturgy, it is traditional to eat a piece of holy bread or **antidoron** — the bread that was left over after Holy Communion was prepared.

While antidoron is not Holy Communion, it is blessed bread and as such, should be eaten carefully so that crumbs don't fall all over the place. After taking Communion or kissing the cross at the end of the Divine Liturgy, take one piece of antidoron (you don't need four or five pieces) and when you return to your seat or get to a place where you can stop for a moment, eat the bread trying not to drop crumbs. If you want to give a piece to someone else, go ahead and take an extra piece — don't break yours in half (it produces too many crumbs). And monitor your children as they take the antidoron and teach them to eat it respectfully.

A Final Thought

North American society in the late 20th century is rather casual in its approach to life. Don't allow this prevailing attitude to enter into your Orthodox Christian piety. There are surely a lot of other areas that could be covered here. Much of Church etiquette is based on common sense and showing respect for God and others. Always remember that you are in Church to worship God, the Holy Trinity. The priest says, "With the fear of God and faith and love, draw near." Let this be the way you approach all of worship. If you do, you will probably have good Church etiquette. ✠ Father David Barr

From Building an Orthodox Christian Family: A Handbook for Parents. Orthodox Christian Schools of Northeast Ohio, Inc. Mogadore, Ohio: 2002.

Question: In different parishes and districts I've noticed that some ladies cover their heads upon walking into church and leave the scarf on through all of the service, some put one on just before taking communion and then take it right off once they sit down, others do not cover their head at all. Some wear a scarf, some a small doily or kerchief and others wear a hat. Where does this practice come from and why/when it is proper to cover one's head in church? i.e. upon entering, always or just when communion will be served?

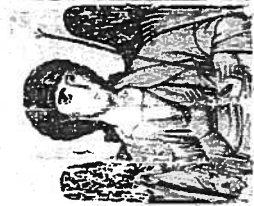
Answer: Women's covering of head when in church is an ancient Christian custom based on Apostle Paul's words: "Every woman who is praying or prophesying with her head uncovered dishonors her head, for it is the same as if she was shaven. For if the woman is not covered, let her also be shorn; but if it is a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have on her head covered as a sign of power over her because of the Angels" (1 Cor. 11:5-10). The Holy Apostle means that a woman who prays with her head uncovered puts herself to shame, as she would do if her head was shaved. He says that head covering for a woman is a sign of her obedience to her husband. Instructed thus by the New Testament, it has always been a custom in the Christian Church for married as well as for unmarried women and young girls to cover their heads, following the example of the Most Holy Mother of God who, remaining a virgin, always, as a sign of humility, covered her head. She covered her head from a very young age as a sign of her submission to the will of God, a submission which she later manifested so perfectly on the day of Annunciation. Imitating the Mother of God in this small way, women should feel honored, not humiliated or irritated, and should be thankful for the opportunity which the Church gives them to curb their self-will and to promote a modest disposition. When the woman, in obedience to the Holy Tradition of the Church, covers her head when entering the House of the Living God, or even when praying at home, she is rewarded by God for her humility and obedience to the Church. From what is written above we see that the pious custom for women to cover their heads when in church comes to us from the Christian antiquity. In the past three – four centuries, as women's hairstyles got rather elaborate, so did their head dresses. So the custom of wearing hats comes to us from that epoch and hats are still an accepted part of church dress code. However, the principle remains the same — modesty and humility. As far as putting the scarf on and then taking it off, the two thousand year practice of the Church teaches us for the woman to have her head covered at all times while in the temple.
† † †

Some women, who cannot fathom themselves in the church without their heads covered, consider it an honor — to cover their heads. They say: "Look at the icons of women Saints! All of them have kerchiefs on their head, with the exception of Saint Mary of Egypt who lived in the desert and wore no clothes at all".

<http://www.troparion.com/askfather.htm>. St. Nicholas Orthodox Church, Hobart, IN,
Priest Father Sergii Alekseev

The Miraculous Power of Icons

The relationship between Orthodox people and holy icons is a deep, warm, and genuine relationship. Holy icons constitute a real part in the life of praying people. Orthodox people pray in front of their icons, talk to them, carry them in their luggage when they travel as protectors, and in time of persecutions, they hide and protect their icons as very valuable and dear things to their hearts.



There are thousands and thousands of famous miraculous icons that in truth proved to be holy and wonderworking, which are kept in many churches and monasteries around the world. Through them, God's grace answered the warm prayers and supplications of those who prayed and asked the saints depicted in them for help.

There are many touching stories that are told about each icon, describing how people discovered its miraculous power. One of these icons is known as the "Unexpected Joy" of the most-holy Theotokos. This icon was in the room of a certain young man who used to kneel and pray every day in front of it. This young man was a very devoted person and loved the Theotokos very much.

One day he was praying before the icon of the All-Pure Virgin. While praying, a bad thought came to his mind, and he started thinking about doing a bad deed. Suddenly, as this young man was praying he saw that wounds appeared on the Lord's hands, feet, and side and blood flowed from them. In horror he shouted, "O Lady, who did this to your son?" The Mother of God replied, "You and other sinners did this to my son. Because of the sins you do every day, you crucify my son anew."



At that moment, this young man realized how bad the effect of his sins was. He prayed for a long time with tears in front of the icon of the All-Pure Mother of God and the Savior for mercy and

The Miraculous Power of Icons

forgiveness. Because of his repentance and tears, he received the unexpected joy of the forgiveness of his sins and felt something very sweet and strange inside his heart. This miracle of the Holy Mother of God is commemorated on January 25 and May 1.



This miracle was only one of many miracles. Another icon of the Holy Theotokos is called "Softener my Sorrows". This icon was brought to Moscow in the year 1640 and placed in the church of Saint Nicholas in the suburb of Moscow.

After renovations were done to the church because of a fire, the icon was carelessly removed and stored in one of the bell towers. However, the Mother of God one day manifested the importance of this icon through a revelation to a sick woman who was praying to the Theotokos to heal her difficult sickness.

The Holy Mother of God instructed this sick lady to go to the church of Saint Nicholas in Moscow and look for a certain icon until she finds it. "Once you find it, pray in front of it and you will be healed from your sickness," said the Mother of God.

This pious woman immediately obeyed the instruction of the Mother of God given to her in the revelation. She went to Moscow and looked for the church of Saint Nicholas. At the church, she found an icon that was darkened by age and full of dust and stored in the church's bell tower.



When the sick woman saw the icon she cried out in great joy and said, "This is she, the woman who told me to come here and pray before this icon!" This woman, who was sick and could not move her arms and legs, walked out of church on her own after a service of thanksgiving and supplication was offered before the icon in the church. That day was January 25 in the year 1760.

(Continued on page 5)

The Miraculous Power of Icons

(Continued from page 3)

Since that day, the icon was put in an honored place in the church of Saint Nicholas, and later a church was built in its honor where it was kept and services were offered in front of it every day. This icon is also commemorated on September 25th and October 9th.

Since 1760, this icon was glorified by many more miracles performed to heal and answer the requests of thousands of people who came to pray in front of it with faith and feelings of repentance. May the intercessions and the prayers of the Holy Theotokos be with us to beseech God on our behalf to grant us forgiveness of sins and healing of souls and bodies.



Children's Orthodox

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This is a great
weekly free resource
for elementary students.
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Mat. Jo

What is an Icon?

- An image, not a picture or a likeness.
- We venerate icons, but we worship only God. To venerate an icon is to greet or honor the person or mystery that the icon represents.

What do Icons do?

- Proclaim the wonder and mystery of Christ, the Theotokos and the saints.
- They were human like we were. They are calling us to spiritual perfection.
- Everything in the icon is represented in relation to Divinity—the divine glory of heaven
- They are called “Windows into heaven.”

Why do we have icons?

- To help us think about God: God knows we are physical creatures with senses.
- What the Gospel proclaims in words, hymns proclaim in music, the icon proclaims visually
- When we venerate and contemplate an icon, our prayers rise to the persons in pictured in the icon.

Who made the first icon?

- The Legend passed down from 2000 years ago.
- Christ was going to Jerusalem. King Abgar of Edessa sent for him, but Christ could not go, so instead he sent a linen cloth on which he had dried his face. The cloth had Christ’s image on it and the King’s illness was healed. This first icon is called the “Image not made by human hands.”
- St. Luke painted the first image of the Theotokos: The Hodighitria” —She who points the way.

Why do Icons look the way they do?

- Full of symbolism, don’t look real. In God the “order of nature” is overthrown
- Not meant to stir our emotions, but to quietly invite us to leave this world for a moment and enter the next.

What is the symbolism of the icon?

- People of importance are pictured as larger than others
- Saint is shown with the instrument of his or her salvation:
- Martyrs—the cross
- Bishops---their Episcopal robes, holding the gospel or giving a blessing
- Evangelists are shown holding the Gospels
- St. Paul holding the Epistles
- Great writers or prophets---the scroll

- Kings, queens and princes wearing crowns.
- The subject of the icon is shown looking straight ahead or at a $\frac{3}{4}$ angle. They are gazing into eternity. The face does not show emotion, but instead portrays patience and purity,
- Light is interior not exterior: "Inner light" There are no shadows in icons.
- Areas that stick out the most have the most light.
- Forehead of the subject is high and convex to represent the power of the spirit and wisdom.
- Ascetics, monks and bishops have deep wrinkles.
- The nose is long and straight ---gracefulness; no longer smells the smells of this world but of heavenly incense
- Lips closed representing true contemplation and complete silence
- Eyes large and protruding---gazing into heaven. The figure appears to be looking AT us.
- Features still look a little bit like the real person.
- Halo symbolizes the divine light that radiates from the person who lives close to God.

What do the colors mean?

- Gold: divinity
- White: purity and uncreated light; white veil means chastity
- Blue: transcendence and humility
- Red: blood of the martyrs, also youth and beauty but also sin and war
- Christ's outer garments are blue and his under garments are red depicting both his humanity and his divinity
- The Theotokos under garments are blue, but outer garments are red or earth color
- Green is the color of the plant world: spring and revival and youth
- Purple: wealth and power or authority
- Black: death, death to the world

Scenery in the icon:

- Serve to tie the icon to a specific event or time.
- Windows, doors, not in exactly the right places.
- Architectural scenes mean that the event took place indoors; but icons are never shown from inside. The building recedes into the background.

How are icons "written?"

- Conforms to a "prototype, cannot reflect the imagination of the painter. The painter becomes an instrument of God's revelation.
- There are different styles: Slavic or Russian Style, Byzantine Style
- The "writer" goes through extensive preparation. He must quiet his spirit and submit himself to God. He will not sign his icon

What is the Icon Screen (Iconostasis)?

- The Church itself is the icon of the Kingdom of God and the Ark of Salvation.
- The Church is built according to the plans of the Tabernacle of Moses and the Temple of Solomon.
- The Church faces East, towards paradise, the Sun of Righteousness, the Orient from on High.
- The sanctuary represents Heaven, the Holy of Holies, reserved for the High Priest
- The nave represents earth.
- The narthex represents unredeemed creation, the world
- Between the Altar and the Nave, between heaven and earth, is the icon screen, uniting heaven and earth. Not meant to separate, but to serve as the horizon point, that connects heaven and earth.
- Arrangement of icons on the screen is standard. Above the main icons is a row of icons called the Deisis, Christ surrounded by interceding saints. Above that the festal icons; above that may be the old Testament prophets, and above that the Patriarchs. (We don't have all the rows on our Iconostasis.....YET!)

From: Class notes for Sunday School. Matushka Joanne Allard (2009).

What Do Icons Mean?

Word Magazine December 2000

Page 22-23

WHAT DO ICONS MEAN?

By Michael Goltz

The iconography of our Orthodox Church, with all of its symbolism and spiritual meaning, is central to the Church's teaching. People are greatly influenced by what they contemplate, and so the Church, in its love for its faithful, has given us iconography in order to help us contemplate God. The Church has elevated iconography to a place of prominence as a teaching tool. What the Gospels proclaim with words, the icon proclaims visually.

The very meaning of the icon has as its foundation the incarnation of Our Lord Jesus Christ. "And the word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Christ is "the icon of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15), and His transfiguration on Mount Tabor offers support of this (Matt. 17:1-13). It is because Christ became man and allowed man to glimpse the divine glory of heaven that we are able to write icons and venerate images of Christ, the Theotokos and the saints. If Christ had not become incarnate, and had not revealed to us his transfigured glory on the Mount, it would be impossible to depict the spiritual realm of Heaven in icons. Precisely because of the incarnation and transfiguration, everything in the icon is represented in relation to Divinity. This impacts all parts of the icon, from how the face is painted, to the robes, to even the "scenery" of the festal icons. While the incarnation is the basis of iconography, the icon itself, in its role as a window into Heaven, affirms the incarnation and speaks of God's great mysteries. The chief task of the icon is to proclaim the wonder and mystery of Christ, the Theotokos and the saints, while reminding us they were human like we are, and calling us to the same spiritual perfection which Christ's incarnation allows us to seek. All naturalism, whether it is spacial, figural or proportional, is set aside and man, landscape and architecture are shown in a transfigured state.

One of the first things which I discovered about icons before converting to Orthodoxy is that icons are initially not easy to see. At first they appear distorted and unreal, almost impressionist, full of symbolism. In a society more familiar with western art, we are concerned with the response of our external, empirical senses. Yet the icon is not meant to excite our external senses. It is not painted to depict the mundane everyday life, but rather the spiritual realm. It is written as a "window into heaven," a physical means which allows us to gaze into the invisible spiritual reality. The simplicity of the icon is not

meant to stir our emotions but rather to quietly invite us to leave the world for a moment and guide every emotion toward the contemplation of the Divine. To achieve this level of spiritual communion, one must quietly, prayerfully and patiently gaze on the image. It is the way to prayer, and the means of prayer itself.

The communion with the Divine to which the icon calls us is achieved through a symbolic language in which clothing styles, colors, gestures, architecture and human form in the icon are fixed. The painting of iconography must not be based on artistic speculation, emotion or abstract ideas but soundly on the teachings of the Orthodox Church. To depict these teachings requires an understanding of Orthodoxy, study, meditation and attention to detail, as well as artistic skill. The iconographer must understand what parts of the icon he can adjust using his best artistic skills and what parts of the icon he ought to leave intact.

In this language of iconography, certain meanings are ascribed to the subjects of the icon. People of importance in icons are often depicted as larger than other people in the icon and are always indicated by name on the icon. In icons of single saints, the saint is also usually depicted with the instrument of his or her salvation. Bishops are usually depicted wearing episcopal robes, whether monastic or Liturgical, holding the gospel and giving a blessing. The blessing hand is formed in the monogram of the name of Christ, ICXC, just as an Orthodox priest blesses. The evangelists are depicted holding the gospels, St. Paul the epistles, and great spiritual writers a scroll. Martyrs are depicted holding the crown of martyrdom, the cross or the instrument of their martyrdom. St. Andrei Rublev, the great Russian iconographer of the fifteenth century, is depicted holding the icon of the Trinity which he painted (and which some regard as the standard for all other icons). The subject of the icon is usually depicted looking straight ahead, or at a 3/4 angle. Icons gaze into eternity; yet while focused on the divinity, the transfigured icon is not avoiding the earthly realm but rather gently addressing it and calling it to be transfigured in Christ as well.

The physical features of the icon are also very important in conveying this symbolic spiritual language. Because the subject of the icon is transfigured by the love of Christ, the light of the icon is interior, not exterior as in other forms of art. Thus, the areas of the robes and skin which protrude the most have the brightest highlights. The forehead on the subject on many icons is often high and convex, to express the power of the spirit and wisdom.; Ascetics, monks and bishops are given deep wrinkles in their cheeks. The nose of the subject is long and thin, which gives it a sense of gracefulness; it no longer smells the odors of the world, but rather the sweet incense of Heaven. The lips of the subject are closed, expressing true contemplation which requires total silence. The eyes are large and pronounced, gazing into Heaven. While the physical features of the face are spiritualized, they still retain a likeness to the saint depicted. Thus the face of St. Peter is different from that of his

brother Andrew and from that of St. Paul. The hands are either holding the instrument of the depicted saint's salvation, raised in a work of mercy, or giving a blessing. The feet, if depicted, walk in the way of God. The halo symbolizes the Divine light which radiates from the person who lives in close communion with God.

As important as the physical features of the icon are the colors used to depict the subject. Certain colors are generally used to depict certain ideas in icons. However, iconography, while being a sacred art, is still art. Iconographers in the past have painted certain icons in certain colors because it was theologically correct to do so as well as visually appealing. The iconographer's job is to write an icon which is theologically correct, in good artistic taste and visually pleasing; good artistic taste has a role to play in what colors are used in the icon. Artistic harmony, for lack of a better phrase, is as important to the icon as theological accuracy. A visually unpleasing icon can be as disturbing as a theologically incorrect one because it draws attention to what should not be important, namely the skills of the iconographer, and draws attention away from what is most important, namely the message which the icon should convey.

Having said this about icon colors and artistic harmony let us now discuss the meanings commonly associated with colors. Gold is used to depict divinity, as it is a rare and precious metal; when light strikes gold it gives a radiance which most closely reflects uncreated light. Gold leaf or a golden color of paint is used for the halo. White, like gold, is used to depict uncreated light, as well as physical and spiritual purity. Christ's robes at the Transfiguration and following His resurrection are painted white, or sometimes gold. The color blue is used to depict transcendence, truth and humility. A famous icon of St. Ignatius of Antioch depicts the saint wearing a deep blue robe with a blue background. The color serves to remind us of the great spiritual truths which St. Ignatius taught us. Red is the color of blood, martyrdom, youth and beauty, but also the color of sin and war. Martyrs are often depicted wearing red, or, as is the case a famous icon of St. George, with a deep red background. Christ's outer garments are blue and his under garments are red to symbolize that He is both divine and human. The Theotokos' outer garments are red, or a deep earthen tone, while her under garments are blue, symbolizing that she is human who bore the Divine. Green is the color of the plant world and thus is used to denote spring time and revival. Finally, black is the color of death, and the renunciation of earthly values. In the icon of the Last Judgment the damned are painted black, as they have lost all hope of salvation. On the icon of the Crucifixion, the cave under the cross is black, denoting death and despair. Monks are depicted wearing black robes as the black symbolizes the monk's renunciation of all that is vain.

The “scenery” in an icon has its meaning in the larger context of the icon. Architecture and landscape serve only to tie the icon to a specific event in time.

That our churches are full of icons is no coincidence, no fluke of artistic taste. The iconostasis does not serve aesthetic purposes only. While the iconostasis does function to separate the altar from the faithful and the rest of the church, it also acts as a bridge between the faithful and the eternal heaven. The saints and angels depicted on the iconostasis are there to remind us that we are not praying alone and in vain, but that we are surrounded by the saints and the heavenly host when we worship together. They also call us to a deeper love and commitment to God. They instruct us in our faith and remind us that we are not the first to walk the sometimes hard, sometimes lonely road of faith. Icons are given as gifts to the faithful at very important times in their lives — baptisms, chrismations, weddings, for a person’s feast day. An icon of the cross is placed in the tomb with the faithful when he/she leaves this world. The icon clearly plays an integral role in the lives of the faithful.

Everything in the icon points to the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is indeed the contemplation of the Divine which is the goal of the icon painter, as well as that of the faithful praying in front of the icon. I have painted many icons, prayed before many more, and in doing so have been brought to a much deeper love of Christ while using my humble talents to manifest the incarnation to others. The Orthodox Church, in its sincere love for its faithful, has for centuries provided us with icons that we may come to a deeper understanding of God. To man, God is a mystery, and the Church in its wisdom and love for man has given us the icon to help us gain a glimpse of Heaven.

Michael

Goltz is a member of St. George Church, Pittsburgh, PA.

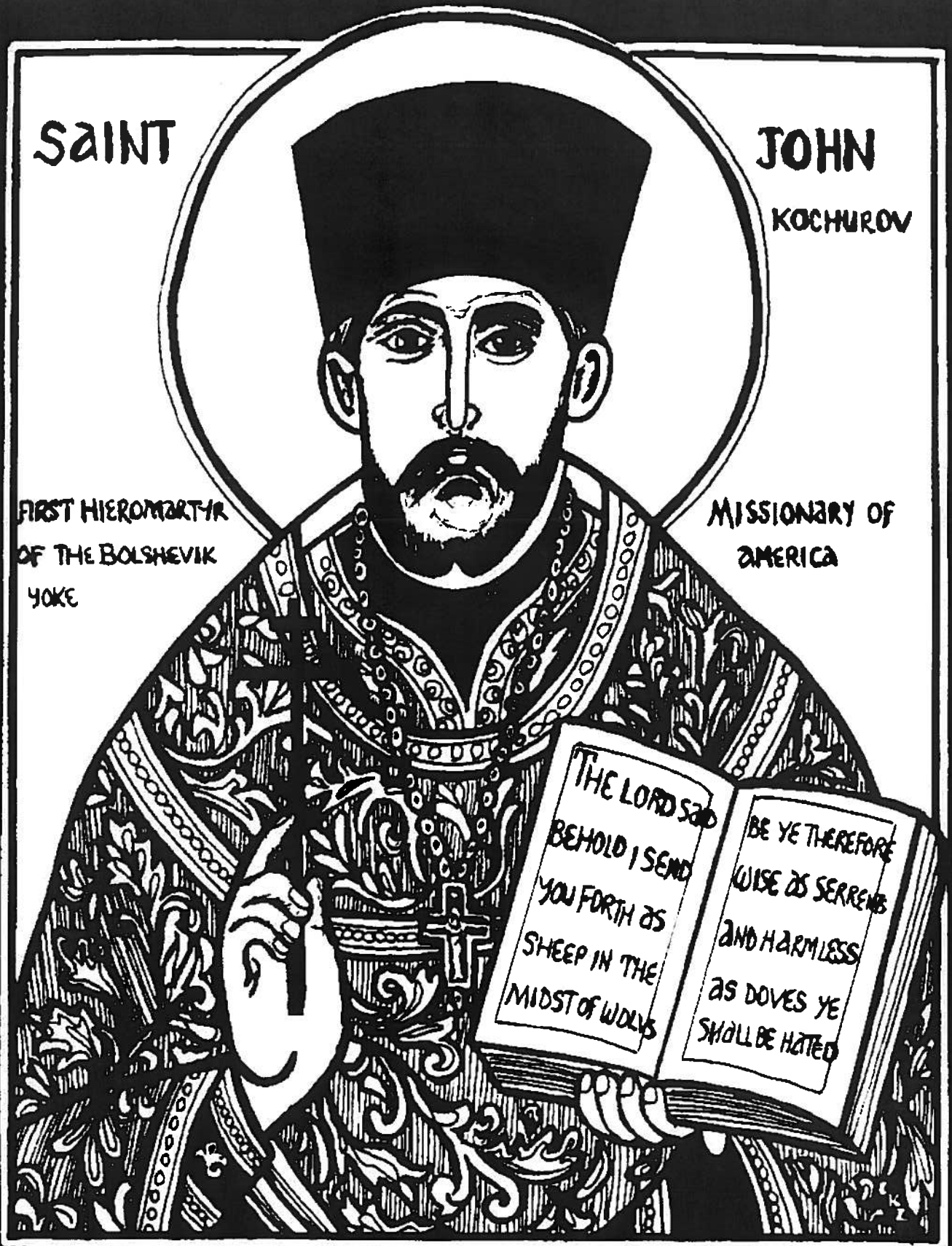
SAINTE

JOHN

KOCHUROV

FIRST HIEROMARTYR
OF THE BOLSHIEVIK
Yoke

MISSIONARY OF
AMERICA



St. John Kochurov

Missionary to America • First Hieromartyr under the Bolshevik Yoke

Commemoration Date: October 31st

Alexander and Anna Kochurov gave birth to a son John, on July 1, 1871, in Russia. His father was a priest and inspired John to serve the church. John was an excellent student, both at the Ryazan Seminary and the St. Petersburg Theological Academy. In 1895 John graduated from the Academy and married Alexandra Chernisheva. A few months later, he was ordained to the priesthood at St. Alexander Nevsky Church in St. Petersburg, Russia.

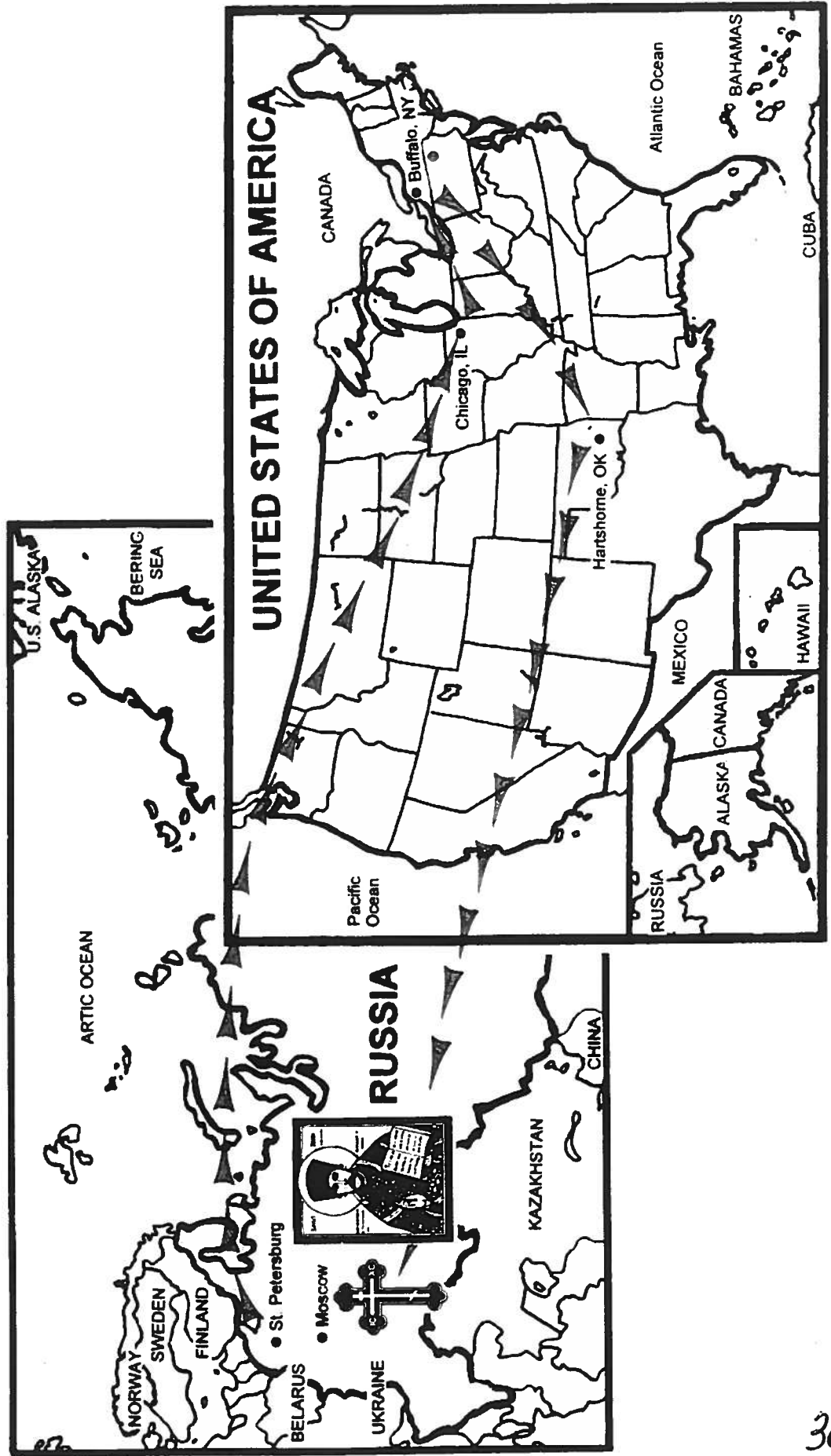
He always wanted to be a missionary priest in the United States and in 1895 his wish came true. He became the parish priest at St. Vladimir's Cathedral in Chicago, Illinois. Since the parish did not have a church building, Fr. John hired an architect and with the help of Bishop Tikhon (St. Tikhon), the church was built and consecrated. The church cost \$50,000. Today, the church is known as Holy Trinity Orthodox Cathedral.

Father John loved working for the church and continued to establish churches in Chicago and the surrounding cities. He also helped to establish churches in Buffalo, New York and Hartshorne, Oklahoma. Father John worked with Father Alexis Toth (St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre) to help the new immigrants that came to America. They founded the Orthodox Mutual Aid Society that gave money to help immigrants to live in America.

At a meeting of the diocesan clergy at St. Michael's Church in Old Forge, Pennsylvania, Father Rafla (St. Raphael) presented Father John with the gold cross, a special award for clergy. He received this award because of his missionary work throughout America.

In 1907, he went back to Narva, Russia and taught religious education in the schools. Because there were wars when he returned to Russia, many people came to the churches and wanted the clergy to conduct services. Some of the people fighting the wars didn't want this. As a result, Fr. John was arrested and killed on October 18, 1917. He became the first clergy martyr. The Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church canonized St. John on December 4, 1994.

St. John Kuchurov's Travels



Word Search Part - 1

St. John Kochurov

On the second Sunday after Holy Pentecost our church celebrates All Saints of America. For this activity, fill in the blanks with the correct answer. To help we will give you the first and last letters of the missing word. After you are finished, find the words in the word bank.

Word Bank

thirst earth mercy sons men kingdom
God glad pure spirit mourn heaven great

"Blessed are the poor in s _____ t, for theirs is the kingdom of
h_____ n. (Matthew 4:3.)

"Blessed are those who m_____ n, for they shall be comforted.
(Matthew 4:4.)

"Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the e_____ h. (Matthew 4:5.)

"Blessed are those who hunger and t_____ t for righteousness, for they shall
be satisfied. (Matthew 4:6.)

"Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain m_____ y. (Matthew 4:7.)

"Blessed are the p_____ e in heart, for they shall see G_____ d. (Matthew 4:8.)

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the s_____ s of God.
(Matthew 4:9.)

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the k_____
_____ m of heaven. (Matthew 4:10.)

"Blessed are you when m_____ n revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you
falsely on my account. (Matthew 4:11.)

"Rejoice and be g_____ d, for your reward will be g_____ t in heaven..."
(Matthew 4:12.)

Part of the Gospel lesson for the Feast of All Saints of America.
Matthew 4:25-5:12

The Beatitudes.



The Second Beatitude

Blessed are they that mourn,
for they shall be comforted.

What does it mean to mourn?

Usually when we say that a person is mourning they are referring to a person being sad because of sickness, the death of a love one, loneliness, or some rejection that they are experiencing.

But in this truth Jesus was talking about Christians mourning because they realize that they have sinned against a holy God and have brought dishonor to His name. This kind of dishonor of God's very name brings great mourning to the true believer. When a true believer sins they know that the sin just committed brings great pain and sorrow to God.

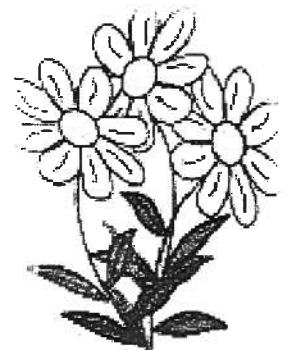




It is Godly mourning and sorrow that leads to repentance which brings salvation to those experiencing it. Godly sorrow causes us to loathe, despise, and reject sin, and this leads the believer to sincerely repent of those sins. Those who experience Godly sorrow truly forsake sin and turn to the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Only those who grieve over their sins under the conviction of the Holy Spirit and cry out to God, saying "Woe is me! I am a sinner. I am unclean. I have sinned against heaven and against you. I have sinned grievously. My sin is so great". They are the ones that will be comforted.

Why will only such people be comforted? Because they alone know that Jesus Christ came to seek and save that which is lost. They alone look to the cross of Jesus Christ and realize that Christ died for their sins.





Beatitude 2



Jesus said "Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." Luke 23: 34

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Jesus died a very painful death. Yet while he was being persecuted He asked God to forgive them. That makes me feel sorry and mournful of my owns sins because: _____

Psalm 119: 9-11

How can a young man keep his way pure?

By living according to your word.

I seek you with all my heart;

do not let me stray from your commands.

I have hidden your word in my heart

that I might not sin against you.



Prayer

Lord, help me to walk in your paths and obey your commands so I do not sin against you. Keep me pure in my ways and in my heart. Amen



The Beatitudes.



The Third Beatitude

Blessed are the meek,
for they shall possess the earth.

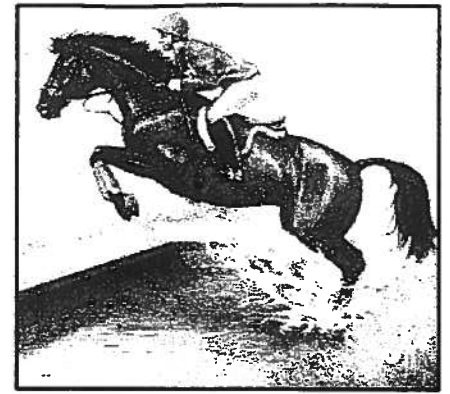
What is Meek?

The Greek word for meek is PRAUS.

Praus was used when speaking about a domestic animal.

A domestic animal is a tamed animal that is trained so that they can live with people. Like a cat or dog that can stay inside your home because they have learned how to act properly inside your house. You would not want a wild unruly animal to tear up everything and terrorize your family. You want a trained DOMESTIC MEEK pet that obeys you, is kind, gentle and loving.





Meet MEEKER, he is a strong show horse that has been trained and disciplined

so that he can be controlled by his master Jamie.

Meeker is a powerful horse that Jamie trusts to ride because he obeys her and he is gentle. When Meeker goes to a horse show he is able to jump large hurdles, because he has received hours of training. The training makes his muscles strong so that his body is the best that it can be. He knows when to jump and how hard to jump. Meeker has been trained to know his masters voice. With even a gentle touch from his master he knows what he is suppose to do. Jamie named her horse MEEKER because he trusts and obeys her and he puts his faith in her everyday. When they go to horse shows MEEKER is strong, mighty and bold before the audience and he preforms magnificantly.

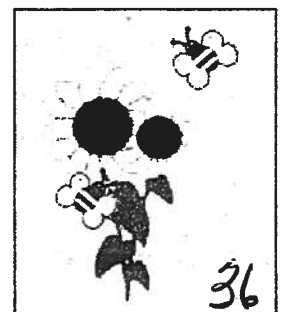
God wants us to be MEEK like MEEKER.

He wants us to put our faith and trust in

Jesus Christ everyday. God desires for us to

be strong and controlled by God. He wants us

to submit our own will to God's will.



When we learn to trust and walk with God everyday it is easy to be strong and bold when we are before the world and when satan tries to test us. A Meek person does not rely on himself, saying, I can do all things. I have confidence in myself for I am strong and able. Instead a meek person says, I know God, and He is able and willing to help me.



"I can do all things through Jesus Christ who strengthens me."

A Meek person trusts the Lord.

A Meek person is wise.

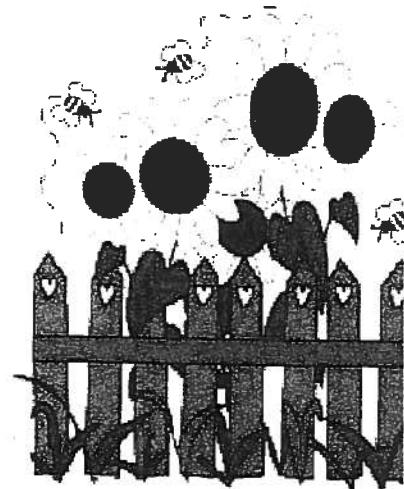
A Meek person is strong

A Meek person is patient.

A Meek person is faithful.

A Meek person is disciplined.

A Meek person submits his will to God and allows God to direct his life.





Beatitude 3



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Some ways that I can show meekness are:

Psalm 33: 12- 15

Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people He chose for His inheritance.

From heaven the Lord looks down and sees
all mankind; from His dwelling place

He watches all who live on earth.

He who forms the hearts of all,
who considers everything they do.



Prayer

Lord, help me to be meek by showing love to others,
being kind and gentle. Help me to obey Your
commands and follow your ways. Amen

